

Renewable Energy researchers converge at Makerere University for Annual Meeting

Academicians and graduate students researching on renewable energy met at Makerere University from the 17th to 18th September 2018 for their EnPe 5th annual meeting hosted by the Department of Physics – College of Natural Sciences (CoNAS). The participants were drawn from Makerere University; University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania; Mekelle University, Ethiopia; NTNU at Trondheim, Norway and Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique. The universities are collaborating on the EnPe: Capacity Building in Renewable Energy Education and Research project funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

The project running from 2014-2019 has its overall goal as 'to build capacity in renewable energy education and research'. The main research in Makerere is focused on developing solar thermal energy storage systems with cooking applications. Dr. Karidewa Nyeinga, a lecturer in the Department of Physics coordinates the project at Makerere.

Officially opening the meeting, Prof. Tumps Ireetta (Head, Department of Physics at Makerere) said, 'this project has been quiet helpful to the department in terms of capacity building and training for our staff and we are very grateful to the funding partners, NORAD'. He reiterated that new knowledge and publications have been realised from the research undertaken by staff in the department.

Prof. Mulu based at Mekelle University in Ethiopia thanked Makerere University for hosting the meeting and noted that the project has delivered with the work accomplished by academic staff and graduate students. He further said, 'It is important for us to consider the benefits of the collaboration on the project, benefits to the partners among the many positives realised. 2017 was a good year for project and it is my hope that 2018 will be the same'. He advised the graduate students attending the meeting to use the presence of senior colleagues for consultations which will enrich their work.

The students presented progress of their work and all are on track to complete their PhDs and Masters on time. The students were also equipped with entrepreneurship skills during trainings conducted as part of the annual meeting. It is the hope of the coordinators at the collaborating universities that, 'PhD and Masters students can use the entrepreneur skills gained to start businesses from their research'.

The meeting participants also discussed engendering the recruitment of students for the project and fit-for-purpose Masters curriculum.