
Module I—Opening Global Dialogue

Introductory Remarks

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In preparing for this afternoon, I noted with interest a statement in the NABC 15 proceedings volume that “communication between the pro- and anti-biotech camps was problematic throughout the meeting.” Of course, we are suffering from a world of dualisms when in fact we live in a highly diverse and philosophically pluralistic global society. We should expect of our speakers and ourselves, as participants in NABC 16, a critical analysis of the case-specific nature of biotechnology. Can we not recognize its inherent contradictions because of its positivist tradition and its commercial interest? How might we approach biotechnology if indeed there is new hope for equitable and sustainable agriculture in food-insecure communities throughout the world? If we are unable to recognize and communicate the diversity of viewpoints on this important topic, we are moving away from action towards social and political lethargy, which will accept, not challenge, the global power and food security *status quo*. For me and for many others, this would be totally unacceptable.

This afternoon we will hear from three eminent speakers on agricultural biotechnology in the global context: Kanayo Nwanze, Neal Van Alfen, and M.S. Swaminathan.