



CENTER FOR INNOVATION IN PROCUREMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STANDARDS (CIPESS)

**FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, MAKURDI (FUAM)
NOW KNOWN AS JOSEPH SARWUAN TARKA UNIVERSITY,
MAKURDI (JOSTUM)**



Excellence & Professionalism

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BULLETIN

In Nigeria, a nation abundant in both natural and human resources, the significance of developing a sustainable human capacity cannot be emphasized enough. Nigeria, with a population exceeding 200 million, possesses significant untapped potential that can be harnessed via targeted investments in knowledge enrichment and skill development. Nigeria can harness its demographic dividend and propel progress and prosperity by prioritizing the cultivation and advancement of its population's human potential.

Developing sustainable human capacity is critical for Nigeria because of its ability to stimulate economic growth and prosperity. An educated and proficient workforce has the potential to enhance production, entice foreign investment, and foster innovation. Through the allocation of resources towards professional training and skills development, Nigeria has the potential to cultivate a highly skilled workforce that can effectively satisfy the ever-changing requirements of the global economy. This would ultimately boost the country's competitiveness and pave way for long-term social and economic prosperity.

The Centre for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental, and Social Standards (CIPESS) at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM) is committed to developing a large and highly skilled workforce that can effectively address important challenges in the areas of procurement, environmental, and social standards. The goal of this responsibility is to enhance the overall quality of society. The Center has demonstrated a commitment to creating a secure, inclusive, and intellectually stimulating learning environment by warmly receiving students from the region and arranging workshops on important subjects such as sexual assault. In addition, the Center's commitment to excellence and professionalism is evident in the orientation of postgraduate students, the launch and graduation of participants in Ilorin and Minna, and the recent matriculation of both postgraduate and undergraduate students.

Recently, the series of successful programmes carried out by CIPESS JOSTUM has received praise from the University's Vice Chancellor, who appropriately referred to CIPESS JOSTUM as the leading programme of the University. This recognition is evidence of CIPESS' steadfast dedication to achieving high standards and its ability to implement influential projects that have a significant impact inside the Center, the institution, and beyond. The acknowledgment from the Vice Chancellor is a deserved recognition of CIPESS' commitment to cultivating an intellectually engaging academic atmosphere that places emphasis on innovation and students' achievement. The programmes coordinated by CIPESS JOSTUM have not only enhanced the educational experience for students but have also bolstered the general reputation and status of the University.

CIPESS JOSTUM has become a pioneer in professional training services by continually surpassing expectations and maintaining high standards of excellence. The support from the University Vice Chancellor validates CIPESS' crucial role in defining the educational landscape of the University.

By welcoming students from the Gambia, the Center took a huge step toward improving its worldwide footprint and cultural diversity. CIPESS has enhanced JOSTUM's academic community by welcoming students from other countries, particularly the Gambia. This has brought a wide variety of viewpoints, experiences, and ideas. This not only benefits the foreign students themselves, but it also enriches the general educational milieu for all students at CIPESS FUAM, promoting a more comprehensive understanding and admiration of diverse cultures and backgrounds.

The training on Gender Based Violence (GBV), Organized for CIPESS JOSTUM faculty was a pivotal move that emphasized the Center's dedication to establishing a secure and nurturing atmosphere for its students. CIPESS JOSTUM's commitment to addressing this delicate and crucial matter displays its determination to raise awareness, reduce harm, and provide support to individuals impacted by sexual harassment and abuse. The course presumably imparted significant perspectives, tools, and tactics for dealing with and managing cases of sexual assault, providing the staff with a comprehensive understanding of crucial elements of gender-based violence.

Moreso, launch and graduation of short course participants by CIPESS JOSTUM in Ilorin (Kwara State) and Minna (Niger State) exemplify the Center's commitment to provide participants with important skills and information that can be effectively utilized in their chosen vocation. CIPESS JOSTUM has facilitated the improvement of participants' expertise, the acquisition of new competencies, and staying up to date with advancements in their areas of interest through the provision of training opportunities. The participants' commitment to using the knowledge they gained for a beneficial effect exemplifies the Center's focus on practical and actionable learning outcomes, motivating individuals to employ their newly acquired abilities to bring about positive changes in their personal and professional spheres.

