

SPbPU at the first ministerial conference of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum

Polytechnic University took part in the first ministerial conference of the Russia-Africa Partnership Forum at Sirius University. The business program included panel sessions and thematic events on topical issues of the Russia-Africa agenda. Experts discussed food security and cooperation in the agro-industrial complex, geological exploration, digitalization, and training of personnel for the real sector of the economy. Sessions focused on cooperation in the spheres of education, healthcare and youth policy were also held.



SPbPU was represented by Maxim Zalyvsky, Head of the Project Office of the Russian-African Network University Consortium. He moderated the session «Prospects for Scientific and Educational Cooperation between Russia and Africa», which was attended by representatives of Russian and African ministries, Russian universities and RAS institutes as experts.



The main agenda of the discussion was the areas of cooperation between Russia and Africa in the field of education. Interest in higher education on the African continent has grown significantly over the past 20 years. The number of students in African higher education institutions has increased by about 30%, which testifies to the development of countries and their economies that require qualified personnel. The number of higher education institutions in Africa has doubled over this period to almost 2000 institutions in 54 countries. However, academic achievements remain limited: only 2.5% of the world's scientists are Africans and only 3.5% of academic publications are written by African researchers.



It is important to note that the African education market is undergoing significant changes and countries are actively involved in the internationalization process, especially in the context of student migration to study abroad. Over the past 20 years, the number of African students outside the continent has almost doubled and now stands at around 650,000-700,000 students.



African countries are in a situation of duality: on the one hand, a large number of graduates without employment, on the other hand, there is still a problem in the provision of quality education. Every year, according to Uganda's Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Monica Jane Musenero Masanza, Ugandan universities graduate about 40000 students, but the economy is still dependent on the export of raw materials and has a very low level of industrialization. As a result, despite having degrees, many graduates are unable to apply their knowledge and skills in their home country. Ms. Masanza is confident that Russia can play an important role in this direction, which is the anchor of interaction between Africa and the Russian Federation.



Polytechnic University actively cooperates with universities on the African continent, which is facilitated by the fact that we are coordinators of the consortium “Russian-African Network University”. Last year, together with other Russian universities participating in the RAFU, SPbPU organized the ‘Week of Russian Language and Culture’ in West African countries (Mali, Senegal, Cote D’Ivoire). We opened in Mali an information center of SPbPU and RAFU, as well as the SPbPU Russian Language Center. In early December we are planning a big visit to North Africa, where we will open another center in Morocco. These centers are an opportunity for African applicants wishing to get higher education in Russia to improve the quality of language training, make a more informed choice of future specialty, get information about Russian universities and enrollment procedures, grants and scholarships to study in Russia, shared Dmitry Arseniev, Vice-Rector for International Affairs of SPbPU.

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