

***Mundus maris* is proud to announce**

We whole-heartedly applaud and congratulate Professor Stella B. Williams, Vice-President of Mundus maris, for much deserved winning the International Institute of Fisheries Economics & Trade (IIFET) 2016 Distinguished Service Award! We are happy and proud to have her at our side.

IIFET states in justification:



“Professor Stella Williams embodies IIFET’s goals of fostering global interaction between academia, trade, and government on the economics of fisheries policy and seafood trade. She has made significant contributions enabling individuals of different professional orientations and countries to exchange information, data, and perspectives on fisheries issues. Because she has devoted her long and productive professional career, as well as her personal energy, to building bridges between academia and governments, farmers, and fishers, to foster better research, collaboration, policy and equity, with a special focus on gender equity, Dr. Williams was selected as the recipient of this year’s IIFET Distinguished Service Award.

Professor Williams holds a BSc (Zoology) and a Postgraduate Diploma in Education from Fourah Bay College (now the University of Sierra Leone) in West Africa, a Master’s degree in Ecology/Marine Biology from University of Connecticut, and a PhD in Fisheries and Allied Aquaculture/Agricultural Economics from Auburn University in the USA. After completing her Ph.D, she returned home to Nigeria to take up a teaching/research appointment in the Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University, OAU).

Commencing her teaching career as a Science Teacher in Secondary School helped her develop a strong passion for mentoring young scientists with particular focus on women and girls in Nigeria and the rest of Africa.

Early in her post graduate career, Professor Williams concentrated her research efforts on value addition in the fishing industry but later broadened her research interests to include the study of women in fisheries and aquaculture. Stella’s academic contribution to fisheries and aquaculture economics and management in Africa includes some 40 publications, many of which are highly cited and indispensable reference materials for scholars of African fisheries. In the course of her University teaching career, Stella not only trained 25

Masters' and 15 Ph.D. students, but was also instrumental in finding sponsorship sources for 80% of these students. Of the 15 Ph.D. students (13 males and two females), 14 hold professorial ranks at Universities in Nigeria and abroad, and one now works for the World Bank.

Stella is a strong advocate of gender and social equity perspectives and brings this to bear in her involvement in development projects and socio-economic research on rural development and fisheries in Nigeria and throughout Africa. In the last thirty years, her primary research and developmental work focused on investigating viable frameworks for user participation in fisheries and aquaculture management, fisheries governance through integration of stakeholders' knowledge, and enhancement of livelihoods and economic development of rural artisanal fishing folks who are often left out of fisheries policy.

Stella has served on a stunning variety of international, regional and national committees and agencies, where she has contributed to solutions to equity and gender problems. She served (twice) on IIFET's Executive Committee (1988-1992 and 1996-1998), in addition to other boards, agencies, and commissions including: Gender and Science and Technology (GASAT), the African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) program, the Nigerian Women in Agricultural Research for Development (NiWARD—www.niward.org) program (of which she was the founder), the International Potato Center (CIP), the committee on Gender Issues in Science and Technology of the Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria, the Board of Trustees of the Worldfish Center (2001-2009; Vice Chair from 2006-2008), two EU-Funded programs--the West African Artisanal Fisheries (WAAF) Project based in Cote d'Ivoire and the Governance Project hosted by the University of Amsterdam, contributing to the FISH-GOV deliberations. Stella currently serves as a Vice President on the Board of Mundus Maris in Belgium (www.mundusmaris.org).

Realizing that some undergraduate students were having a hard time financing their university studies, she advocated for the introduction of a work-study program at her university, of the type that she benefited from as a postgraduate student in the United States. During a Fulbright Senior-Resident Exchange Program at Bellevue Community College in Washington State, she carefully studied how to run such a program. On her return to her University after the fellowship, she convinced the University's Vice Chancellor to institute a similar program and became the founding Chair of the Committee (2005-2008) which assisted about 300 indigent students who would otherwise have dropped out of OAU, to finish with good grades and sound entrepreneurial skills.

While on the WorldFish Center Board, Stella worked with Dr. Sloans Chimatiro to organize the NEPAD Fish for All Summit held in Abuja, Nigeria, in 2005. Stella seized that opportunity to bring fisheries and aquaculture to the attention of African leaders as a critical livelihood, development, and economic issue using Nigeria as a case study, ensuring the addition of this critical subject area in NEPAD's future agenda. (NEPAD would later go on to enable some 35 African participants to attend the IIFET 2012 Tanzania Conference, and several more to attend IIFET 2016 Scotland).

Stella pushed hard to add gender in fisheries and aquaculture to IIFET's agenda. Her presentation at IIFET Tromso 1998 was a ground-breaking moment, being among the first to provide gender perspectives. Dr. Williams helped organize a special session on gender in Fisheries at the IIFET 2012 Tanzania conference, and supported Dr. Meryl Williams and others in developing a session on gender for IIFET 2016 Scotland. She helped show that in addition to being processors and marketers of fish, women are also artisanal fisher folk.

In recognition of her tireless promotion of youth and women in fisheries and academia, Stella has won several awards, including the Lagos State Government World Food Day Merit Award for distinguished assistance to youth and women in Agriculture and Fisheries (2000) and the Merit award of the Fisheries Society of Nigeria (1997).

Professor Stella Williams will be honored as the Distinguished Service Award Winner at the IIFET 2016 Scotland conference in July, 2016.