

SHORT REPORT OF ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION ON MATHEMATICS AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: MATHEMATICS IN AFRICA, 17 JULY 2008, DURING 5th ECM

*Prof. Dr. Andreas Griewank
Moderator and Organizer of the Round Table*

The round table discussion was organized as a follow up to one on 'Developing Mathematics in the Developing World' held at ICIAM'07. While the previous event had a global scope, this one focused on developing mathematics in Africa. The panel, comprising individuals actively involved in several development activities and organizations, presented and discussed among themselves and with the audience a wide range of topics including: Status quo of mathematics in statistical terms; Challenges with the development of advanced centers of excellence; Whether mathematical research is an issue for a developing country; Barriers: political, economical, and cultural; Remedies: 'Twinning' of departments from developing countries with departments from the developed countries; and Strategies to persuade African governments to support the development of mathematics in their countries. Finally, panel members answered questions and took suggestions from the audience.

It was clear from the audience's vigorous discussions and contributions, especially from those working in various development activities in Africa, that the round table had highlighted challenges faced by Africa and other developing regions in the development of mathematics. To this end, a number of possible solutions were discussed. Existing efforts by the European Mathematical Society were presented, including a proposal to provide up to 500 euros 'seed grants' to mathematics departments in developed countries who wish to participate in the twinning project. A list of over twenty pairs of departments that had already been twinned by the time of the round table was also presented.

An article on the event by Levis Eneya appeared in the EMS Newsletter of December 2008. (See <http://www.ems-ph.org/journals/newsletter/pdf/2008-12-70.pdf>).

We are grateful to EMS and IMU for the organizational and financial support, which made the round table a success, as it enabled the panel members to travel and stay in Amsterdam during the congress. These were:

NAME	Affiliation	Type of Support Received
Laura Pauline Fotso	University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon	Full travel and accommodation
Wandera Ogana	University of Nairobi, Kenya	Partial travel and accommodation
Gareth Whitten	University of Cape Town, South Africa	Partial travel and accommodation
Leif Abrahamsson	Uppsala University, Sweden	Organizational
Tsou Sheung Tsun	Oxford University, UK	Organizational
Mohamed Jaoua	UNESCO, Tunis and Université de Nice Sophia Antipolis, France	Organizational
Bernard Philippe	INRIA, France	Organizational
Andreas Griewank	Humboldt Universität zu Berlin	Organizational and accommodation
Levis Eneya ¹	Humboldt Universität zu Berlin	Organizational, partial travel and accommodation

¹ Levis Eneya is a PhD student from Malawi who assisted with the organization of the event