

## Embassy Hosts Royal Society Pfizer African Academies

**LONDON, 31<sup>st</sup> October 2012** - On 30<sup>th</sup> October, participants at the Royal Society Pfizer African Academies workshop - which is taking place from 30<sup>th</sup> October until 1<sup>st</sup> November - were hosted at the Ethiopian Embassy in a reception organized by the Royal Society.



Present on the occasion were scientists and distinguished researchers from the African Academies, the Society's partner organizations as well as members from various institutions in the UK. The Ethiopian Academy of Sciences (EAS) was represented by its Executive Director, Professor Shibru Tedla and Alemayehu Teferra, Professor of Civil Engineering.



Addressing guests at the reception, H.E. Berhanu Kebede, Ambassador of Ethiopia to the UK and Scandinavian countries urged the Royal Society and partners to support the Ethiopian government efforts to improve the quality and broaden the scope and fields of research in the natural sciences, technology and medicine that underpin the huge task of capacity building in Ethiopia.

trajectory.

Ethiopia, he said, has embarked upon an agriculture-led industrialization development policy at the centre of which lies economic transformation and prosperity. The policy has positioned the country on a sustainable economic growth and development

As a country with a vision of joining the middle income group of nations by 2025, Ethiopia has drawn up a Five Year Growth and Transformation Plan which calls for increased skill and capacity development that in turn needs to foster institutional capacity to spur technology transfer and innovation. This is why Ethiopia has adopted a strategy to enroll 70% per cent of new entrants to universities in the domains of science and technology, which are crucial for the realization of the national drive to achieve faster economic growth, benefitting the public at all levels, the Ambassador noted.



Speaking on the occasion, Professor Martyn Poliakoff, Foreign Secretary of the Royal Society, expressed his gratitude to the Embassy for hosting the event and said, "...we chose the Ethiopian Embassy to host this evening as the Ethiopian Academy of Science is our youngest member. It is important to stress that the Ethiopian government has been an extraordinary example for supporting science. Certainly in the UK, we could not dream of having 70% of our students doing science and technology and I think this is an extremely bold experiment."

The professor went on to stress the need for African countries to have their own scientists to drive their country forward as these scientists will be the ones leading government efforts when it comes to dealing with expanding populations and increased standard of living expectations. The Royal Society, he said, is going to be very strong in bringing together the African Academies and creating a community of scientists across the whole continent.

“My dream is that I will go to a conference in a few years time and there will be African scientists there and nobody will think this is unusual,” Professor Poliakoff said.

Guests were then treated to a full Ethiopian dinner, a traditional coffee ceremony and Ethiopian music.

In an interview, Professor Shibiru Tedla, Executive Director of EAS, said that Ethiopian Academy of Sciences will focus on advising government on issues pertaining to the quality and relevance of the sciences, in particular on issues related to science education in Ethiopia.

The Academy was established on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 and officially launched on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2010 in the presence of H.E. Ato Girma Wolde Giorgis, President of Ethiopia. The Academy is currently actively engaged in implementing its first five-year strategic plan for the period 2011 to 2015 when it will embark on increasing and strengthening the visibility and relevance of EAS, promote science, technology and innovation and providing consensus building platforms on critical national issues.



Professor Poliakoff presented the Ambassador with a reproduction of the pictures of animals from Ethiopia from a book first published in 1691.

The Royal Society Pfizer African Academies Programme is an on-going programme which provides training, mentoring and project support to develop and strengthen national science academies in Ghana, Tanzania and Ethiopia in partnership with Network of African Science Academies (NASAC).

Since its launch, the Pfizer African Academies programme has focused on establishing relationships, building stronger capacity in areas identified by the academies as priorities, and increasing the relevance of science academies in their national context.

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The Ambassador's and Professor Poliakoff's speeches are available on demand or on our website.

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