

THE BELT AND ROAD UNIVERSITY PRESIDENTS FORUM (BUCT*2017)

**Education, Science and Technology,
Cooperation**



**HELD AT THE
BEIJING UNIVERSITY OF CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY (BUCT)**

6-7 DEC, 2017

The Belt and Road University Presidents Forum (BUCT*2017)

Meeting Report

December 6-7, 2017. BUCT. Beijing, China



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI



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The Belt and Road University Presidents Forum (BUCT*2017)

Report Compiled by

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Preamble

The University of Nairobi Vice Chancellor, Prof. Peter M. F. Mbithi participated in the Belt and Road University President's forum that was held at the Beijing University of Chemical Technology (BUCT) on 6 – 7 December, 2017. Presidents of over 30 Universities across the globe and representatives from Chinese companies exchanged ideas on how to maximize on the opportunities brought about by the Road and Belt Initiative unveiled by China's President, Xi Jinping.

The Belt and Road initiative is part of China's answer to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal, a regional trade pact involving Pacific Rim countries, but excluding China. The Silk Road initiative aims to boost China's global leadership ambitions by expanding the links between Asia, Africa, Europe and beyond. The Belt and road initiative is an outcome of president Xi Jinping's component of socialism in a new era. It places a new path for china to engage in global collaborations. Over 80 international organizations and 140 countries have supported the belt and road initiative and incorporated belt and road activities. Resource sharing and innovative synergies are of great importance to achieve this.

The Belt and Road initiative is aimed at promoting global governance and building a bridge for people to people connectivity. BUCT seeks to follow the principles of peace, cooperation and collaborations with research Universities and institutions to build the road and belt initiative.

Speaking during the forum, Prof. Wang Fang, the Chair of the University Affairs Council at BUCT indicated that this was the first belt and road for University Presidents (Vice Chancellors). She further pointed out that the aim of the forum was to promote cooperation among countries within the belt and road in order to build a shared community for mankind, share experiences and offer talent and technical support.

It is expected that through this initiative, an education action map for the belt and road initiative will be developed. This will include mutual learning, mutual benefit, talent cultivation, people to people exchanges, bilateral and multilateral collaborations and regional collaborations for the education sector.

In his speech titled '*Developing Skilled Workforce in Africa for Belt and Road Initiative through Sino-African Partnership*', Prof. Peter Mbithi indicated that there is urgent need to address African Skills shortage particularly in areas of technical education, engineering, science and technology if the Belt & Road Initiative is to be successful. . He further said that it is imperative to invest in the capacity building of African higher education institutions particularly in infrastructure, curriculum and laboratory equipment. A Capacity Building program of African Higher Institutions is critical to help break the three development bottlenecks; backward infrastructure, talent shortage and inadequate funds.

Prof. Wang Hui-Deputy Director-Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges, Ministry of Education in China maintained that countries should make use of benefits like geographical advantages, scholarship programs, advance human resource training and capacity development to develop based on their own unique advantages, to innovate mechanisms and platforms for institutional innovations and to conduct training of international students. Co-building and sharing culture and sustainable development models is also critical for universities to reveal their potential, establish scientific research zones, share outcomes of research and get synergies. To achieve this, peace, prosperity, openness and innovation must be achieved.

Therefore, if the Belt and Road initiative is to be realized, there is need for Universities along the Silk Road to establish an educational cooperation platform to promote extensive scientific research cooperation among other areas of collaboration to boost Higher Education standards worldwide.

EMERGING KEY ISSUES

The following were the guest speakers during the opening ceremony of the forum.