Progressively, the recent matriculation ceremony of CIPESS JOSTUM postgraduate students signified a significant milestone in the academic progression of the Center's incoming students.

According to Abraham Lincoln, the most effective method of anticipating the future is to actively shape it. Since her establishment, CIPESS JOSTUM's strategic actions have led to significant accomplishments, demonstrating a purposeful effort to not only anticipate the future but also shape it. Although we have not reached our goal yet, by consistently putting in effort, showing dedication, and staying committed, we can ensure a positive future for everyone. For us, each day represents a fresh start.

We trust that the May 2024 edition of our bulletin will fulfill your informational needs and keep you well-informed about the events taking place at CIPESS JOSTUM.

Continue to read.



Prof. Lami A. Nnamonu, FICCON, FCSN
Center Leader & Director, Center for
Innovation in Procurement Environmental
and Social Standards (CIPESS)





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The Centre for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental, and Social Standards (CIPESS), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi (JOSTUM), welcomed its first set of foreign students from the Gambia on Thursday, April 4, 2024, in accordance with its mandate to develop sustainable human capacity in procurement, environmental, and social standards in Nigeria and across the west African sub-region.



The Administrative Team Leader, Dr Felix Igbahenah (left), other Staff and CIPESS Postgraduate Students from Gambia on their arrival to CIPESS

Shortly after their arrival on the JOSTUM campus, Salim Jaiteh, Lamin Sanyang, and Ansu Njie, in separate remarks, thanked the center management for their warm hospitality and for selecting them to participate in the fully funded programme, particularly at the master's level.

Salim Jaiteh congratulated the project's initiators on reaching out to other African countries, particularly the Gambia, and stated that they were eager to begin full lectures. Lamin Sanyang, representing pioneering Gambia students, expressed his admiration for the existing structures and pledged to relay positive feedback to their authorities. Ansu Njie also expressed confidence in his capacity to excel in the programme, demonstrating a desire to be the best.



Deputy Center Leader of Environmental Standards, Prof A.A. Naswem (right) and CIPESS Postgraduate Students from Gambia on their arrival to CIPESS

Earlier, at the Zaamo motor park in Makurdi, the Deputy Center Leader of Social Standards Professor A.A. Naswem and the Administrative Team Leader, Dr Felix Igbahenah, accompanied by other key center staff, welcomed the students on behalf of the Center Leader and Director, Prof. L.A. Nnamonu. The Administrative Team Leader applauded their dedication, which enabled their nominations to participate in the center's postgraduate programmes. Dr Igbahenah encouraged the students to relax and converse freely, as adequate precautions had already been put in place to ensure their safety and welfare.

The Vice Chancellor of Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM), Engr Prof. Isaac N. Itodo, has rated the Center for Innovation in Procurement and Social Standards (CIPESS) as the University's flagship initiative.

Prof. Itodo made this statement in his conference room on Monday, April 22, 2024, while speaking with the World Bank Sustainable Procurement, Environmental, and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) Project Results Verification team.

According to the Vice Chancellor, who charmingly stated that he lacks the words to explain how beneficial CIPESS has been to the University, stated that CIPESS has transported the University everywhere. He affirmed that the Center has successfully conducted procurement training for Vice Chancellors and Procurement Officers in the North Central Zone.



JOSTUM Vice Chancellor, Engr Prof. I.N. Itodo interfacing with the Third Party Independent Verification Agents During a Courtesy Visit in the Vc's Conference Room

He emphasized how the Center of Excellence has projected the institution, saying, "We've taken the story of procurement and environmental sustainability to the nooks and crannies of this country." He went on to say that "we have reached out to the segments of society—whether to the least or most educated by organising workshops and seminars and issuing certificates."

The University Don stated that if the institution was not previously recognized for anything, the Center has brought it to light, which is why it is referred to as the university's flagship programme. The school head pledged management's assistance to ensure the Center's continued success and stated that measures were in the works to assure the Center's sustainability even after the World Bank's withdrawal.

He intimated that relevant government entities and agencies would be contacted in the hopes of receiving approvals shortly so that the Center could operate as an institute within the University. He consequently highlighted that the Center has been grafted into the University framework and has come to stay.

