

Rwanda celebrates World Engineering Day

Kigali, March 4, 2022 - The Institution of Engineers Rwanda (IER) will on Friday March 4, 2022 join the global community of engineers to celebrate the World Engineering Day (WED), which will this year be celebrated under the theme; *Build Back Wiser. Engineering the Future.*

Dedicated by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), WED is an opportunity to celebrate engineering in general and the contribution of the world's engineers for a better, sustainable world.

In Rwanda, the day will be celebrated through a study tour by a delegation comprising members of the engineers' body to Kicukiro Centre where a modern flyover is being built as part of the Kicukiro Sonatubes-Gahanga-Akagera highway that is under construction.

Once completed, the flyover, which is part of the 13.8-kilometre dual carriage highway being built by Chinese firm – China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC) – will be one of the infrastructure marvels in Kigali.

Speaking about why they chose to visit this project, Eng. Gentil Kangaho, the Board Chairman of IER said: *“Part of our mandate as an institution is to enhance capacity among our members. Visiting such major infrastructure that is being undertaken by a foreign firm is to ensure our members draw inspiration and as we grow, we shall soon have our members taking on such projects.”*

Kangaho said that their mandate also entails lobbying their partners – especially government – for knowledge transfer especially on some of the major projects that are undertaken by foreign-based companies, to ensure that local engineers acquire skills from the foreign experts who are brought in to implement such projects.

Speaking about the global theme and how it relates to local engineers, Steven Sabiti, the Executive Secretary of the Institution of Engineers said that the world of engineering has greatly evolved over time, and that the global theme is a call for the engineering fraternity to think holistically whenever undertaking a project.

Sabiti said: *“It is basically a reminder that they need to go beyond the traditional drivers of engineering outcomes – quality, cost, time - to include environmental, social, and humanitarian impacts.”*

According to Sabiti, all these aspects are global in nature; they know no borders and affect every engineer in the world, including those in Rwanda.

Celebration of the World Engineering Day in Rwanda will also be an opportune moment to rally women to join the engineering profession. Women remain proportionally underrepresented in the field of engineering in the country.

Currently, there are 230 women engineers in Rwanda out of the over 2,500 registered members, which is a far cry from the national threshold of 30 per cent representation of women required in all sectors as prescribed for in the National Constitution of 2003 as amended in 2015.

Women representation in engineering even falls below the global average, which currently stands at 28 per cent.

According to Engineer Cecile Uwimana, a senior engineer with the institution, the Government of Rwanda has put a lot of effort in promoting science and technology and a lot has been done to embrace the equality, diversity, and inclusion policy in every sector of the country.

She however said that much effort must be put in raising awareness and inspiring ladies from STEM subjects to join the engineering profession.

Eng. Uwimana said: *“For instance, you find a good number of girls offering STEM subjects in high school but this number significantly drops when it comes to those who pursue engineering at university. It even further dwindles for graduates who eventually join the engineering profession.”*

“To inspire the future generation in engineering, as women in engineering, we must be role models, mentor our little sisters in the industry and share experience to let them know that it is possible to practise engineering as women. We have full support from our government, and we have history to share.”

About the Institution of Engineers Rwanda

Established in 2008, the Institution of Engineers Rwanda is a learned society of engineering profession with an aim to promote and develop professional engineering services and best practice for sustainable development of our country.

Following the establishment of the body, a legal framework governing and regulating the profession of engineering was passed in 2012, under Law No. 26/2012 of June 29th 2012.

Currently, the IER has over 2500 registered professional engineers licensed to operate in Rwanda.

The creation of the IER was in line with the government's commitment to place science at the centre of national development.

The engineering body is also used as a forum to harmonise engineering services and activities within the country, the East African Community through Mutual Recognition Agreement(MRA)and the world at large.