GUEST SPEAKERS

Prof. Wang Fang-Chair of the University Affairs Council – Welcome Speech;

Ms. Wang Hui-Deputy Director, Department of International Cooperation and Exchanges, Ministry of Education – Address;

Mr. Liu Jianxing-Deputy Director, International Cooperation Center, National Development and Reform Commission – Address;

Mr. Li Chuansheng, Deputy Secretary General, China Education Association for International Exchange – Address;

Mr. Masood Khalid-Ambassador, Embassy of Islamic Republic of Pakistan-Address;

Mr. Majed A. Al-Sanei-Representative of Aramco Asia

The following key issues emerged from the speeches

1. The Belt and Road initiative is a roadmap for China's education to move to the centre of world education and international cooperation;
2. People to people exchanges are of key importance for the realization of the Belt and Road initiative;
3. The Belt and Road initiative highly encourages International co-operations and a win-win situation for all parties involved;
4. Countries must make use of gains like geographical advantages, scholarship programs, advance human resource training and capacity development;
5. There is need to develop new platforms for cooperation between China and international universities and modernization of mechanisms and platforms for institutional innovations and training of international students;
6. Co-building and sharing culture is critical. This calls for a sustainable development model to reveal the Universities' potential, scientific research zones, research outcomes and identify synergies for potential collaborations;
7. To achieve the expected outcomes of the belt and road initiative, peace, prosperity, openness, creativity and innovation are vita;
8. The initiative enhances talent exchanges, increases mobility of higher education programs, encourages sharing of research outcomes in key areas of cooperation and promotes a community of shared culture for humanity;
9. The initiative offers an opportunity to enhance innovation to have open pattern of interaction home and abroad;

10. Universities need to build the community of education of belt and road-cultural diversification, internationalization, sharing, inclusiveness, connectivity, economic development, prosperity of mankind, mutual learning, improve education quality of international programs, build overall management systems and optimize the structure of international programs;
11. This also calls for people-to-people exchanges, a bridge to people in a bid to strengthen people exchanges through education. This will lead to the development of common communities of shared future, people's affections and mutual learning. The new actions for new era are guided by the road and belt initiative;
12. The Road and Belt Initiative is a valuable platform in promoting educational linkages and cooperation. This is a model of interregional integration and cooperation, people to people connectivity and institutions of higher learning have a big role to play;
13. Universities and colleges serve to foster a sense of inclusion, tolerance and cultural diversity. The process of mutual learning is not unidirectional.
14. The global economy is undergoing transformations with focus on innovation and green technology. Institutions of higher learning must embrace this.

OUTCOMES OF THE FORUM

The University President's discussed the following topics as a way of wrapping up the forum and proposed points on how to improve on the Strategic Cooperation exchanges between China and other countries along the Belt and Road.

Topics of discussion

1. **Improve the quality and build the cooperation mode of study-in-China education;**
Refine the course construction and establish the quality standard. Enhance internationalization level of teachers. Promote the exchange and two-way joint students training of students and mutual recognition of credit.
2. **Promote the internationalization of education in colleges and universities;**
The size and quality of international students, the exchange of visits by academic staff and the cooperation platform for industry and research.
3. **Promote the cooperation in scientific research and international capacity cooperation;**
Talent cultivation international cooperation platform, industry-university-research international cooperation platform and the students' employment and sustainable development platform
4. **Service for Chinese and foreign enterprises "Going Out" and "Bringing In" strategy;**
Technology R&D International Cooperation Platform and Technology Transfer International Cooperation Platform.
5. **Service for the cultural exchange between China and foreign countries;**
Set up short-term culture exchange programs, enhance the understanding of students from different countries and promote cultural identity and integration.

The following suggestions were given with reference to the topics above.

1. Universities should have concrete student Academic exchange programs such as Summer Programs.
2. On Scientific Research Cooperation, Universities must be precise on how to transfer technology and knowledge;
3. There should be exchange visits by a delegation of professors to different countries;
4. Universities must consider some type of standards for the care and hosting of international students;
5. On collaborating centres, each country and university represented could be a collaborating hub for all Universities;
6. Represented universities at the forum to form one website/platform on student exchange programs and visiting professors programs;
7. It is also important to have an international accreditation system;
8. Partnerships should also be made with industry partners who could mentor and mold students, offer internship and scholarship opportunities.
9. There should be more future forums for universities to explore areas of collaboration in setting up joint research centres.