Earlier in his remarks, Dr Peter Tobrise, a representative of the National Universities Commission (NUC), noted that the main purpose of the visit was to assist in the development of a sustainable university in terms of procurement, environmental, and social standards. This, he stated, was in lieu of the covenant binding on the Programme and commission to ensure that the acclaimed findings were verified.

He maintained that the NUC's primary responsibility was to facilitate a smooth exercise, while the Independent Verification Agency would check the books to confirm the Center's renowned accomplishments.

In the same vein, Chinatu Onwuegbuchi of the Independent Verification Agency (IVA) indicated in her remarks that the exercise was not a witch-hunt, but rather a statutory duty related to the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) project. She insisted that it was not only mandatory, but also necessary, so the Center's credibility was not jeopardized.

The SPESSE 3rd round verification exercise was to be conducted by Binomial Optimal Limited, an Independent Verification Agency (IVA) comprising a representative from the National Universities Commission.

The Vice Chancellor, Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM), Engr Prof. I.N. Itodo has extended unreserved commendations to the management of the Center for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental, and Social Standards (CIPESS) for the unparalleled implementation of the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental, and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) project under the watch of the Center Leader and Director, Prof. Lami A. Nnamonu.



Engr Prof. I.N. Itodo
Vice Chancellor, JOSTUM

In a letter dated February 13, 2024, addressed to the Center Leader and Director, Center for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (CIPESS), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, the Vice Chancellor stated that "The SPESSE project implemented by CIPESS is no doubt a flagship project of JOSTUM; one which has tremendously continued to bridge the knowledge gaps in the areas of procurement, environmental and social treatises."

Engr Prof. Itodo asserted that, "the impact of the SPESSE project especially in the North Central, which falls within our geopolitical zone, is visible to all and the University is happy to be associated with the milestone achievements of CIPESS in this regard." He added that the University community was appreciative of the World Bank-assisted project through the Federal Government of Nigeria and looks forward to a continuous upscaling of the impact of the project.

The management of the Center for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (CIPESS), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, paid a courtesy visit to one of the pioneering officers of the Center, Professor Benard Awa Kalu in his Makurdi residence on Wednesday, April 24th, 2024.



**Prof. Rufus Sha-Ato (left) Presenting
a souvenir to Prof. B.A. Kalu During the visit.**

Speaking during the visit, the representative of the Center and Director, Professor Rufus Sha-Ato who was accompanied by members of Center Management Committee (CMC) lauded the immense contributions of Professor Kalu to the Center and described the University Don as a strong pillar upon which the Center has built its legacy. According to Professor Sha-Ato, the visit was a follow-up to find out how he was faring since retiring from the Centre and the University.

Professor B.A. Kalu, overwhelmed with emotions, thanked the Center's management for the visit and remarked that it was a unique experience since he had retired. Professor Kalu went on to say that he was pleased and confident in the makeup of the CIPESS team, and that the caliber of achievements exhibited by team members did not come as a surprise. In order to reach higher levels, he pleaded with the team to stay dedicated to the initiatives of the Center and the University.

Professor Kalu served as Director of Research and Development at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, until his retirement.

Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) and Master of Science (M.Sc.) students admitted for the 20203/2024 academic session at the Center for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (CIPESS), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM) were on May 28, 2024, hosted to an orientation event to sensitize them on the basic requirements of the programme.



Deputy Center Leader, Environmental Standards, Prof. R. Sha'Ato Addressing Postgraduate Students During CIPESS Postgraduate orientation Event

Speaking during the event held at the College of Forestry and Fisheries Auditorium, the Center Leader and Director, Prof. L. A. Nnamonu, represented by the Deputy

Center Leader of Environmental Standards, Professor Rufus Sha-Ato congratulated the students for their resolve to enroll in and participate in programmes at the Center. Professor Sha-Ato maintained that the Federal Government, having secured a loan from the World Bank has ensured that the students participate in the programmes at no cost within the duration of the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) project. The Center Leader's representative explained the key concepts of the SPESSE project, stating that the Federal Government of Nigeria, through the National Universities Commission (NUC), initiated the project to build a critical mass of professionals in procurement, environmental, and social standards. He warned the students to first see themselves as JOSTUM students and further urged them to remain committed to their professional journeys, revealing that only students with commendable grades may enjoy some support even at the end of the project's tenure.

