

**AN ADDRESS BY CHIEF (DR.) J. O. SANUSI,
(CON), GOVERNOR, CENTRAL BANK OF
NIGERIA, AT THE OFFICIAL COMMISSIONING
OF THE CENTRE FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY
RESEARCH AND TRAINING OF THE AHMADU
BELLO UNIVERSITY, ZARIA BUILT UNDER CBN
CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME, ON 10TH
MAY, 2004.**

**The Pro Chancellor,
The Vice Chancellor,
Members of Senate of the University,
Other Principal Officers of the University,
Directors of Central of Bank of Nigeria,
Members of the Academia,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**I am delighted to be here this morning for the
official commissioning of the Centre for
Biotechnology Research and Training, Ahmadu
Bello University, Zaria. This project was built
through a collaborative effort between the
Central Bank of Nigeria and the Ahmadu Bello**

University under the Bank's Capacity Building Programme (CBP).

2. It might interest you to know that the intervention of the Central Bank of Nigeria through financial assistance to Nigerian Universities arose from the recognition that these institutions are faced with a number of difficulties arising primarily from inadequate funding.

3. Our intervention is predicated on the awareness that investment in human capital, through improved funding of the education sector helps to accelerate the pace of economic growth and development. We note in particular that the impressive productivity growth, which

mainly explained the East Asia's economic success, was largely attributable to the high rate of investment in education and training. Thus, the CBP initiative represents the Central Bank's commitment to the rejuvenation and revival of the ailing education sector in the country.

4. More importantly, the CBP was initiated in 1998 out of the Bank's genuine desire to lead and encourage other corporate institutions, particularly those in the financial sector, to support Nigerian Universities in re-habilitating their fast deteriorating infrastructural facilities, as well as, provide additional ones. It is noteworthy that we have made satisfactory progress in realising these objectives, as

revealed by the level of financial support given to Nigerian Universities by many banks and other financial institutions in the country.

5. I am aware that the Research Centre being commissioned today represents the cutting edge of science in today's world with various benefits in the areas of biological and medical research, drug production, diagnosis, safety testing, agriculture and engineering, etc. It is also recognized that, although these benefits are valuable and desirable, some people are concerned about the risks associated with some products of biotechnology, such as genetically modified foods or organisms. While some of these risks may be real, they do not undermine the benefits or weaken the growing acceptability

and endorsement of biotechnology as the solution to the problems of poverty, health and quality of life.

5. I understand that the main objectives of the University for establishing this Centre are to:

- provide training facilities in molecular biology techniques to undergraduate, postgraduate and post-doctoral students;**
- carry out basic and applied research in the areas of medical, agricultural and veterinary sciences;**
- provide molecular diagnostic facilities for Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Veterinary Teaching Hospital and referrals from other hospitals in the country,**

- including HIV/AIDS diagnosis, and checking of vaccines and drugs for potency;
- provide full complement of equipment and facilities for teaching and research in the areas of recombinant DNA technology, cell and tissue culture and immunology; and
 - enhance the research capability and academic leadership of the University.

Recognizing the importance of these benefits to ABU and the nation, the Central Bank is proud to be associated with the Project. Indeed, we see our involvement as a positive contribution to national economic development.

7. Mr. Pro Chancellor, I understand that the Centre being commissioned today was built at a cost of ₦70 million, signifying that the ₦25

million provided by the CBN represented the seed-money for the take-off of the project. Let me, therefore, commend the University Administration for its appreciable contribution and the efficient resource management that facilitated the timely completion of the project.

8. Distinguished Members of the University Community, Ladies and Gentlemen, I call on all Scientists and Researchers from this University and other institutions to take full advantage of the facilities being assembled here for the advancement of scientific knowledge for the good of mankind, in general, and the Nigeria nation, in particular. We hope that this centre will be jealously guarded and protected.

9. I congratulate the Governing Council, Senate and, indeed, the entire academic community of the Ahmadu Bello University on this epoch making occasion.

10. I thank you for your kind attention.

**Chief (Dr.) J. O. Sanusi (CON)
Governor,
Central Bank of Nigeria**

May 10, 2004