

Panel discussion on the occasion of the international women's day by the Cameroon Academy of Young Scientists (CAYS)

Theme: "Women and Science: What Future for Cameroon?"

The Cameroon Academy of young Scientists (CAYS) has as one its mandates to promote research as a career option for the younger generation especially girls. It therefore uses various avenues to showcase the importance of research. The opportunity this time was the International Women's Day 2020, celebratory activities. The International Women's Day is recognized internationally to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. Celebrating this day stands as a reminder for nations to eliminate discrimination against women, accelerate gender parity and advance women's full and equal participation in global development. CAYS as an advocate for equal treatment of women and the full and inclusive participation in the development of Cameroon, has outlined activities towards addressing issues faced by women. In line with this, on the 4th March 2020, CAYS organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation in Cameroon, a panel discussion on the topic: "Women and Science: What Future for Cameroon?". The topics ranged from the reasons for choosing a scientific or research career by women (by Dr Brice Tchakam) to statistics illustrating the number of women in the scientific/research career internationally and in Cameroon in particular (by Dr Raoul Ehode), as well as outlining the difficulties faced by women in science (by Dr Valerie Makoge) and proposing strategies to promote women in science (by Dr Nzweundji Justine Germe). This scientific exchange was moderated by Prof Josephine Ngo Mbing. Over fifty people took part in this panel discussion and open debate which was covered by various media including the state-run media (CRTV). The role of women in science is undeniable and important for a stable and prosperous society. The following recommendations were made:

- Breaking stereotypes and allowing women to follow their dreams
- Recognizing the value and potential of women in science
- Setting up a repertoire or database of women scientists and their works for visibility and use by the general public
- Applying laws that empower and valorize women
- Creating a special award or prize of excellence dedicated to women scholars
- Celebrating female scientist as models and mentors
- Empowering women scientists through promotion to positions of leadership