Delivering goodwill messages at the event, the

Deans of the Colleges of Management Science, Physical Science, and Agricultural Economics and Extension, Prof. P.I. Zayol, Dr S.T. Swem and Dr E.A. Unongu (represented), respectively, congratulated the students for the feat and the Center management for effectively executing the project at the University. They called on the students to be dedicated, committed, and, most importantly, cooperate with key players in order to graduate within the stipulated period. Prof. Zayol urged the students to make judicious use of the opportunity presented by CIPESS to their advantage.



Members of CIPESS Management Team and a group of CIPESS Postgraduate Students During CIPESS Postgraduate Orientation Event

The monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Prof. S.A Shomkegh, Acting Head of Department, Sustainable Social Development, Dr Peter Tsue; Gender and Social Development Officer, Prof. Mrs E.G. Egbe-Okpenge as well as the Center Librarian, Mrs Esther Oyeniyi while presenting on a variety of topics connected to the programme emphasized the need for the students to clearly understand the structure and objectives of the programme in order to design a roadmap for academic success. Professor Egbe-Okpenge called on the students to prioritize issues of their health as well as shun all forms of social vices, including sexual harassment and abuse, as it is a punishable offense. On her part, the Center Librarian encouraged the students to explore the well-equipped University and Center libraries in pursuit of their academic excellence.

In her unwavering pursuit of long-term human capacity development in the fields of procurement, environmental, and social standards throughout the country's North Central region, the Center for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental, and Social Standards (CIPESS), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM), on Monday, April 29, 2024 began short executive course (Track A) training of participants in Ilorin and Minna.



Prof. S. A. Shomkegh Delivering a Presentation During CIPESS Track A Orientation Event at University of Ilorin

The Vice Chancellor of the Federal University of Technology (FUT), Minna, Professor Faruk Adamu Kuta, represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration, Professor Uno E. Uno, expressed gratitude during the opening ceremony of the event in Minna. He thanked both the management of the Center and the University for their strong partnership, which has led to the successful launching of the training programme at the University. The Vice Chancellor also praised the participants for choosing to be part of the transformative programme and urged them not to rescind their commitment in order to fully reap the benefits of the training.

While delivering a lecture on the theme “This is CIPESS” in Minna, Dr David Ekhuemelo stated that, the Sustainable, Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) project was instituted to develop capacities to fill the skill gap in the areas of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards in order to address critical challenges in the country. The representative of the Center Leader and Director while emphasizing the relevance of the certificates to career progression, further charged participants to remain committed and gain adequate knowledge to be part of the change movement.

On his part, the Academic Programme Coordinator, Environmental Standards, Professor E.J. Ekefan while speaking on the same topic in Ilorin reminisced the journey of the Center from its formation days to the present and encouraged the participants to use the Track A training as a starting point in their journey to

becoming certified professionals in their chosen fields. He added that acquiring and applying the knowledge gained from the training will help address some of the issues impeding Nigeria's growth and development.

Presenting on the theme "CIPESS Short Courses: Requirements and Trainee Obligations" in Ilorin, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Professor S.A. Shomkegh, encouraged participants to make the most of the opportunity by working hard to meet the requirements for certificate awards. Professor Shomkegh further emphasized that 100% attendance, punctuality, and participant regularity were some of the essential prerequisites for awarding certificates. During her presentation on the same theme in Minna, the Assistant Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Patricia Kuma, urged trainees to maintain respect for one another by ensuring the inclusion, equality, and diversity of fellow trainees in order to create a welcoming environment for everyone. She also encouraged attendees to report any incident of gender-based violence or sexual harassment to the right authorities for proper resolution.

In a vote of thanks, the state Training Coordinator, Niger State, Professor Israel Olayemi, expressed gratitude to the management of CIPESS led by Professor L.A. Nnamonu for breaking barriers to commence the training in the State. Professor Olayemi also commended the management of FUT, Minna for providing an enabling environment for the programme to run. He again called on the participants to cherish the moment and be committed to acquiring skills that will improve their standard of living and that of society at large.



With this feat, CIPESS has met its obligation to institute and ensure sustainable human capacity development across the six North Central States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) in line with the requirements of the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) Project.

