

The Nuffield Contemporary Scholars Conference Experience for an International Participant

Let me start by expressing my sincere and deep heartfelt gratitude to Nuffield for making me one of the first internationals on the Nuffield Programme. It was such a great honour and privilege. My special thank you goes to Mr John Stones for his assistance throughout the application process. Mr Peter Nixon and Mr Jim Gelch were also very helpful.

The Nuffield Contemporary Conference is a great and unforgettable experience. Most of the topics and issues covered are of a global nature. We had distinguished conference speakers with a wealth of international experience and prestigious conference venues too. We also had superb farm visits and agro-processing plants in the UK and France.

In my view the CSC programme is designed to shape, sharpen and inspire individual's entrepreneurial and leadership skills in the land, agriculture and food sector and there is no doubt that it just did that to me and will go a long way in assisting me to realise my dreams and ambitions in commercial agriculture.

Besides the actual conference there was also a lot of learning from other Nuffield peers from all over the world. In a matter of a week, one would get a clear picture of the global agricultural scene and challenges that farmers are facing in different parts of the world. Many of the challenges such as climate change, environment, sustainability and viability problems, farming finance and unpredictable markets are the same across the globe, although there are many others that are geographic specific. It was such an amazing experience to meet a group of like-minded people from different parts of the world and deliberate on issues affecting global agriculture.

In addition to formal conference speakers and activities, the CSC programme was also packed with a wide range of excellent social and informal activities such as the night boat cruise, London Eye riding, visits to the Houses of Parliament, The Liberal Club and Farmers Club all in London, and visits to World War 1 Battlefields in Belgium and France and many great eating out places too!!

The whole experience instilled in me the desire to play a leading role in the development of commercial agriculture especially in Africa.

It was also an excellent occasion for networking with other scholars from different parts of the world, some of which shall last for life.

As one of the first from Africa to be on the Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust via this route, I want not only to thank but to congratulate the Nuffield leadership for its vision to set up a more international agenda for Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust which incorporate like-minded people from more countries of the world-people whose passion is commercial and organised agriculture. This is a very positive development and I am sure this shall pave way to the widening of the number of participating countries from the current few, in the process giving Nuffield a wider recognition and indeed a more international outlook and this in turn shall translate into increasing Nuffield's role, influence, recognition and contribution to the development of global agriculture.

As a follow up to this conference I shall proceed to travel to Australia, New Zealand, Thailand, Philippine, USA and Canada to study and find out lessons, experiences and best practices to address the negative impact of insecurity of land tenure and property rights to land on the development of African agriculture and food security especially in the long term as population increases and land becomes scarce. This is going to be followed by writing a report for submission and presentation to Nuffield in the next 18 months.

I have already made some good progress on the preparations for the study tours and I am looking forward to this great learning experience. I am confident this study will go a long way in preparing me to play a big role in moving commercial agriculture in Africa to new heights in the near future despite the myriad of challenges it is facing at the moment.

To sum it up it was a lot of humour, fun, enjoying and learning!!

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