

Editorial

The Biochemical Society of Kenya

The Biochemical Society of Kenya (BSK) was formed in 1980 at the University of Nairobi, as a society for biochemists involved in research and teaching of biochemistry and related subjects in Kenya. The society has since grown to include members from neighbouring countries. One of the key objectives of BSK is to share research experiences and to communicate the scientific outputs of our investigations through holding of annual symposia. The theme for the 9th symposium of BSK was "Empowering the Nation with Biotechnology for Sustainable Development". In adopting this theme, it was felt within BSK that "empowerment" was a broad concept that includes education, training, technology development, transfer and adoption, etc; all applicable to welfare of man, animals, plants and the environment, in the field of biotechnology. Presentations were therefore very broad in scope.

The publication of this special issue of the African Journal of Biotechnology (AJB) marks a significant milestone for BSK. In 2003, AJB permitted BSK to post proceedings of the 7th symposium on their website, allowing us to take advantage of the Internet to present our science to the global science community. Quite significantly this has considerably increased the readership of the output the research undertaken by BSK members and also reduced the cost of publication and distribution of our proceedings. Alongside the special issue of AJB, we are publishing the abstracts of papers that were presented but not published for various reasons, hence giving a fuller picture of the scope of our symposium. This is a measure of the commitment of the BSK membership to make this information available on-line, to the global science community.

In spite of the relatively small number of papers published in this issue of AJB, the topics are necessarily varied, in conformity with the broad scope of scientific interest within the membership of BSK. This includes a discussion of communication of scientific research in the 21st century, with the increasing importance of the Internet; capacity building in genome science, genetics and agricultural genomics and development. Clearly, these are important subjects, not only to the African continent, but also of interest globally. Hence, we are delighted to be able to present these papers after peer review; to the widest audience we can reach. During the launch of the AGORA (Access to Global Online Research in Agriculture) project, Eric Swanson senior vice-president of John Wiley and Sons, Inc said, "There can be few things more satisfying to a scientific publisher than to contribute to a practical programme to make valuable information easily available in places where it will be used to improve health, nutrition and education of the world's poor." We fully endorse the efforts of several groups to make published information more readily available to the global community, and trust that the readers of the February 2004 issue of AJB will find this contribution of scientific merit.

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Guest editor

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