OUR STORY IN PICTURES



Dr. David Ekhuemelo Delivering a Presentation During CIPESS Short Course Orientation Event in Minna



A Section of Participants During CIPESS Short Course Orientation Event in FUT, Minna



Assistant Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Patricia Kuma Delivering a Presentation During CIPESS Short Course Orientation Event in FUT, Minna



CIPESS Team and the Niger State Training Coordinator, Professor Israel Olayemi (2nd left) During CIPESS Short Course Orientation Event in FUT, Minna



Daniel Laka, Delivering a Presentation During CIPESS Track A Valedictory Event in Minna



RTL, SS, Prof. S. Ejembi (left) Issuing Certificate to a Graduand During CIPESS Track A Valedictory Event in Minna



OUR STORY IN PICTURES



DCL-ES, Prof. Rufus Sha-Ato Addressing Graduands During CIPESS Track A Valedictory Event in Ilorin



A Graduand Delivering a Valedictory Speech During CIPESS Track A Valedictory Event in Minna



DVC Admin, FUT Minna, Prof. U.F. Uno (left), Presenting Certificate to a Graduand During CIPESS Track A Valedictory Event in Minna



State Training Coordinator, Niger State, Prof. Israel Olavemi (left) Presenting Certificate to a Graduand During CIPESS Track A Valedictory Event in Minna



A Section of Graduands During CIPESS Track B Graduation Event in Keffi



A Section of Graduands During CIPESS Track A Valedictory Event in Minna





CIPESS Deputy Director, Dr Christopher Eche (L) Interfacing with the Vice Chancellor, JOSTUM, Engr Prof. I.N. Itodo ® During SPESSE 3rd Round Verification Exercise in CIPESS, JOSTUM



Vice Chancellor, JOSTUM, Engr Prof. I.N. Itodo (M) Exchanging Pleasantries with the Independent Verification Team During SPESSE 3rd Round Verification Exercise in CIPESS, JOSTUM



Administrative Team Leader, Dr Felix Igbahehah Addressing CIPESS Postgraduate Students During Orientation Event



Dean, College of Management Science, Professor P. I. Zayol Delivering Goodwill Message During CIPESS Postgraduate Orientation Event



DVC. Admin., FUT Minna, Professor U.E. Uno (left) Addressing Graduands During CIPESS Track A Valedictory Event in Minna

WE WILL APPLY THE KNOWLEDGE WE HAVE ACQUIRED TO BETTER THE SOCIETY: CIPESS SHORT COURSE GRADUANDS VOW.

Short course graduands in Ilorin and Minna study Centers of the Center for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (CIPESS), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM) have vowed to leverage the knowledge and skills gained during the 3-weeks intensive training to uphold the highest standards of professionalism and integrity for the betterment of society.



DVC Admin. (JOSTUM) and APC (CIPESS) PS, Prof. C.D. Tuleun (left) Issuing certificate to a Graduand During CIPESS Track A valedictory Event in Minna

The graduands made this declaration in separate valedictory speeches during the graduation event of the Center's first set of short course participants, which held concurrently on May 18, 2024, in Ilorin and Minna.

In separate valedictory speeches, class representatives of the various cohorts, including Titilayo Abdulsalam, Ahmed Muhammed Jibril, and Dr. Muhammad Isa Bala, expressed profound gratitude to the World Bank and the Nigerian government for the invaluable initiative aimed at tackling global challenges and promoting sustainable development. The graduands stated that, the training was a transformative experience that has equipped them with the knowledge, skills, and passion to drive positive change in their workplaces, Nigeria and beyond. The representatives called on their fellow participants to be active observers and agents of change to be able to shape the future. Dr Muhammad Isa Bala said. "Let us embrace this responsibility with courage, determination, and compassion. Let us continue to learn, to grow, and to strive for excellence in everything we do. And let us never forget the lessons we have learned and the friendships we have forged during our time at CIPESS classes."

Presenting on the theme, "Drivers of Change" in Minna, the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, Professor S.A. Shomkegh, who was represented by Daniel Laka charged graduands to courageously apply the knowledge and skills gained in the course of the training in order to drive the needed positive change. Speaking on the same topic in Ilorin, the Examination Officer of Social Standards, Dr, Hephziba Obekpa charged the graduands to be committed to promoting best practices by upholding integrity, professionalism, and patriotism. According to her, improving the quality of life of the people, as well as contributing to reducing the incidences of corruption and mismanagement of public

resources, were the core responsibilities of the ordained agents of change. The presenters called on the graduands to sustain the already established relationship by responding to inquiries emanating from the Center and other implementing units, saying, the training was the beginning of a symbiotic, lifelong journey.

