

Mr Richard Weyers, Director, British Council, Uganda. Opening remarks: Abstract.

Mr. Weyers, Director British Council Uganda, started by quoting Professor Calestous Juma as he received his election to the Royal Society in London: "What Africa needs is to invest in scientific capacity to harness knowledge and put it to commercial use. Most of the technical knowledge needed to solve Africa's problems exists somewhere in the world". Mr. Weyers commended UNCST for initiating National Science Week. He also commended the Government of Uganda and World Bank on the Millennium Science Initiative, the most exciting science initiative to happen in East Africa for at least a generation. He described two British Council programmes which support the scientific community in developing countries: Development Partners in Higher Education (DELPHE), a DFID funded, British Council administered programme to link universities across developing countries and the UK for the purposes of developing applied research and curriculum development. Africa Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (AKTP) is a British Council programme bringing the private sector together with universities to transfer technology and innovation. AKTP is focussed on the demands of companies which identify opportunities requiring scientific inputs from higher education, and the vehicle for the technology transfer is a young graduate who works within the company for 2 years supported by a partner university and by the British Council through learning & development. The programme, pioneered in Uganda is running in Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria.

Mr Weyers asked participants to understand the position of policy makers, particularly politicians who in developing countries are committed to achieving the Millennium Development Goals as a priority. A challenge for this conference was to convince these policy makers that the MDGs can only be achieved with the full involvement of applied science and that therefore investments in the infrastructure of innovation are justified in terms of achieving the MDGs.

Finally he urged participants to remember that science and innovation are about people, not printed circuit boards or molecules. Human resource development is crucial to ensuring that science is applied to the generation of wealth and to economic development. To this end the British Council had contributed a 2 day *Interaction* transformational leadership programme immediately preceding the symposium, for 39 of the Symposium participants. He finished by saying that leadership and scientific innovation are a powerful combination which can transform societies. We need scientists who can lead to effect positive change"