MEETING WITH TSINGHUA UNIVERSITY –EXPLORING POTENTIAL AREAS OF COLLABORATION

FRIDAY DECEMBER 8, 2017 9.00 A.M – 12.00. P.M

DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Hosted by – Prof. Dr. Haiyan ZHAO
Vice-Chair
Department of Mechanical Engineering
Tsinghua University
Email: hyzhao@tsinghua.edu.cn

DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Hosted by – Prof. Wu Ji
Vice-Chairman
Department of Electronic Engineering
Tsinghua University
Email: wuji_ee@tsinghua.edu.cn

Potential areas of collaboration with the Department of Mechanical Engineering discussed include:

1. Leveraging on development of a joint curriculum for common courses;
2. Developing capacities of academic staff in a bid to respond to global challenges;
3. Culture immersion programs such as Student Exchange and Summer school;
4. PhDs and Masters training;

5. Staff mobility, faculty exchange and participation in research teams;
6. Joint application for research grants

Immediate areas of possible collaborations based on the MoU between UoN and Tsinghua University:

1. Applying for Joint Research Grants for graduate students;
2. UoN students participation in the Experience China Summer Program – Summer School;
3. Train PhD and Masters Students in Tsinghua through the China Scholarship Council (CSC) funding then send them back to Kenya for research;
4. Joint international lab for advanced international research for short periods (3-6 months);
5. Have a program for sabbatical professors – adjunct professors. UoN to share the areas of focus for their Faculty with Tsinghua Faculty and identify potential collaboration areas.
6. Focus on skills enhancement to improve on high-level capacity for faculty;
7. Invite the Chairs of the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Departments at Tsinghua University to the University of Nairobi and vice versa then identify collaboration areas.

MEETING WITH BEIJING UNIVERSITY OF CHEMICAL TECHNOLOGY – EXPLORING POTENTIAL AREAS OF COLLABORATION FRIDAY DECEMBER 8, 2017 – 2.30 – 3.30 P.M

PRESENTATIONS FROM THE

1. COLLEGE OF INFORMATION SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
2. COLLEGE OF MECHANICAL AND ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING

Hosted by – Prof. Zheng Li
Director of College Affairs Committee
College of Information Science & Technology
Beijing University of Chemical Technology
Email: lizheng@mail.buct.edu.cn

Prof. Hongguang Li
Vice Dean
College of Information Science & Technology
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Dr. Mao Lixin
Director
International Exchanges & Cooperation Department
Beijing University of Chemical Technology
Email: maolx@mail.buct.edu.cn

Vice Chair
College of Mechanical & Electrical Engineering

Potential areas of collaboration with BUCT discussed include:

1. International Education Cooperation programs like:
 - a) Summer School Programs;
 - b) Visiting Researchers;
 - c) Academic exchange programs;
 - d) Joint research programs;

Prof. Mbithi indicated that modernization of UoN was critical and this calls for benchmarking with other universities. UoN is looking for ways of training postgraduate students abroad for exposure to new thinking to meet the emerging needs of the 21st century.

Other potential areas of collaboration include:

1. Arrange for visits to BUCT and UoN for professors in the two colleges;
2. Joint Research;
3. Joint authorship;
4. Joint sourcing of research funding;
5. Training Masters and PhD students for skills development;
6. Faculty collaborations;
7. Summer school programs for international professors to lecture short courses.

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4.	Jianya Zhao Associate Professor	Director of Division of International Students School of International Education Beijing University of Chemical Technology (BUCT)	zhaojy@mail.buct.edu.cn
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11.	John Paul Grima	Program Manager Global Partnerships Office of International Cooperation and	Jp_grima@tsinghua.edu.cn

		Exchange Tsinghua University	
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17.			