The Vice Chancellor, Federal University of Technology, Minna, Professor Faruk Adam Kuta, represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration, Professor Uno E. Uno praised the World Bank for the initiative and CIPESS management for seamlessly implementing the project across the north central region of Nigeria. Professor Uno enjoined the graduands to apply the knowledge to add value to themselves and society.



CIPESS Management Team and Members of University of Ilorin Management Team During CIPESS Track A Valedictory Event in Ilorin

The State Training Coordinator, Niger State, Professor, Israel Olayemi praised the camaraderie between the management of FUT, Minna, CIPESS team, facilitators, data Officers and other support staff which according to him facilitated the success of the programme in Minna, Niger State. He called on CIPESS to sustain the partnership with FUT, Minna for the training to continue.

Earlier in a goodwill message, the representatives of the Center Leader and Director in Minna and Ilorin, Professor C.D. Tuleun and Professor Rufus Sha-Ato respectively, congratulated the graduands for the feat and commended their dedication, commitment, and hard work during the course of the training. Professor Tuleun while commending the State Training Coordinator and the entire University management for creating a conducive environment for the Programme to thrive, further urged participants to put to practice the knowledge acquired towards curtailing ill practices in their places of work.

The valedictory events, which were held concurrently in Ilorin and Minna witnessed the presentation of certificates to not less than 280 short course participants—140 each in Minna and Ilorin.



SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE IS A CRIME: SAYS PROFESSOR EGBE-OKPENGE

Gender and Social Development Officer (GSDO) of the Center for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (CIPESS) at Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi (JOSTUM) Professor Enechojo Grace Egbe-Okpenge has cautioned the staff of the Center to shun all forms of sexual abuse and harassment as they are punishable by law.



Gender and Social Development Officer, Prof. Mrs E.G. Egbe-Okpenge Making a Presentation During a Workshop on Gender Based Violence at CIPESS Boardroom

On Tuesday, March 16, 2024, Professor Egbe-Okpenge made this statement via Zoom during a presentation at the Sexual Exploitation and Abuse/Sexual Harassment (SEA/SH) workshop for CIPESS Project Officers.

The Gender and Social Development Officer maintained that CIPESS is a world Bank-sponsored Center of Excellence, and the World Bank (WB) and the National Universities Commission (NUC) were committed to ensuring a work environment that minimizes any negative impacts on the local environment and its workers. According to her, “The Project is

expected to strongly commit to creating and maintaining an environment in which Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) have no place. She emphasized that the act will not be tolerated from any employee, participant, stakeholder, or representative of the project.”



Gender and Social Development Officer, Prof. Mrs E.G. Egbe-Okpenge and Participants During Workshop on Gender Based Violence at CIPESS Boardroom

Speaking on the concept of “consent,” the Gender Officer said, “If the agreement is obtained using threats, lies, coercion, abduction, fraud, manipulation, deception, misrepresentation, or exploitation of power imbalance, it is not consent.” She informed that consent cannot be given by anyone under the age of 18, regardless of the age of maturity or age of consent locally. She added that, the mistaken belief regarding the age of the child was not a defense.

Professor Mrs Egbe-Okpenge who explained that sexual harassment constitutes gross misconduct and could lead to termination or other consequences related to employment and employment status further called on Project staff and faculty to endeavour to read and sign the Code of Conduct document after attending SEA/SH awareness meetings and trainings.

UNDER GRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS AT CIPESS TAKE THE MATRICULATION OATH.

Newly admitted undergraduate and postgraduate students at the Center for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (CIPESS) were among the 3,514 students matriculated into various courses for the 2023/2024 academic session at the Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi.



Vice Chancellor, Engr Prof. I.N. Itodo Addressing Newly Admitted Students During JOSTUM Matriculation Event for the 2023/2024 Academic Session

Addressing the new students at the James Ayatse Convocation Square during the matriculation event on Thursday, May 16, 2024, the Vice Chancellor, Engr Prof I.N Itodo maintained that, “matriculation ceremony is a rite of passage to usher fresh students into the formal structure, environment, tradition, and culture of the University as it confers on new students the rights and privileges of the University life immediately after the oath is administered.” The Vice Chancellor further congratulated the Matriculants on their admission to the University and urged them to set their priorities right and settle down for the academic journey and the challenges ahead.

