

Good afternoon, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thank you Linda, and thank you Susana for introducing the programme.

It is a programme that British Council have designed to be different, in three very important ways.

Firstly, normal programmes define what is to be done, and simply tender for someone to do it. This programme has decided that we are surrounded by experts and knowledge, so why buy a dog and bark yourself? So we have asked partnerships of Sub Saharan universities, UK universities, and sub Saharan ecosystem players to tell us what needs to be done, in order to build a continent where Higher Education and the entrepreneurial ecosystem and symbiotic, supporting each other to the benefit of the economy and Africa's youth.

That leads me to the second difference. This is a learning programme, in the entrepreneurial sense. Because what we now have are 24 different projects happening over the next 11 months. Each addresses a different problem in a different way and thus each is a business experiment from which we hope we can all learn and find something to use.

Which brings me to my final difference. Most programmes, you get given a job, you get on with it, you deliver on your responsibility. This programme will create more than the sum of its parts, because we are building a community, a place where people can collaborate, learn from and support each other. An outcome I want, is for someone to come to me in 3 months' time and go 'Hey, Neil, we met those lovely people at, I don't know, Kenyatta University, and we've decided to do a project together and we're applying for a grant'... or some such. Working together, learning from each other, we've got everyone on a platform, and we want to create a new and powerful pan-African network.

So, we are a university driven, collaborative, learning programme.

And I am a lucky man. Because out of the 24 projects we have running in 4 countries, it falls to me this afternoon to introduce to you the nine, yes nine different projects that we have running in South Africa.

All the lovely people leading these projects are here to talk to you today, so I am going to step aside, get out of the way, and let these lovely people talk to you.

## Introductions

Lets start with

Durban University of Technology: Prof Sunday Ojo

University of the Free State: Deidre Van Rooyen

Mangosuthu University of Technology: Dr Mariam Akinlolu

Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT): Dr Michael Twum-Darko

University of the Witwatersrand Dr Robert Ventor

University of Johannesburg Dr Love Odion Idahosa

University of KwaZulu-Natal Dr Thea van der Westhuizen

Central University of Technology: Prof. Deon Johan de Beer

Stellenbosch University: Dr. Nico Elema with Josh Romisher, Henley Business School

## Other countries

What a fantastic set of projects. Thank you everyone. So looking forward to working with you and learning from you all over the next 11 months.

Whilst we are here, I need to just mention two things. First, we have a couple of South African organisations supporting projects elsewhere on the continent. Both

- Kwakye Donkor, Africa Tourism Partners (ATP), and
- Erika Kraemer-Mbula, University of Johannesburg

are supporting projects led in Kenya

And it would of course be remiss of me not to mention the other 15 projects we have going on in Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya.

I'll just mention a few highlights, such as Project Kenten, looking at how university logistics expertise can help reduce the 40% post-harvest losses from rural Ghana, Accelerating Youth Employability in Tourism in Kenya, which, as the name suggests, focusses on youth enterprise skills in the tourism industry to support the industry and job creation, and the Circular Plastic Economy Innovation Hub, which investigates how universities can drive a thriving ecosystem to support and develop waste to wealth ventures.

Lots going on. The projects are presently engaged in defining, researching and deepening their focus of investigation, and once they are all written up will share a document with you so you can see all 24 in all their glory 😊. That won't be long now.

Meanwhile, I'd like if I may to ask you a question, and to guide us through that I'll pass back to Linda.

[Linda leads: How can the IAU cooperate and support the South African universities and stakeholders? plus general questions]

Finally then, I'll put my contact details here in chat for anyone who would like to get in touch. My details are also in the conference brochure. Get in touch any way you like – I'm on email, phone, WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, I even have an old Skype account somewhere... And I'll be very much looking forward to hearing from you.

Thank you everyone for your time and patience this afternoon, and thanks to the EDHE team for the opportunity and their work in supporting this wonderful conference.