

## Visit to Nigeria (9-16 March 2018)

I was invited in my capacity as president of IAESTE A.s.b.l. to present a lecture at the second foundation day of the Federal University of Petroleum Resources in Effurun - FUPRE (Delta State Nigeria).

I arrived on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> in Abuja and on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> in Benin City where I was received at the airport by the National Secretary of IAESTE Nigeria, Otabor Ahanor Enyoze, together with two IAESTE trainees, Katharina Leeb and Marlene Lasser. Both of whom are doing their traineeships at the University of Benin. From there we went by road to Warri, the capital of the Delta State, a one-hour journey.

On Monday 12<sup>th</sup> I had meetings in Effurun (a town near to Warri where the university is located) with the Vice Chancellor of the University, Prof. Dr. Akii Ibhadoke and the Management team of the University. After presenting me to the participants at the meeting, the Vice Chancellor gave me a short history of the university. From my side I gave an overview of IAESTE.



The University was founded in 2007 by the government to develop research and technical experience in the management of their big natural resource, oil. As well as traditional engineering subjects, such as mechanical, chemical, electronic and electrical, they have also petroleum engineering. They are eager to send these students out for international training.



In the early afternoon we had an audience with the local King, Ovie n'Úvwie (King of Uvwie community). These are important people for the local community as they settle possible conflicts between the people of the community. The audience follows an interesting protocol, taking into account old traditions, including the gift of Kola nuts.

A dinner was held in the evening by the management of the University, giving an opportunity to have informal discussions with them.



The next day, Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> March, at 9:00 we had a press conference with the local press. They asked some questions about my visit, IAESTE, and the importance of the international traineeship in higher education.



At 10:00 we went in procession from the head office to the auditorium where the lecture of the second founders 'day was taking place. The ceremony started with the Nigerian National Anthem and the official song of the university. After presenting some important people in the audience (traditional chiefs of the different communities, professors of other universities and myself) I started the lecture with a presentation of IAESTE and its achievements during these 70 years, together with a view of future predictions based on the study by Sullivan and Frost. After speaking about the different kinds of traineeships observed by the study of the European Union, I emphasised the importance of international traineeships and the way we treat them in IAESTE. The presentation ended showing the future weight of Nigeria in the world economy, again based on the study of Sullivan and Frost.

After the lecture we were shown the practical achievements of the university's students, concluding with a cultural show where different traditional dance groups of the University performed for us.

In the afternoon we started our journey to Benin City. In the afternoon we had a meeting with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Benin, together with the management of the University. In the evening, the National Secretary of IAESTE Nigeria held a dinner where some employers were also invited, together with the AIESEC representatives in Benin city.



On Wednesday 14 March we travelled to Lagos where we had a meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Prof. AAA Atayero and the management of the Covenant University, a big private university that is very much interested in expanding its international activities and inviting foreign student to their campus. In the evening we were travelling to Abuja and at night we had a meeting with the President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, Eng. Adekunle Mokuolu. The next day we had an appointment with the Director General/CEO, Eng. Dr. Mohammed Jibirn and the National Board for Technology Incubation(NBTI) of the Federal Ministry of Science and Technology. Thereafter, we went to the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), where we had a meeting with the registrar, Eng. W.Kamila Maliki and his staff.



The whole programme was very well organised and all meetings were on time with the excellent management of the host organisation. The visit gave the impression that IAESTE Nigeria is very well connected and has a good future.

There seems to be a great interest in developing the IAESTE programme in Nigeria. The Universities are convinced that they need a stronger relationship with academic institutions outside of Nigeria and are eager to receive foreign students.

IAESTE Nigeria and its National Secretary seem to have broad support from their institutions. For the moment the numbers are limited but with the help of the authorities this can be expanded. The COREN in charge of the curriculum and auditing of the engineering programme in Nigeria are very interested in inviting us again to present our programme to an even broader audience.

Nigeria sometimes has bad press and is perhaps not so well understood in the rest of the world. As a result, students may not initially be attracted to it as a potential destination. More effort should be made to increase the visibility of Nigeria as an attractive country for our students to undertake their traineeships. The two IAESTE trainees I met seemed to be very happy with their experience and the way it has been organised. They promised me an article for our Annual Review.

Luxembourg, 19 March 2018

Prof. Bernard Baeyens