On his vision and mission, Engr Prof. Itodo said his administration's vision has been clearly defined to "reposition the university for national and global competitiveness." He added that the pursuit of academic excellence focusing on quality teaching, research, extension services, infrastructure, as well as staff and students' welfare in the foreground were aimed at maximizing the use of ultra-modern techniques in teaching

and research, agricultural production, and approaches to solving the problems of farmers in society.



A Section of CIPESS Post graduate Students During JOSTUM Matriculation Event for the 2023/2024 Academic Session

The University Don reiterated his administration's tireless effort to provide a conducive learning environment for students. He highlighted the strides of his administration on student welfare within the last one year to include the repair and renovation of students' hostels; the construction of a gas plant by Hyde Energy for the supply of cooking gas on campus; uninterrupted electricity and water supply to hostels; and total illumination of the surrounding hostel environment, among others.



CIPESS Regional Students from the Gambia During JOSTUM Matriculation Event for the 2023/2024 Academic Session

He advised the newly matriculated students to shun all acts of violence and social vices, warning that the acts could ink their names in the black books of the University and enjoined parents and guardians to team up with the University administration and law enforcement agencies in stamping out anti-social practices on campus.

The 3,514 students who matriculated for the 2023/2024 academic session comprised 2,602 undergraduate regular students, 139 sandwich students, and 773 postgraduate students.



WE ARE TRAINED AND FIT FOR PURPOSE: CIPESS TRACK B GRADUANDS PROCLAIM

Graduands of the Advanced Certificate Course (Track B) at the Center for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (CIPESS), Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University Makurdi have expressed confidence, readiness, and commitment towards applying, where necessary the knowledge and skills gained during the three weeks of intensive training to attract positive change in their various fields of work.

Class representatives of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards made the proclamation on behalf of the entire graduands on 19th April, 2024 during CIPESS valedictory events, which were held simultaneously in Makurdi, Lafia and Keffi.



In separate valedictory speeches, the graduands expressed profound gratitude to the World Bank (WB), National Universities Commission (NUC) and CIPESS for supporting and implementing the Sustainable Procurement, Environmental, and Social Standards Enhancement (SPESSE) project. Ogah Felix Mathew of the Procurement standards class who described the programme as enriching, enlightening, and transformative, further enjoined his fellow participants to reflect and apply the knowledge and skills acquired to improve their workplaces and society at large. "Let us continue to strive for excellence in our respective roles, uphold the highest standards of professionalism and ethics, and contribute positively to our organizations, communities, and broader society." He stated.

Delivering lectures on the topic "Drivers of Change," Dr Victor Otene, Dr David Ekhuemelo, and Dr Gabriel Yager who delivered in Keffi, Lafia and Makurdi respectively maintained that, as Drivers of Change, graduands were expected to be committed to promoting best practices in their chosen fields by upholding integrity, professionalism, and patriotism. According to them, graduands were also expected to commit to

improving the quality of life of the people around them and contribute to reducing the incidences of corruption and mismanagement of public resources. Dr Otene called on the participants to sustain the already established relationship by responding to inquiries emanating from the Center, other implementing units, or the Independent Verification Agency/Agents as a way of authenticating their participation in the programme(s).

Earlier, in a goodwill message at the valedictory event in Keffi, the Center Leader and Director, Prof. L.A. Nnamonu, represented by the Deputy Center Leader, Social Standards, Prof. A. A. Naswem congratulated the graduands for their commitment, courage, and resilience, which culminated in their attainment of the feat. The Center Leader, who thanked the Vice Chancellor, Nasarawa State University Keffi Prof. . S.B. Mohammed, for providing a venue for the programme to run, expressed confidence that, the insight and skill the graduands were exposed to will surely benefit them and the Nigerian society at large.



