

Feature article

China attaches great importance to South-South cooperation and through its largest research body, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS), it has increased its collaboration with many other developing countries by means of scientific exchange, research cooperation and fellowship programmes. One of the most successful fellowship programmes has proved to be the CAS-TWAS programme that awards up to 50 postgraduate, post-doctoral and advanced research fellowships a year, tenable at more than 90 CAS institutes throughout China.

The programme, inaugurated in 2004, has seen more than one hundred scientists from developing countries around the world visiting us. The great success of the programme, administered by both CAS and TWAS, can be attributed to the excellent cooperation and strong support from the host research institutions in China and the generous assistance provided by the host supervisors directly to the visiting scientists. Improved scientific research, knowledge-sharing, the opportunity to use cutting-edge technology and enlightened multicultural cooperation are only some of the benefits of this programme – a programme that CAS would like to enlarge over the next few years by increasing the number of fellowships available.

I believe that, with its steady economic development and the advances it is making in science, technology and education, China should continue to increase its contributions to the world and to the developing world in particular. As I mentioned at the CAS annual strategic roundtable meeting in Beijing earlier this year, I believe efforts to help developing countries increase their science and technology capabilities have more long-term benefits than the usual foreign aid projects, and that our collaboration with TWAS has given us the opportunity to demonstrate this. Isaac Asimov, the science fiction writer, once said: "There is a single light of science, and to

brighten it anywhere is to brighten it everywhere." Just think, then, of the impact that a programme such as the CAS-TWAS fellowship programme can have when it is attempting to brighten the light of science across our globe.



Prof. Dr-Ing. Lu Yongxiang

President, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS)

Awardee article and snapshot

Coming to China: A Remarkable Experience.

Olugbenga A. Ehinola, Nigeria, CAS-TWAS postdoctoral fellow from the Department of Geology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria visited the Multiphase Reaction Laboratory, Institute of Process Engineering, Beijing and tells us of his experience there:

I knew little about China in terms of its language, culture and technology until I was awarded a CAS-TWAS postdoctoral fellowship in 2005. Thanks to the award, I lived in Beijing for a year and quickly discovered that the Chinese language is complicated to newcomers and that the letters could not be easily comprehended. However, I registered for online teaching and managed to make tremendous progress in speaking some basic Chinese words. Thanks to the wonderful and memorable lectures of my Chinese language teachers, Yi Jun, XiaoHong Tang, Wang Wei, Feng Rui, Amanda, Cao Yang, Meng Nan and Li Wei, I can now go alone to a restaurant and order food without any problem. During my stay, I visited the Great Wall, the Forbidden City and other cultural sites. I was amazed at their remarkable state of preservation and beauty. I also participated in some cultural activities during the Spring Festival (Chinese New Year) and the national day in my host institute where I thrilled the audience with African juju music and dance.

My research experiences – the main reason I was in China – were very interesting, too. Thanks to the excellent facilities available at the Institute of Process Engineering I was able to identify some new research directions.



Dr. Ehinola (centre) with his wife and Madame Fu, Director, TWAS Regional Office for East and South-East Asia and the Pacific, Beijing.

For example, I was introduced to solid oxide fuel cells, which are environmentally friendly sources of energy. I also learned some computational modelling on the thermodynamics of mineral resources and carried out some experimental

verification of my results. I also had the opportunity to attend conferences and seminars where I met international colleagues and established what I hope will become long-term professional relationships. Finally, I admit that I now understand my scientific discipline better in a global context.

Initially I was lonely but Chinese people are generally friendly and helpful and my list of friends soon skyrocketed from just a few to many. I also lay claim to having a Chinese extended family that includes Prof. Lin Jian Xiang (grandfather) and Henry Zhao (father) with their wives as my grandmother and mother respectively, and Prof. Qinshan Zhu (my host supervisor) and Drs. Zhang, Zhxie and Huang as my siblings and cousins.

Once again, I thank CAS and TWAS for providing me with the opportunity to both advance my career as a scientist in my home country and to have these remarkable experiences.

