

Russian-African Network University: SPbPU summarizes the results of the year

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On December 21, SPbPU, as a coordinator of the Russian-African Network University consortium, convened a videoconference to summarize the results of its activities. The establishment of RAFU is aimed at ensuring sustainable development of the countries of the African continent. To meet the needs of the African economies, it is necessary to train well-qualified personnel, expand the access of students to modern technologies within the framework of educational programs and scientific and technological projects. In addition, an important factor is the involvement of industrial companies operating on the African continent in the training of specialists and the necessary technical expertise.



Representatives of the Russian RAFU members were welcomed by Dmitry Arseniev, Vice-Rector for International Affairs of SPbPU, and Sergey Terashkevich, Deputy Director of the International Cooperation Department of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

Within the framework of the RAFU consortium activities we see such important areas of cooperation as academic, industrial and governmental. It is this synergy of three directions that is the most effective for achieving real positive results of Russian-African cooperation in higher education and science, said Dmitry Arseniev. Speaking about academic cooperation, we have accumulated a lot of experience here. These are network programs of bachelor's, master's and specialist degrees. We are working on joint postgraduate programs. Polytechnic University together with nine universities participating in the consortium this year successfully implemented the programs of the RAFU Summer University and retraining programs for specialists.

A tremendous amount of work has been done this year. Participation of SPbPU [in the second](#)

[economic and humanitarian forum of the Russia-Africa Summit](#). Work of the RAFU Summer Multidisciplinary University in SPbPU, where 20 rectors and heads of universities of the Republic of Mali mastered the advanced training program «Digital Research Leadership». Polytechnic University hosted the first international youth festival «Africa in St. Petersburg», dedicated to the 60th anniversary of Africa Day. Our university took [part in the 5th international forum BRICS+](#), which was also held in St. Petersburg, where SPbPU signed agreements for new participants to join RAFU. Recently, a large-scale event «Days of Russian Language and Culture» was held in the Republics of [Senegal](#) and [Cote d'Ivoire](#), in which several Russian universities took part, as well as the opening of the centers of Russian language, pre-university training and [«Information Center of SPbPU and RAFU»](#) in the Republic of Mali. [The panel discussion «RAFU for sustainable development of African countries» was held at the 3rd Congress of Young Scientists in Sochi.](#)



Thank you for the work that has been done in the outgoing year. We have shown our willingness, readiness and skills in working in the African direction. And, perhaps, if some time ago Africa was perceived by us only through the prism of students coming to us, now we go there ourselves. During this year we have had several not only forums, but actual trips, which have resulted in a lot of work already done. We have visited a large number of countries during this time, and these trips were numerous, in several directions at once, by many universities, Sergey Terashkevich addressed the participants of the videoconference. There is still a lot of work to be done, all the more fortunate that Russian universities offer a wide range of specializations. Representatives of ministries, heads of African universities are ready to structure the education system in a new way, based on successful Russian practices. This is a very good stimulus for expanding the weight of our project, which has already gone beyond just educational programs.

Russian companies are currently implementing a number of projects in Africa in the fields of geological exploration, mining, agriculture and energy. Industrial facilities using Russian technologies are being built on the continent. This requires the training of qualified personnel and

scientific expertise. Russian industrial companies operate in Africa in about one hundred areas. These are operating industrial enterprises created on the basis of domestic design solutions, using domestic equipment, mainly in the raw materials, energy and telecommunications sectors.



Maxim Zalyvsky, Head of the RAFU Project Office, also noted the need to work in conjunction in several areas at once due to the fact that any activity of universities and industrial enterprises in Africa is coordinated and controlled by government agencies.

In Africa we observe a positive approach to Russia. On the one hand, for the Soviet Union's contribution to the development of education and medicine. On the other hand, for the obvious diplomatic efforts that our country makes in working with this or that country, Maxim Zalyvsky emphasized. For example, in ECOWAS countries interest in Russia and Russian culture is growing, and we should not miss this positive vector. Russia does not need raw material export potential in the form of many African countries, and we can provide Africa with some of the best technologies in terms of energy, hydropower, mining, information technology.

Alla Mazina, the moderator of the meeting, Deputy Head of the International Education Department, noted the successes of RAFU: *Today the number of Russian participants of the consortium has increased from 51 to 60. African participants — from 12 to 23 (they represent 7 countries of the continent). It is also planned to sign 7 agreements from 4 countries. Such growth of interested structures determines the development of the informational 'RAFU Digest', which is planned to be regularly published in three languages. Besides, we are thinking about the creation of a new structure of coordination of the consortium activity.*



Alla Mazina told in detail about the Russia-Africa Summer Multidisciplinary University, within the framework of which educational tracks in the field of ecology, climate, electric power, biotechnology, geological exploration, tourism, information systems, biomedicine, agriculture were implemented in 2023. At the current stage of development, the African continent is in urgent need of new professional staff with modern competencies in engineering, technical sciences and, in particular, specialists for prospecting and exploration of mineral resources.



Four new Russian participants signed an agreement on joining the RAFU consortium: Tambov State Technical University, Lomonosov Northern (Arctic) Federal University, Yugra State University, Plekhanov Russian University of Economics.



On the same day, face-to-face negotiations on cooperation between SPbPU and the National Institute of Medical Sciences of Bamako represented by Director General Bokari Dialo took place. The parties signed a memorandum on joining the RAFU of the National Institute.