

Developing cooperation: the Polytechnic delegation visited the Republic of Mali

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Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, coordinator of the Russian-African Network University (RAFU) consortium, held the «Week of Russian Education and Science» in the Republic of Mali.



On November 20, a representative delegation from Russian universities participating in RAFU arrived in the Republic of Mali: Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, St. Petersburg State Electrotechnical University (LETI), Russian State Hydrometeorological University (Hydromet), Sergo Ordzhonikidze Russian State Geological Exploration University, South-West State University (South-Urals State University), South-Urals State Humanitarian and Pedagogical University.

The delegation from SPbPU to Mali included Maxim Zalyvsky, Head of the RAFU Project Office, Alla Mazina, Deputy Head of the International Education Department, Issa Togo, Associate Professor of the Graduate School of Hydraulic and Power Engineering, and Viktor Krasnoshchekov, Director of the Higher School of International Educational Programs. In the presence of the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Mali Bourema Kansai and Deputy Director of the Department of International Cooperation of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation Sergey Terashkevich, the official opening ceremony of the Russian Language Center of SPbPU and the Open Education Center of the South Ural Pedagogical University took place.

Russia intends to assist the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Mali in training highly qualified specialists necessary for the implementation of national programs of socio-economic development. In this regard, the number of quotas for Malian citizens wishing to receive education

in Russia has been increased 10 times, so with an allocated quota of 290 places, this year 297 Malians were enrolled in quota places, said at the opening ceremony Sergei Terashkevich.



The Information Center of SPbPU and RAFU was opened at the Higher National School of Engineers. According to Sergey Terashkevich, these centers will improve the quality of language training of Malian applicants who want to get higher education in Russia. For them, the Information Center is an opportunity to make a more informed choice of their future specialty, to receive information about Russian universities and enrollment procedures, information about opportunities to receive grants and scholarships to study in Russia.

As part of the visit, Polytechnic University held two days of educational and outreach events «Days of Russian Language and Culture». Students of Malian universities were shown presentations and videos about Russian education, introduced to educational projects they can use. They were also told about the culture and traditions of our country.

No less important step in Russian-African cooperation was the opening of the «Pre-University Training Center» at the Private University of Ahmed Baba by Polytechnic University. The official ceremony was attended by a representative of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of Mali and the Republic of Niger. The University has equipped 2 halls for the center: a language laboratory with Internet access for online classes and a lecture hall for 40 seats.

The goal of the Center is to provide Russian language training for undergraduate students for admission to master's degree programs at SPbPU and other Russian universities.

During the negotiations on cooperation with RAFU universities the first agreements were reached. For example, the development of modern energy programs with SPbPU, meteorology programs with Hydromet, and programs on mining with RSMU.



We hope that the Centers will also work for citizens of neighboring countries, which will create in Mali an educational hub for the whole of West Africa. In addition, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Mali plans to build new universities, which will be created on the basis of Russian educational programs and with the participation of leading Russian universities, primarily RAFU participants, said Sergey Terashevich.

The Ministry held a meeting with the rectors of universities in Mali, where the Russian delegation was invited. The republic is already preparing a project to decentralize higher education and build several new universities, including a polytechnic university.

Mali's Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research Bourema Kansai expressed his desire to visit St. Petersburg in the near future: *In 2017, the first steps of our cooperation with Polytechnic University were made. Today, within the framework of RAFU, more than 50 Russian universities are already ready to carry out joint scientific and educational activities and contribute to the strengthening of Russian-African cooperation. The open centers will become a real bridge, and even a springboard, for both countries for the successful development of bilateral partnership between our states.*

SPbPU expressed its readiness to assist in the development of the new Polytechnic University in Mali and joint development of modern educational programs in various technical areas. Memoranda of cooperation between the Russian-African Network University consortium and three new universities were signed: the Higher National School of Engineers in Bamako, the South Ural State Humanitarian and Pedagogical University, and the University of Sciences, Engineering and Technology of Bamako.



Within the framework of the 'Week of Russian Education and Science' in Mali, we have done a great job: we opened the Russian Language Center, the Pre-University Training Center, as well as the Information Center of SPbPU and RAFU. These centers will contribute to the development of joint scientific and project activities and the establishment of intercultural communication between our

countries. Our active work on the development of RAFU contributes to the accession of new participants — three universities have signed a memorandum of accession to the consortium. Polytechnic University plans to continue working on strengthening Russian-African educational interaction. In the coming months, we will take part in a number of events aimed, among other things, at attracting leading Russian and African universities and major industrial partners to RAFU, said Rector of SPbPU, Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences Andrei Rudskoi.

The events held in West Africa will significantly strengthen bilateral cooperation between our countries and open new prospects for quality training of well-qualified personnel for the Republic of Mali.