Programme News

• **Nigeria-Brazil Collaboration.** Thanks to the efforts of Ayodele Ajayi, a TWAS-CNPq postdoctoral fellow at the *Universidade Federal de Lavras* (UFLA), Brazil, a team from his home institution, the Federal University of Technology, Akure Nigeria (FUTA), led by the vice chancellor, Adebisi Balogun, Biyi Daramola (director, international linkages) and Babatunde Ajayi, embarked on a visit to UFLA and the University of São Paulo. The purpose of the visit was to explore the opportunities for academic and research collaboration. A memorandum of understanding was signed between the universities and covers degree programmes for undergraduate students, sandwich programmes for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, staff exchange (academic, technical and administrative), joint research projects and technology transfer between FUTA and the Brazilian universities. Moacir Dias Junior, Ajayi's host supervisor at UFLA, was appointed coordinator of FUTA-UFLA linkage programme and is now soliciting the support of international donor agencies to strengthen this South-South collaboration. For more information contact: Moacir Dias Junior at msouzadj@ufla.br.

News from TWAS

• **International Workshop on Cities, Science and Sustainability.** An international workshop examining successful approaches to 'cities, science and sustainability' will be held at TWAS's headquarters in Trieste, Italy, from 20 to 22 September 2007. Some 120 institutions in developing countries have responded to the call for submission of successful initiatives that highlight how science and technology can help solve problems of sustainability associated with large urban areas, including access to safe drinking water, sanitation, air pollution, housing and construction, land use planning, transport, traffic congestion and waste disposal in a city in the developing world. Eighteen of these initiatives will be presented at the workshop. For more information visit: www.twas.org.

• **Third World Organization for Women in Science (TWOWS) Workshop on Women in Science.** The workshop, organized by TWOWS in conjunction with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) and TWAS, was held in Beijing on 16-17 August 2007. Scholars from more than a dozen developing countries gathered in Beijing to address issues concerning women in science and technology, including careers for women in science, ways to attract women into scientific careers, factors behind the success of women scientists and ways to encourage the understanding and use of scientific knowledge by women in rural areas.



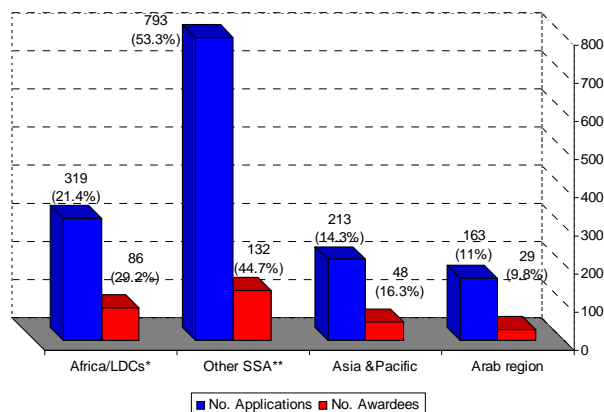
From the left: G. Tayo (Nigeria), I. Mahmood (Pakistan), Madame Fu (CAS) and N. Shirchinnamjil (Mongolia).

to encourage the understanding and use of scientific knowledge by women in rural areas.

The meeting was also attended by a number of TWAS Fellowships grantees (see picture). TWOWS offers a number of postgraduate fellowships each year to support young women scientists from developing countries who wish to pursue a PhD in a field of natural sciences. For more information on TWOWS and the fellowship programme see: www.twows.org.

TWOWS Fellowships in numbers

TWOWS Postgraduate Fellowships: Applications and Awards (1998-2007)



*LDC: Least Developed Countries; **SSA: Sub-Saharan African countries.

Other opportunities

• **The Third International Conference on Industrial Electronics, Technology & Automation (IETA 2007).** IETA 2007 provides a virtual forum on the state-of-the-art research on computers, information and systems sciences. It is one of the sub-conferences in the Computer, Information, and Systems Sciences, and Engineering (CISSE) series of international joint e-conferences. CISSE is the world's first engineering/computing and systems research e-conference. Prospective authors are invited to submit full papers electronically through the conference website. For complete details see: www.cisse2007online.org.

• **The Life Sciences Mobility Portal from the European Molecular Biology Organization (EMBO)** offers searchable databases of grants, courses, scientific partners for collaboration and jobs. The site also includes stories from postdoctoral fellows who made the move from one country to another, following a recent competition for the best stories. These often very personal stories provide a broad range of views and experiences in Europe and in the USA. For details see: mobility.embo.org.

Upcoming 2007 Deadlines

• 1 October: TWAS Fellowship for Research and Advanced Training. To download the application form see: www.twas.org/Exchange.

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Reminder to awardees: Please send us your photos!