PHOTO GALLERY

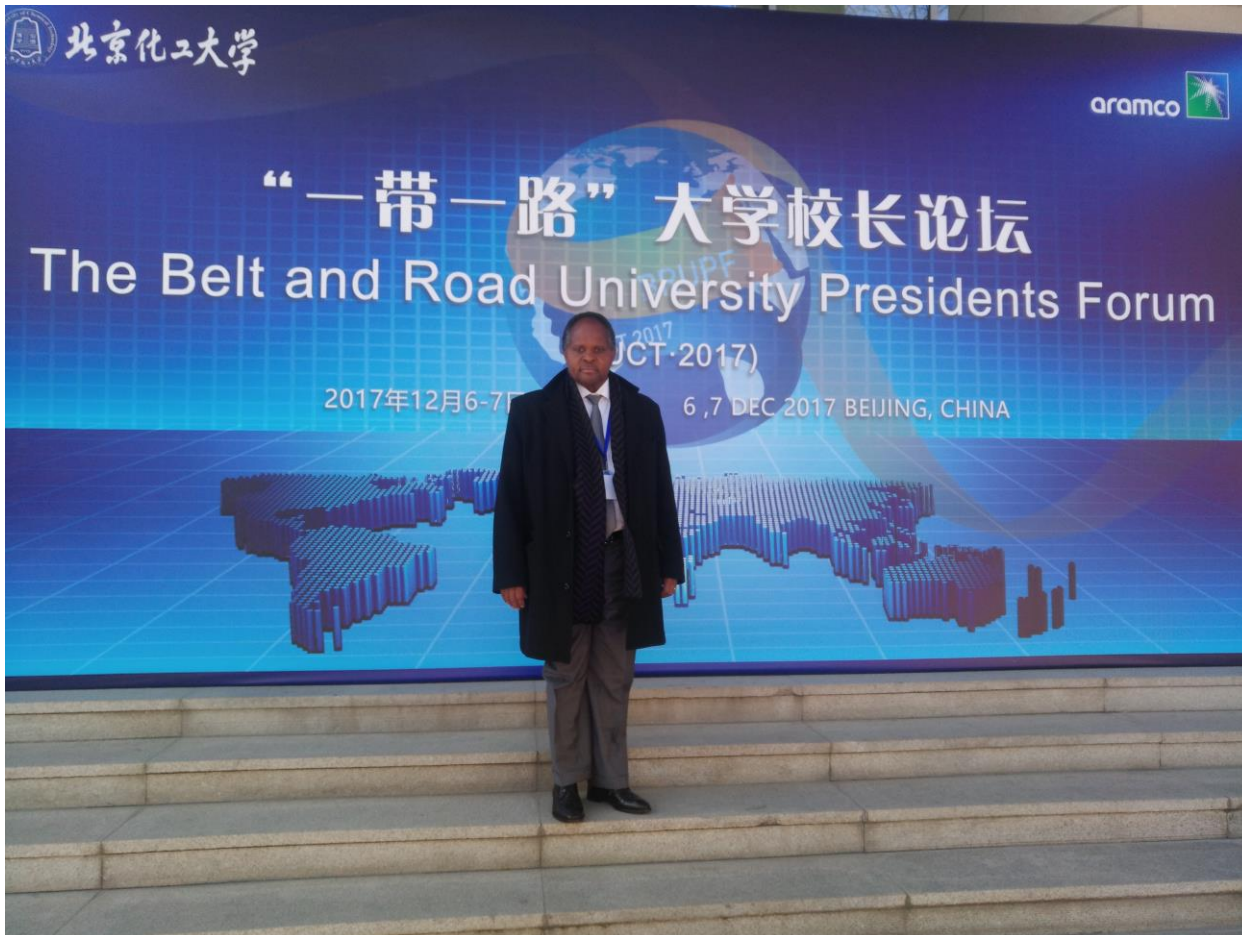


Photo 1: Prof. Peter M. F. Mbithi, Vice Chancellor, UoN participates in the Belt and Road University Presidents Forum in Beijing, China

