Panel session on "Africa & Middle East: achievements and expectations from IUPAP"

Conveners
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Abstract

IUPAP is a Union that is organised and run by the physics community itself. It is a stated aim of IUPAP that it seeks to assist the worldwide development of physics. It aims to engage in the strengthening and improvement of physics education, particularly in developing countries. In this interactive session we explore the achievements of IUPAP and its members in Africa and the Middle East: how have these regions benefitted from IUPAP membership and IUPAP's influence? What should the Union do, in addition to present activities?
To introduce the discussion, two speakers will set the scene: Dr Marielle Agbahoungbata, Coordinator of the X-TechLab , Benin, and Prof Andrea Lausi, Scientific Director of SESAME. All participants are invited to collaborate in setting out ways to enrich the future of physics, the community of practice of physicists, and the programmes of the Union in the regions.

Marielle Agbahoungbata
X-TechLab/Agence de Développement de Sèmè City (ADSC) - Cotonou, Bénin

Coordinator of the X-TechLab, the first X-ray techniques platform established in Benin, she is involved in a number of actions to support the development of research and education in Africa. Presently, she serves on the Steering Committee of the African Crystallographic Association. She is also a member of the LAAAMP Executive Committee (Lightsources for Africa, the Americas, Asia, Middle East and the Pacific).
BSc and PhD in Inorganic Chemistry from University of Abomey-Calavi in Benin, she spent a year as post-doc researcher at the University of Zurich thanks to a Swiss Government Excellence scholarship. Her research focuses on the development of clays-based material for environmental remediation. She uses X-ray diffraction as the main technique in her studies and works on the structural analysis of different types of clays and their use in the synthesis of functionalized materials such as adsorbents and photocatalysts for applications in wastewater treatment.
In September 2017, she was awarded with the first prize of the International Competition "Ma These en 180s". In 2019, she was nominated as Magnesium in the Periodic Table of Younger Chemists by the International Union for Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC).

Andrea Lausi
Scientific Director, SESAME Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East, Jordan

After graduating in physics at the University of Trieste, Andrea Lausi joined the Surface Science Group of the University of Genova, focusing his activities on atom-surface scattering phenomena. In 1996 he joined Elettra, where he initially participated in the design and construction of the first hard x-ray beamline.
In the following years, Andrea Lausi presented the scientific case and managed the construction of two more beamlines, MCX and Xpress. As Head of the powder diffraction beamline, he developed instruments aimed to attract both the scientific and the industrial community. At Elettra, he was involved in several international cooperation projects, and besides the responsibility of the Indo-Italian beamline Xpress, he also represented Elettra in several boards and occasions, from the Italian Crystallographic Association panel for Instrumentation, to the Users' Meetings of the Mexican Synchrotron project. He is also a member of the LAAMP steering committee, and in April 2019 have been elected chair of the RICE working group, connecting the chief communication officers of the European Research Facilities Association.
Since March 1st, 2020, Andrea Lausi is the Scientific Director of SESAME.

Marielle Agbahoungbata

Andrea Lausi