

AFRICAN ASSOCIATION OF MIYAGI (AFAM)



SENDAI, JAPAN

REPORT ON AFAM-TOHOKU UNIVERSITY-ALUMNI PRESENTATION

The Tohoku University African Alumni Webinar was organized by the African Association of Miyagi (AFAM) to mark Tohoku University's 115th anniversary. The theme of the webinar was "AFRICAN ALUMNI VISION FOR AFRICA," and it took place on August 21, 2022, at 9 p.m. JST.

It is worth noting that this was a first-of-its-kind event for the African community. It was remarkable and successful, with truly inspirational presentations from four of our past and present AFAM members, all of whom graduated from Tohoku University. We had two Tohoku University professors in attendance, four Tohoku University African Alumni presenters, three other African Alumni who shared their thoughts, and over 80 participants from all over the world.

The event began with an opening speech from AFAM president, Dr Isaac Yaw Asiedu, who delivered a brief overview of the organization.

Professor Tetsuya Nagasaka, vice president for social outreach and research collaboration at Tohoku University, gave the opening remarks and expressed his happiness over the collaboration.

Professor Yumiko Watanabe, the coordinator of the Future Global Leadership (FGL) and Global Learning Center at Tohoku University, delivered a presentation about Tohoku University's programs and scholarship opportunities for international students. She expressed her delight at the increasing number of African students at Tohoku University and urged for more.

Ms. Selma Awumbila, a lawyer and Acting Legal Manager at Ghana Grid Company Ltd. in Ghana, gave the first presentation. She earned a master's degree in international environment and resource policy from Tohoku University's Graduate School of International Cultural Studies, where she also studied Human Security. She is currently a PhD student at Tohoku University Graduate School of Law, and her thesis is titled "Energy Poverty is Poverty: Applying the Rights-Based Approach to Energy Justice."

Her **vision for Africa** is for the **continent to be united in trade**, serving as a model for cross-border cooperation in an era of growing isolationism. She envisions that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) would be the world's largest free trade area since the formation of the World Trade Organization, bringing together all 55 African Union (AU) member states to cover a market of more than 1.2 billion people, including a growing middle class, and a combined GDP of \$2.6 trillion.

Furthermore, she **envisions the establishment of the West Africa Power Pool (WAPP)**, which would aid in the integration of West African countries' national power systems into a unified regional electricity market, with the ultimate goal of providing regular and reliable energy at a competitive cost to the citizens of the ECOWAS region in the medium and long term.

Dr. Emmanuel Jesuyon Dansu, a lecturer at the Federal University of Technology in Akure, Nigeria, gave the second presentation. He earned his PhD in Mathematical Biology from Tohoku University's Graduate School of Information Science.

His **vision for Africa** is to **strengthen ties between the Federal University of Technology in Akure, Nigeria, and Tohoku University**. He hopes that **Tohoku University's Future Global Leadership and exchange programs will be expanded to Africa**. He aspires to work with progressive Africans promote African solutions to African problems. He also hopes to bridge the bilateral knowledge gap that exists between Africa and the rest of the world.

Dr. Hamza Abdelli, a MEMS Design and Development Engineer at Silicon Microgravity in Cambridge, UK, gave the third presentation. Tohoku University awarded him a master's and PhD in Engineering.

“Connect-Reflect-Inspire-Share experiences” are the four main pillars of his **vision for Africa**.

He hopes to organize inspirational speeches and workshops to expose and orient the African young generation's talent. He is currently planning to organize seminars in the Algerian universities of Bumerdes, Bordj Bou Arréridj, and Oran.

Ms. Jemima Kibira, Executive Director of the Africa Women's Health Foundation in Kenya, gave the final presentation. Tohoku University awarded her a Master of Science in Palliative Nursing.

Her dedication to providing solution-based services that span **Agriculture, Technology, and Women empowerment** demonstrates her **vision for Africa**.

The audience listened with keen interest as the alumni shared their giant strides. Following the presentations, **Dr. Joshua Owoyemi, Dr. David Izuogu, and Ms. Agnes Lakudzala**—the other Tohoku University African Alumni—commended the presenters and shared their thoughts.

Subsequently, there was a panel discussion in which the audience discussed the following questions:

- How does/can our international learning experiences and mobility foster our vision for Africa?
- A lot of Africans who have studied/worked abroad do not return to Africa. How could we mobilize Africans or how could we encourage Africans in the diaspora to contribute to the development of Africa “in our vision for Africa”?

Finally, Dr. Ismail Issah, Vice President of AFAM, delivered closing remarks. He expressed his appreciation to all participants, both resource persons and presenters, and shared some inspirational words. The event ended at 11:00 p.m. JST.