

**UNESCO-WFEO Conference for Member States held at UNESCO H/Q in  
Paris on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

**Report by Raj H Prayag GOSK PDSM FIEM, President of the Institution of Engineers,  
Mauritius**

At the invitation of WFEO/UNESCO, IEM's President attended the UNESCO-WFEO Conference for Member States on Wednesday the 26<sup>th</sup> October and on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> October 2022 participated as a panellist for the discussions on Engineering as a lever to achieve UNESCO's priorities for Africa and SIDS:

On the 26<sup>th</sup> October RHP, attended various committee meetings 1) Committee of the Chairs of various WFEO committees, 2) Committee of membership, 3) Education committee and 4) the Finance committee.

During the Education committee, African Countries, led by the WFEO President Elect Mustafa Shehu and Martin Manuah of Zambia and past President of DAFEO, raised their voices regarding the complex and arduous procedures in place for joining Washington Accord and requested for relaxation of these.

However, there was consensus that there was a need to have a degree standard that all should endeavour to aim for, so as to enable mutual recognition and facilitate professional engineers' movement across borders. It was conceded that the National laws should prevail and any requirements regarding engineering practice should be observed in the respective countries.

On the other hand, it was stated that many African Countries are aspiring to become members of WA. Kenya, which had come with a strong delegation of 6 members to apply to become an affiliate member of WFEO informed the meeting that it was being mentored by Malaysia and Pakistan for the WA.

Many representatives from were very keen to hear from Mauritius about its state of preparedness for WA.

In this regard Dr. Marlene Kanga had repeatedly made mention of the mentoring being provided to Mauritius by the WFEO Education committee with the assistance of ECSA and NBA.

In the margin of the meeting Mr. Jean Dambreville of IESF (société des ingénieurs et scientifiques de France) had a meeting with me with regard to renewing the collaboration between the French Engineers of France with IEM.

**The theme of the third Session 3 was- *Mobilizing Engineers for UNESCO Member States' Priorities***

**Session 3** – The panel for the Mobilizing Engineers for UNESCO Member States' Priorities was moderated by Dr. Amal Kasry, Chief of Section, Basic Science, Research Innovation and Engineering, UNESCO

This session was a Roundtable discussion with the theme of **Engineering as a lever to achieve UNESCO's priorities for Africa and SIDS:**

The international Invited panel members were: 1) Raj Hemansing Prayag, President, Institution of Engineers of Mauritius, 2) Yetunde Holloway, Chair, WFEO Women in Engineering committee, and 3) Soichiro Yasukawa, Chief of Disaster Risk Reduction Unit, UNESCO

I made a PPT presentation on the challenges posed by the pandemic, compounded by Climate Change. I spoke on how both Africa and SIDS were handicapped because of lack of internet coverage over large areas to communicate and also to organise help. Communications via internet and also on the ground proved to be major obstacles. This was exacerbated by the fact that they could not compete for vaccines at the beginning of the COVID outbreak and were thus last in the queue to get vaccines. The other challenge was to maintain the vaccine at a given temperature and that meant having electricity supply. In many cases the vaccines were nearing expiry date for use.

Concerning Climate Change, SIDS having the most sensitive ecosystems are due to suffer the most and providing mitigative and adaptation measures are taking away the limited resources from important human development budgets such as building hospitals/schools and communication infrastructures. Regarding SIDS, their major concerns are water security, food security, reliable and resilient infrastructures, salination of aquifers, erosion of coastal areas.

The presentation drew lots of interest at the Q&A time.

**Bilateral meeting UNESCO and IEM**

During discussions between Dr. Amal Kasry, Chief of Section, Basic Science, Research Innovation and Engineering, UNESCO and Raj H Prayag of IEM, there was an agreement in principle to firm up the collaboration between UNESCO and IEM on specific projects that would be high on the priority list of SIDS. It was agreed that UNESCO and IEM will follow up on this.

Furthermore, IEM was requested to propose projects for consideration and funding by UNESCO. Education oriented projects including workshops with a regional bias will be favourably considered.

