

Nuclear technologies for sustainable development of African countries: SPbPU hosted a round table within the framework of the Russia-Africa summit

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On July 28, Polytechnic University hosted a roundtable discussion «Nuclear Technologies for Sustainable Development of the African Continent: the Role of Russian and Soviet Graduates» in the format of a business breakfast. The event was held as part of the second summit of the Russia-Africa Economic Aid and Humanitarian Forum. It was organized by Rosatom State Corporation, the Patrice Lumumba Peoples' Friendship University of Russia and Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University. Moderators of the event were: Dmitry Arseniev — Vice-Rector for International Affairs of Peter the Great St. Petersburg Polytechnic University; Alexander Tarasov — Vice-Rector for International Relations of the National Research University «MPEI»; Ngan Toni Francois — Head of the Association of Graduates of Russian (Soviet) Universities in Cameroon «Souzniki».



Innovations and technologies, especially in nuclear power, play a key role in shaping the modern world and have great potential to improve the quality of life of the population. Interaction with foreign graduates of Russian and Soviet universities educated in nuclear and related technologies contributes not only to the popularization of Russian education, but also to increasing interest in nuclear «clean» technologies. SPbPU is a key university in training students from the African continent, and our graduates successfully work as engineers at major energy enterprises in Africa. Addressing the audience, Rector of SPbPU A.I. Rudskoi reminded that SPbPU has become the coordinator of the Russian-African Network University until 2025 and our university is ready to make every effort to make RAFU gain strength.



We will take a new approach to this project — practice-oriented training, involving not only African and Russian universities, but also specialized high-tech enterprises, so that African students can undergo practical training and upon graduation go straight to work as engineers. I am confident that we will provide all industries and economies of the African continent with highly qualified personnel, including the most important one — nuclear power , said Andrei Rudskoi, Rector of SPbPU, Academician of the RAS. As the President of Russia noted the day before: ‘Africa is the territory of the future of the earth’. In 20 years, it will become the leading territory of economic and cultural development of our civilization. In African countries live people who are extremely talented, able to work, and, most importantly, who understand the value of civilized life.



The Russian-African Network University Consortium (RAFU) is a unified platform for the development of academic cooperation between Russian and African universities. The platform unites more than 40 Russian universities, 2 Russian research institutes, almost 20 African universities (Zimbabwe, Uganda, Mali) and one industrial partner.

New members joined RAFU at the Russia-Africa Summit. RAFU's mission is to create a unified educational space providing equal access to educational resources for all participants from different countries. During the discussion, many noted that the interaction between Russia and Africa should be built on the principle of «university — graduate — industry» both in education and in energy, medicine, agriculture and other areas.

According to Konstantin Mogilevsky, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of the RF, it is very important that the topic of nuclear technologies in education is one of the main trends of the forum and numerous discussions.



Energy independence is an important part of national sovereignty, emphasized the Deputy Minister. In the field of nuclear energy, Russia is a reliable partner for foreign friends and an absolute leader in the construction of nuclear power units. Rosatom Corporation is one of the key partners of the Ministry of Education and Science. In order to achieve the goals, set by the nuclear industry on the international track in the coming years, the industry will need thousands and thousands of specialists, both in Russia and Africa, as well as wherever they understand the efficiency and safety of nuclear power. And I think that all the foreign students who are studying now will find a job either with us or in their home countries. The creation of a network university (RAFU) contributes to the strengthening of cooperation with African countries, we are creating an educational hub that can be called a bridge of friendship.

Rossotrudnichestvo, a leading Russian agency whose main mission is to strengthen Russia's humanitarian influence in the world, plays an important role in the development of friendly and business relations. The organization is represented in 80 countries of the world by 87 foreign missions. Rossotrudnichestvo notes high interest in Russian education, including in Africa. In the last year alone, the volume of quotas for students from African countries to study in Russia has almost doubled. This year, 4,580 people are being selected.



According to Pavel Shevtsov, Deputy Head of Rossotrudnichestvo, there are now 10 centers of the agency operating in Africa: *People who want to study in Russia are coming there more and more often. They learn about Russian higher education from friends, relatives and acquaintances. They dream of learning the Russian language, they dream of getting into our universities. This is a vivid example of international humanitarian cooperation. We are developing the New Generation program. These are young people aged 20-25 who come to Russia. And this is not just a tourist trip. They get to know the country, find friends and business partners here, and build long-term relationships with various structures and organizations. We brought 87 African young people to the Russia-Africa summit.*



Ngan Toni Francois — Head of the Association of Graduates of Russian (Soviet) Universities in Cameroon «Souzniki», addressed the audience with a welcoming speech: *Dear participants of the roundtable, on behalf of myself and the alumni of Cameroon, I cordially welcome those gathered to discuss the important issue of the role of Russian and Soviet graduates in the development of African countries. I want to say that we are Russia's ambassadors in Africa. We have received Russian diplomas, gained knowledge and now we are ready to work for the benefit of our countries.*

The round table was held with the support of Rosatom State Corporation, which is creating a system of effective interaction between the state, universities and employers in the Russian nuclear industry. This is not the first event that brings together representatives of diplomatic missions and state authorities of foreign countries, Russian and foreign universities, graduates of Russian and Soviet universities, and international students on one platform.



Next year we celebrate an anniversary — 70 years of the first nuclear power plant. Over these 70 years, we have created a unique knowledge base, emphasized Valery Karezin, Educational Projects Director, Rosatom State Corporation. And we consider it our duty to share this knowledge with our partners. Cooperation with universities abroad is a top priority for Rosatom. We are always open to cooperation, and we are ready to support a wide variety of projects. And what I would like to draw attention to. It is very important for us that graduates find a job. The training system has no stock. After all, if they do not find a job, they go to another industry, and we lose them. So we have to work so that our graduates find their place in life.

To a large extent, the implementation of these plans is facilitated by the activities of ANO DPO Technical Academy of Rosatom. This is an organization that specializes in additional professional education, professional retraining of managers and specialists of nuclear power engineering and industry.



Our academy is a unique company that stands between the student and the industry, said Yury Seleznev, Rector of Rosatom Technical Academy. And I am very pleased to see here specialists from Egypt, who were trained here and will now work at Africa's first nuclear power plant, Ed Dabaa. We have been communicating with our Egyptian partners for three years. The experience we are gaining will be useful to us in our work with other African countries, not only in nuclear power, but also in nuclear technology and medicine. So welcome to our academy.

The development of international activities of Russian universities, popularization of Russian education in the world and involvement of associations of foreign students and graduates abroad in this important process are the key areas of work of universities at all stages of education and postgraduate education of representatives of different countries. The round table allowed not only to get acquainted with the successful experience of work of universities with foreign students and graduates, but also to determine the vector of further improvement of work, ensuring the continuity of generations, close cooperation of all stakeholders in providing and receiving quality education for future and present specialists of African countries.