Graduands Seated During CIPESS Track B Graduation Event in Keffi

Prof. Rufus Sha-Ato, Deputy Center Leader, Environmental Standards and Dr Felix Igbahenah, Administrative Team Leader while delivering goodwill messages in Lafia and Makurdi respectively, commended the graduands' resolve to be part of the change movement and urged them to put to practice the knowledge and skills acquired in the course of the training for the betterment of society. Prof. Sha-Ato also urged the graduates to continue their pursuit of becoming certified experts in their various industries, as well as to enroll in higher levels of study at the Center in areas such as procurement, environmental and social standards.

The presentation of certificates of participation to more than 400 combined participants trained at the three study centers was the event's highlight.



Center for Innovation in Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards (CIPESS) Federal University of Agriculture, Makurdi (FUAM) now known as Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi (JOSTUM) has been a hive of activity over the last two months, with a wide range of activities and initiatives demonstrating the Center's dedication to excellence and expertise in student success.

From welcoming international students to organizing workshops on vital issues such as Gender Based Violence (GBV), the Center has made an indelible impression on its community. The orientation event for postgraduate students, short courses training in Ilorin and Minna, students' matriculation ceremony all culminating to the Vice Chancellor's commendation demonstrate CIPESS JOSTUM's critical role in the area of sustainable capacity building in North Central Nigeria.

One of Center's most remarkable accomplishments in recent months has been the effective integration of international students into the institution. CIPESS JOSTUM has enhanced its academic community with a varied spectrum of ideas and experiences by embracing students from other nations, as well as proved its dedication to building a global learning environment. The cultural exchange and cross-cultural contacts that emerge from embracing international students will help to create a vibrant and dynamic academic community in the University, where students will be exposed to different ideas, customs, and ways of thinking.

Furthermore, the workshop Gender Based Violence (GBV) stands out as an important initiative that demonstrates the Center's commitment to raising awareness and providing a secure environment for its students. Addressing such a delicate and crucial topic demonstrates CIPESS JOSTUM's dedication to the well-being and security of its students. The programme provided a forum for conversation, education, and support, giving participants the knowledge and resources they needed to avoid and respond to cases of sexual misconduct and ultimately establishing a culture of safety, respect, and empowerment within the University community.

Postgraduate students' orientation at CIPESS JOSTUM played an important role in preparing students for academic success. The extensive orientation workshop ensured that postgraduate students adjust smoothly to their programmes, understand the resources accessible to them, and feel prepared to excel in their studies. This proactive approach to student support would not only improve their academic experience, but also foster a sense of confidence and belonging.

CIPESS JOSTUM short courses training in Ilorin and Minna have helped participants gain vital skills and information that could be deployed to make a good difference. The participants' passion and promise to apply their newly acquired knowledge to better the society demonstrated CIPESS JOSTUM's emphasis on practical and usable learning outcomes, motivating individuals to make a difference in their chosen fields.

The matriculation ceremony of CIPESS JOSTUM's students marked a crucial milestone in their academic career at the Center. The Matriculation event represented students' formal admittance into various programmes, signalling the start of their educational journey at the Center.

Delightfully, the University Vice Chancellor in a letter addressed to the Center Leader Director rated CIPESS JOSTUM as the institution's flagship programme. this outstanding rating highlights the excellence and impact of the Center's initiatives. This accolade also demonstrated CIPESS JOSTUM's commitment to creating a lively, inclusive, and supportive academic environment that values innovation, student success, and community engagement. Recognizing the Center as the flagship programme of the University, sets the benchmark for excellence, inspiring others to replicate its best practices and maintain a commitment to quality programme delivery.

In summary, CIPESS JOSTUM's activities over the last two months, which included the welcoming of foreign students, a workshop on Gender Based Violence (GBV), postgraduate student orientation, short courses training in Ilorin and Minna, matriculation of undergraduate and postgraduate students, and a commendation from the Vice Chancellor, unequivocally reflected the Center's commitment to providing a holistic and enriching educational experience for its students. The center's continued leadership by example solidifies its place as a cornerstone of educational and professional support services, creating positive change and cultivating an academic culture of excellence, innovation, and student achievement.



Uche Michael Aondohemba
Communications Officer

SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT, ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL STANDARDS ENHANCEMENT (SPESSE) PROJECT



SPESSE

MISSION

To produce a critical mass of highly skilled and fit-for purpose professionals in the areas of Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards for sustainable development.

VISION

To be a Dynamic Regional Hub for Expert Training and Research in Public Procurement, Environmental and Social Standards Based on Global Best Practices.

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