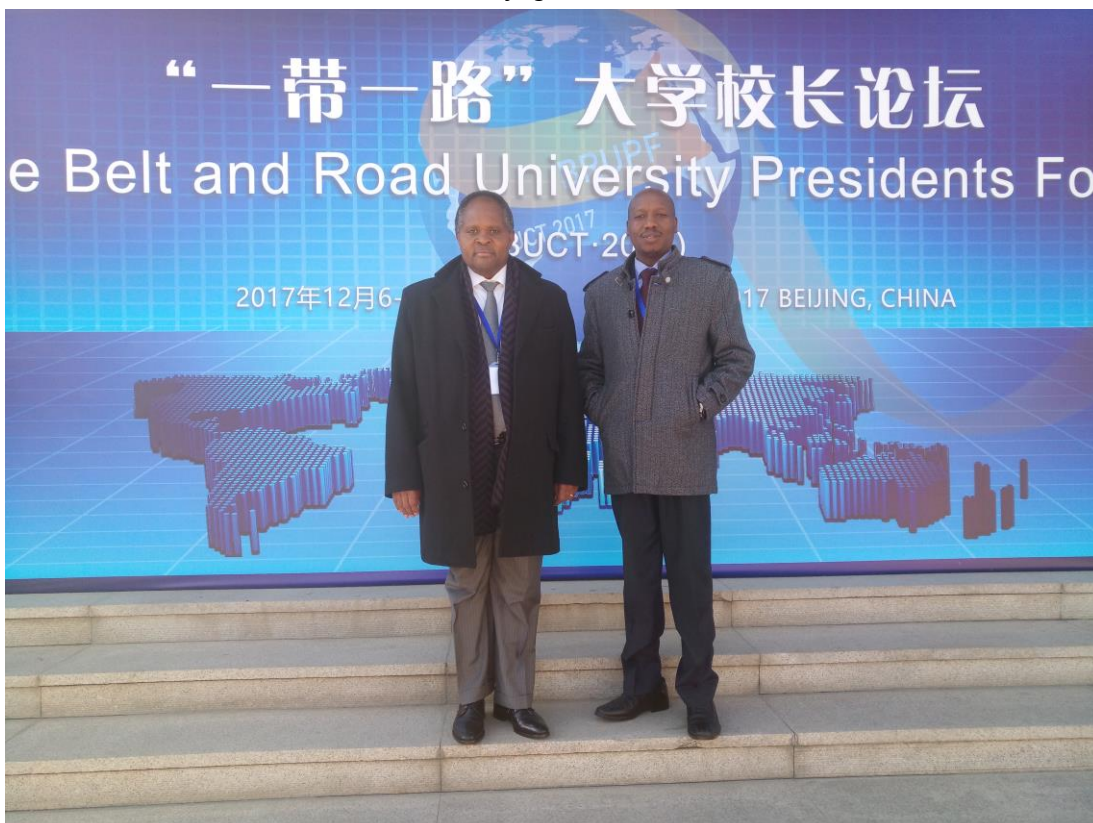


Photo 2: Prof. Mbithi with the Education Attache at the Kenyan Embassy in China Mr. Reuben Argut Kipturgo

