



## World Federation of Engineering Organisations (WFEO)

### President Speech

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2017 UNESCO-Africa Engineering Week featuring Africa Engineering Conference.  
Hosted by The Institution of Engineers Rwanda (IER) DATES: 25th -29th  
September 2017, VENUE: Kigali Convention Centre.



WFEO President, Jorge Spitalnik address to UNESCO AEW 2017, Kigali, Rwanda.

**(Presented on his behalf by WFEO Vice President and Chair of the Anti-Corruption Committee (CAC), Eng. Martin Manuhwa).**

May I take this opportunity to congratulate the Institution of Engineers Rwanda (IER), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations (UNESCO) and the Federation of Africa Engineering Organization (FAEO) on the occasion of the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>)°UNESCO Africa Engineering Week and Africa Engineering Conference (AEC) 2017. WFEO is honoured to be partner for the UNESCO Africa Engineering Week Initiative, an initiative led by UNESCO and WFEO, through its Standing Committees based in Africa

and FAEO. The first UNESCO African Engineering week took place in South Africa in 2014, the second in Zimbabwe in 2015, and the third was hosted by Nigeria in 2016.

The World Federation of Engineering Organisations, (WFEO) was established in 1968 under the auspices of UNESCO, WFEO has about 90 national members comprising of one engineering organisation per country and 11 international members among which the Federation of African Engineering Organisations (FAEO). WFEO represents some 20 million engineers from around the world whose collective wisdom can be utilised within Africa to be a collective guide on best practices on global standards, mobility, capacity building and education.

WFEO acts as the prominent voice of engineering in the world and provides advice to inspire positive dialogues between the engineering community and international bodies such as the UN, governments, civil society, and the private sector and as such, we place great value on partnerships and interactions. To this effect, WFEO conceived and structured the Africa Catalyst Project being carried out by the Royal Academy of Engineering (RAEng) under the financing support of the UK GCRF. The aim of GCRF Africa Catalyst is to strengthen professional engineering bodies in sub-Saharan Africa so that they can effectively promote the profession, share best practise and increase local engineering capacity, to help drive development.

The WFEO-UN Relations Committee (WURC) interfaces with different UN agencies especially in delivering the SDGs, and WFEO is represented in the UN High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development. We take note of the importance of the collaboration of engineering institutions and their governments and thank Rwanda for demonstrating such top-level sponsorship as evidenced by the presence of the Prime Minister who carried the message of His Excellence Paul Kagame, the President of Rwanda, and members of his cabinet especially the Minister of Infrastructure and several Ministers of State at this conference. A pleasing feature is some of the Ministers are

engineers. We also reiterate our support for the WFEO Abuja declaration for engineering capacity building, and the Africa Union and FAEO agreement of co-operation, which should see African governments and the African Union take a leading role in building engineering capacity in Africa.

WFEO is privileged to have three out of its ten WFEO standing committees hosted by African Countries, namely, the Women in Engineering hosted by Nigeria, the Engineering Capacity Building Committee hosted by South Africa, and the Anticorruption Committee hosted by Zimbabwe. These committees have done sterling work in furthering the goals of the Engineering profession, and we acknowledge and commend the efforts that they are doing in collaboration with partners in Africa, and indeed the rest of the World.

The aim of the Africa Engineering Week is to create a strong engineering community in Africa with robust links between Government, Industry and Academia. Engineering is pivotal to economic development and social wellbeing of all nations. As WFEO, we contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We also believe that it is more prudent to encourage students to study engineering through events like these and by “supplementing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) curriculum with practical engineering applications, and to incite more African countries to participate ensuring the sustainability of these efforts.” Engineering students should be exposed to career guidance and mentoring by seasoned engineering practitioners during the duration of this conference and indeed continuously via programmes by professional engineering organisations and their partners.

The visibility of engineering must be enhanced further by encouraging African Governments to support research and training opportunities for the next generation of engineers that will deliver innovative solutions (e.g. sound waste management systems) to society’s problems. The knowledge exchanged will be of the highest quality and of strategic and high technical level to offer the unique opportunity to meet local and international experts to discuss engineering developments in waste management.

WFEO would also like to endorse this year's theme **"Effective Waste Management in Africa"** which gives a clarion call for Africa to leap frog in its waste management and infrastructure delivery programmes to solve the challenges faced as a continent. It is our view that the critical decisions being made in infrastructure investment require suitable professional advice, as early as possible and considering the full cycle of the infrastructure asset. There is now a greater expectation to do more with less; to be more creative and innovative; to maximise the solutions available; to offer SMART infrastructure that is more responsive to the needs of society. The theme is therefore, very relevant for disseminating and sharing of engineering knowledge, innovations, and solutions and promotion of engineering in general.

I also applaud the concept of the Africa Engineering Conference, intended to bring together partners throughout Africa, to support and drive capacity and competence building projects, using mainly resources from the African continent. This would indeed form part of the solution to support the goals for effective waste management within Africa, by ensuring that we work together to build a pipeline of Engineering Professionals of a world-class standard. Due to the wide range of issues to be discussed, the conference is of interest to engineers, consultants, educational institutions, industrialists, manufacturers, economists, development specialists, policy makers, Government bodies, Students and society in general. I am told this year's edition of the AEW will attract about, "1,000 participants providing an excellent opportunity for exchanging of ideas to the engineering fraternity in Africa and beyond and the hosting Institution in particular." Waste management is of major interest to WFEO especially the management of the disposal of industrial and mining waste and electronic gadgets dumping.

We believe that a quick turnaround for Africa's development agenda can be achieved through investment into infrastructure, building and construction industries. There is immediate benefit to the economy at both national and individual levels. Our perspective is that the reconstruction and development process in Africa should be integrally linked

to the reconstruction and development of the economies. We see the Africa Engineering Week as a rare opportunity for all stakeholders in Africa to recommit to a vision of a transformed industry contributing towards the realization of national social and economic goals.

It is my hope that participants of the conference shall benefit through excellent presentations and discussions on waste Management in Africa. Good policies, practices, and sound engineering hold solutions on how waste can be a valuable resource. With rational and consistent waste management practices, there shall be opportunity to reap a range of economic, social, environmental and other benefits. Reusing and recycling and reducing waste, and minimizing resource extraction can provide improved air and water quality and help mitigating the effects of climate change. Following effective waste management practices can provide subsequent generations a more robust economy, a fairer and more inclusive society and a cleaner environment.

May I also take this opportunity to invite all African Engineering Organisations that have not yet to joined FAEO and WFEO to do so and those that are members to be as active as possible in order as to make Africa's voice bigger and greater in WFEO. Once again, I applaud UNESCO, FAEO and IER for the fantastic hosting of this year's event; I wish all the delegates the best during this very crucial fourth edition of the Africa Engineering Week.

I thank you all for your kind attention.