

Polytechnic took part in the Russian-African conference "Water is more expensive than gold" at SPIEF-2024

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The XXVII St. Petersburg International Economic Forum SPIEF-2024 hosted the Russian-African conference "Water is more expensive than gold". It was attended by 9 countries: Russia, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Angola, Kenya, Burkina Faso, Sudan and Mali. Experts, scientists and heads of environmental agencies discussed pressing problems and co-operation in the field of water resources.

✖ On the first day of the conference, four sessions were held, at which the participants of the discussions exchanged their experience in solving water use issues in Russia and African countries, talked about the Russian experience in prospecting for water deposits and providing water resources to African countries.

Polytech was represented by Maxim Zalyvsky, Head of the Russian-African Network University Project Office, Alla Mazina, Deputy Head of the International Education Department, and Issa Togo, Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Hydraulic and Power Engineering of SPbPU, Honorary Consul of Mali in St. Petersburg.

✖ St Petersburg Polytechnic presented its cases of successful projects on interaction with African universities and enterprises. Issa Togo spoke about the project of efficient use of water resources of the Niger River and emphasised the importance of training African students in Russian technologies to make them applicable in African countries.

✖ Training of qualified personnel in the field of water management in Russia for African countries was given special attention. Polytechnic's experience as a coordinator of the Russian-African Network University (RAFU) consortium helped to maximise the potential of the conference "Water is More Valuable than Gold". The RAFU consortium brings together a wide representation of universities from Russia and Africa and can combine the efforts of different universities, responding to the wide range of needs of African countries in training qualified personnel.

Africa, being the continent with the youngest population, faces an acute shortage of qualified personnel and higher education institutions. The activities of RAFU member universities are aimed at solving this problem from both the Russian and African sides.

"Clean water is indeed more precious than gold. Approximately a quarter of the world's population does not have access to quality drinking water. Russia is the second country in the world in terms of fresh water reserves, and we have a lot of experience in preserving this valuable resource. We are clearing riverbeds, restoring aquatic ecosystems, building treatment facilities, and searching for underground sources. And we are ready to share this experience with African countries", Ivan Kushch, Director of the Department of International Cooperation and Climate Change of the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, said.

Photo: Roscongress photobank