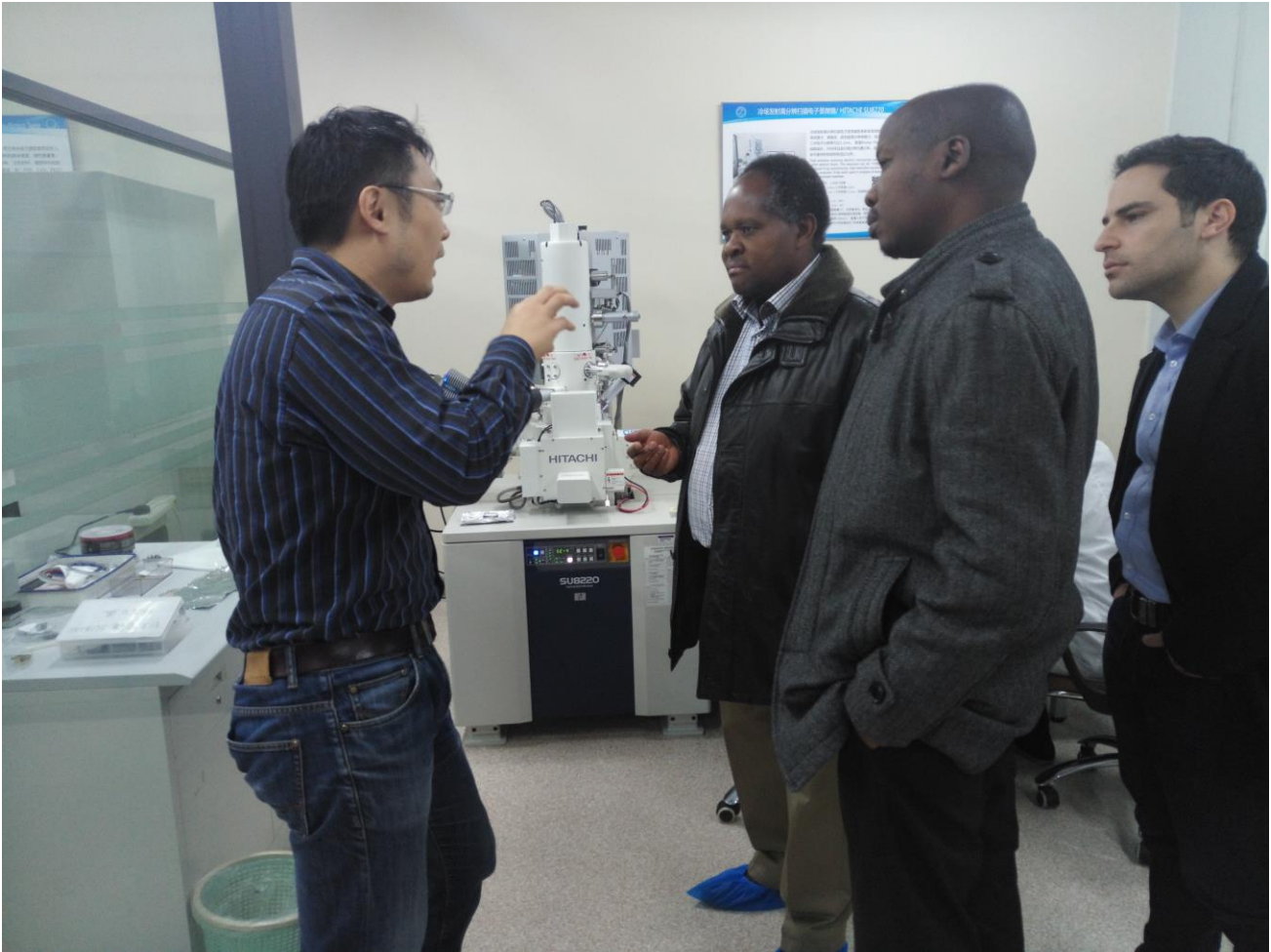


Photo 3: A tour at the Department of Mechanical Engineering lab at Tsinghua University, Beijing, China



Photo 4: A tour to a lab at the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China



Photo 5: Touring one of the labs at the Department of Electrical Engineering, Tsinghua University, Beijing, China



Photo 6: Prof. Mbithi at the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Tsinghua University



Photo 7: Prof. Mbiti making a presentation at the Road and belt Forum on *Developing Skilled Workforce in Africa for Belt and Road Initiative through Sino-African Partnership*



Photo 8: University Presidents from different countries at the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, China



Photo 9: A team of University Presidents and Tsinghua University Officials give a toast to a successful conference



Photo 11: Gordon (Student, BUCT), Prof. Peter M. F. Mbithi, VC UoN, Naomi Nyaboga, Advancement Office and Lucy (Student BUCT)



Photo 11: Group Photo of the participants of the Belt and Road Forum