## **Useful contacts established for future communications and follow ups.**

I must say that the invitation for me to attend the UNESCO/WFEO meeting was the idea of Dr. Marlene Kanga, Past President of WFEO and Chair of the Education WFEO/UNESCO committee, who wanted to provide visibility for IEM at global level. She was quite pleased to talk about the mentoring that her team is doing to help Mauritius to attain the status of WA membership.

Valuable meetings held in the margin of this UNESCO/WFEO meeting:

Dr Kanga introduced me to

**(1) the WFEO ,present President Prof Dr. Jose Vieira**

**(2) Prof Gong Ke, the immediate Past President of WFEO**

I had meetings with the following personalities with a view for IEM to engage with them in the future to enhance IEM's image and as a potential player at international level.

**3) Eng Ignacio Glez.-Castelao Mtnez.-Peñuela ([icastelao@ceig.eu](mailto:icastelao@ceig.eu)) is the International Relation person of the Instituto de la Ingenieria de Espana and Chairman of the WFEO Water Committee.** I expressed my concern about water security in SIDS and in particular in Mauritius where policy makers are talking of desalination plants which are neither sustainable nor environmentally friendly. We agreed that IEM will write to him to express our concerns and engage in discussions.

Below is email received from Mtnez Penuela on 31.11.2022

*<Dear Eng. Raj Prayag,*

*It was also a pleasure to meet you at UNESCO meeting in Paris.*

*I hope you have a safe trip back home.*

*I share your concern about water security in East Africa and SIDS*

*You can count on my support for any initiative in which you believe the participation of the WFEO water committee is appropriate.*

*Best regards*

*Ignacio>*

4) Jean Dambreville of IESF (société des ingénieurs et scientifiques de France) is the one who found me as he had been requested by Engineers from Reunion to establish contact with IEM. He informed me that the Engineers from Reunion , members of IESF, are very keen to renew relationship that existed between IEM and SOFIUM in the past. I have now the email address of the President, Vice-President and another member of Reunion IEST.

I reproduce hereunder the email that Jean sent me:

*Frédéric, Céline, Jany,*

*Je vous transmets comme convenu hier les coordonnées de Raj Prayag que j'ai rencontré hier à l'UNESCO au meeting de la FMOI.*

*La collaboration régionale entre nos îles me semble une excellente opportunité et la prise de responsabilité de Raj au niveau de la collaboration des organisations d'ingénieurs panafricaines peut également permettre des ouvertures intéressantes.*

*Pour Raj :*

- *Frédéric Rougemont est le président d'IESF Réunion ;*
- *Céline Bolaky est la vice-présidente ;*
- *Jany Cardia est le trésorier.*

*Je vous souhaite de bons échanges,*

**Jean DAMBREVILLE**

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**I have followed up with IESF of Reunion through an email dated 3.11.22**

**5) Meeting with the Kenya delegation** consisting of 6 members, Eng Erastus K Mwangera FIEK Chairperson of Engineers Board of Kenya, Eng Margaret N. Ogai CE Registrar/CEO;

Here the Kenyan delegation was very interested with IEM's state of preparedness to join WA and expressed the wish to engage with IEM

**6) Prof Shankar M Krishnan, President International Federation for medical and biological Engineering.** He asked me to advise him when we have our national conferences as he would be keen to participate and bring medical and biological engineering to the table.

**7) Er Tan Seng Chuan of the Institution of Engineers Singapore** ins the chair of the Membership committee. I raised the issue of payment of annual subscription which poses a problem for African and SIDS members, He said that WFEO has a policy of finding a solution for such cases

**8) Dr.Wael R Abdulmajeed of the Iraqi Engineers Union** and representing the Baghdad Branch of the American Society for Engineering Education.

**9) I had a formal meeting with Dr Amal Kasry, Chief of Section, Basic Science, Research Innovation and Engineering, UNESCO** on the 27.10.22 in her office. She indicated that she would welcome any proposals to run educational programmes.

**10. meeting with Simon Klein of OCE, Ocean Climate Education division of UN** who will be running the 22-24 November 2022 training of trainers of Teachers workshop at MIE (Mauritius)