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A New COST Success Story: Green Chemistry and Cooperation with African Countries

Green chemistry – the creation of sustainable processes to prevent the creation of hazardous waste – is one of the answers to the worldwide demand for environmentally friendly chemical processes and cost-effective approaches to pollution prevention. This new and important scientific frontier is addressed by a number of COST Actions.

One Action, COST Action D29 "Sustainable/Green Chemistry and Chemical Technology", expanded COST's geographic scope by involving green chemists from Ethiopia. This unique contribution to global science was featured in Science Magazine, Volume 316, in June 2007. Management Committee members Dr Asfaw Nigist from the Chemistry Department of Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia and Professor Martyn Poliakoff from the Department of Chemistry at the University of Nottingham co-authored the article entitled "Empowering Green Chemists in Ethiopia".

The concept of Green Chemistry was new to Ethiopia when Dr Nigist joined the COST Action in 2004 and awareness has been rising steadily ever since. The enthusiasm of a few young chemists, combined with the fact that Africa has resources such as intense sunlight and unique species readily available make Africa an excellent breeding ground for the development of sustainable chemical technologies appropriate to the needs of the community.

An aspect that is well-recognised by the Federation of African Societies of Chemistry (FASC) that therefore chose Green Chemistry as the theme for its First Annual Congress to be held in Addis Ababa in September 2007.

The authors conclude that the collaboration between Ethiopian and European scientists was not only intellectually rewarding for all chemists involved, it also helped raise the profile of Ethiopian chemistry and enriched the international scientific community.

For more information on this topic, please contact Dr Nigist (nigista@chem.aau.edu.net) or Professor Poliakoff (martyn.poliakoff@nottingham.ac.uk) directly.

Other COST Actions addressing Green Chemistry are Actions D6, D10 or D30.



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