

FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, ABEOKUTA



AN ADDRESS BY

**THE VICE-CHANCELLOR,
PROFESSOR OLUSOLA BANDELE OYEWOLE**

AT THE

**41st INAUGURAL LECTURE DELIVERED BY
PROFESSOR SILVIA VERONICA AJAGUGHA UZOUCHUKWU,
PROFESSOR OF FOOD MICROBIOLOGY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY**

HELD ON

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2013.

**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR
PROFESSOR OLUSOLA BANDELE OYEWOLE, AT THE 41ST
INAUGURAL LECTURE DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR SILVIA
VERONICA AJAGUGHA UZOUCHUKWU, PROFESSOR OF FOOD
MICROBIOLOGY AND BIOTECHNOLOGY ON WEDNESDAY,
JUNE 5, 2013**

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic);

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Development);

The Registrar;

The Bursar;

The University Librarian;

The Inaugural Lecturer, Professor S. V. A. Uzochukwu;

Dean, College of Food Science and Human Ecology (COLFHEC)

Deans of Colleges and Postgraduate School;

Directors of Institutes, Centres and Services;

Head of Department of Food Science and Technology;

Heads of Departments and Units;

Members of Uzochukwu's Families

Invited Guests;

Members of the University Community;

Gentlemen of the Press;

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen;

Great Funaabites!!!

I am pleased to welcome you all to the 41st edition in the series of Inaugural Lectures of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria. This is the first (1st) from the College of Food Science and Human Ecology (COLFHEC), and the fifth (5th) that I will preside over as the Vice-Chancellor of this great University.

Our Inaugural Lecturer of today, Professor Sylvia Veronica Ajagugha Uzochukwu was born on the 29th May, 1955 in Jos, Nigeria. She is the second of the three children of Barrister James B.C. Mmegwa of Ebegworo Family, Ihiala, Anambra State, and Mrs Esther Ifeatu Mmegwa of Okechukwu Family of Enugwu Ukwu, Anambra State. Her Father is a lawyer by profession and retired from the Nigerian Railway Corporation due to the Nigeria civil war, as Deputy Secretary (Legal) of Nigerian Railways. He was the Chairman of

Ihiala Local Government for many years following the civil war, after which he has been in private legal practice. Her mother was a Catering Officer with Nigeria Airways, having trained as a caterer and dietician in Great Britain.

Professor Uzochukwu started her Primary School education in 1960 at Ndiezike Primary School, in Ihiala, Anambra State, where she was living with her grandparents. She vaguely remembers the excitement of the independence celebrations with little flags and cups given to each pupil. She got up to primary 2 at that school, before her father returned from Great Britain and relocated the children to Lagos, where little Silvia completed her primary school education at Mary Wood Primary School, Ebute Metta, Lagos. She passed the very competitive examinations into Queen's College Lagos for her secondary school education, but could not take up the admission as a result of the breakout of civil war hostilities in 1967. Her admission was transferred to Queen's School Enugu, from where she passed out in 1973 with a Division One (1) in the West

Africa School Certificate Examinations. She went to the Federal Government College, Enugu, for the Higher School Certificate Course and passed Physics, Chemistry and General Paper in the Higher School Certificate Examinations in 1975. She proceeded to the University of Nigeria Nsukka the same year to study Botany and graduated with a Second Class Upper Honours Degree in 1979. After the Youth service at the Rivers State College of Science and Technology, (now Rivers State University of Science and Technology), in June 1980, she joined the Nigerian Institute for Oil Palm Research (NIFOR), Benin in August, 1980. NIFOR sponsored her for her Masters and Ph.D. from 1981 – 1987 at the Department of Food Science and Technology of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. She got her Masters in Food Science and Technology in 1984, and her Ph.D in Food Science and Technology in 1987, with specialization in Food Microbiology.

Having joined NIFOR in 1980, she rose to become Principal Research Officer in 1992. Her research in NIFOR, was on Palm wine

and Date Fruit processing. In March, 1992 she joined the services of the University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (UNAAB, now FUNAAB), as Lecturer 1, and rose to become a Professor of Food Microbiology and Biotechnology in 2004. Her research interests have covered palm wine product development, beans utilization, cassava and cassava product shelf life, potability of commercial table water, microbial bioprospecting in food environments and capacity building in biotechnology. She has contributed over 40 publications in learned journal articles, referred proceedings, technical bulletins and papers read at conferences, to learning in her field. She has supervised more than 200 undergraduate projects, 8 Masters Dissertations and 3 Ph.D. theses. She has won various International Fellowships to improve her knowledge, such as the American Society for Microbiology International Educator Fellowship 2009, and the Biosafety Specialist Fellowship of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, (ICGEB) 2010, as well as numerous International and National grants for capacity building in

Biotechnology. She was a member of the National Biosafety Committee from 2002 to 2010.

Professor Uzochukwu is a member of the following learned Societies:

- a. Nigerian Institute of Food Science and Technology;
- b. Biotechnology Society of Nigeria;
- c. Nigerian Microbiology Society;
- d. American Society for Microbiology; and
- e. International Society for Biosafety Research.

In addition to her contributions to research and teaching, she has rendered service to the University as follows:

- a. Member of Senate 2004 to date;
- b. Director, UNAAB Biotechnology Centre 2002- 2009;
- c. Organizer and Coordinator, UNAAB Summer Courses in Practical Biotechnology 2000 – 2009;
- d. Chairman, UNAAB Ceremonials Committee 2005 – 2007;
- e. Vice Chairman, UNAAB Ceremonials Committee 1999 – 2005;

- f. Associate Director, UNAAB Biotechnology Centre 2000 –2002;
- g. Acting Director, UNAAB Equipment Maintenance and Biotechnology Centre 2001;
- h. Deputy Dean, College of Agricultural Management, Rural Development and Consumer Studies, 1999 – 2000;
- i. Chairman and secretary respectively, of many University Investigation Panels;
- j. Producer of UNAAB Bottled Palm Wine from 1998 to 2006; and
- k. Establishing Consultant for the University's Palm Wine Bottling Factory within the University in 2006.

Professor Silvia Veronica Ajagugha Uzochukwu is an AWARD (African Women in Agricultural Research and Development) Mentor. She is the Chairman of a human rights group, the Justice Development and Peace Commission of St. Anne Catholic Parish, Abeokuta. She is married to Engineer Benjamin Uzochukwu, formerly of PZ Industries, and the marriage is blessed with two children.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, it is my honour and privilege to invite Professor Silvia Veronica Ajagugha Uzochukwu from the Department of Food Science and Technology to present her Inaugural Lecture title "***Biotechnology Capacity Building: The Gateway to Food Security***"

Thank you all for your attention and God bless you all.

Professor Olusola Bandele Oyewole
Vice-Chancellor

Wednesday, 5th June, 2013