

## Introduction and Biographical notes – Professor Jerry John Kponyo

Prof. Jerry John Kponyo is the Dean of the Quality Assurance and Planning Office of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST) and Associate Professor at the Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

In 2004 and 2005, close to 20 years ago, he had a KAAD InCountry (Sur Place) Scholarship for Master studies in Electrical Engineering at KNUST. After his master studies he became a lecturer at this university and was during that time very active in the network of KAAD in Ghana— so active that fellow scholars and alumni chose him to be the Coordinator of KASWA middle chapter. KASWA stands for KAAD Association of Scholars in West Africa and the middle chapter of this association covers mainly those scholars and alumni from KNUST – the main focal point of KAAD’s work in Ghana. The Catholic Chaplaincy of this university is the place where the KAAD Partner Committee for Ghana meets, where the scholars gather in their meetings and where the chaplain has always been a strong ally of KAAD. That KAAD and Prof. Kponyo’s university have a strong connection can be seen also by the fact that six members of the KAAD Partner Committee are lecturers at it – one of them is Prof. Marian Nkansah who gave the keynote address at the same place, our Jahresakademie, one year ago. Our topic then was the social and ecological transformation and the future of our planet and Prof. Nkansah spoke about “Responsible Consumption and Production – a necessary North South Dialogue”. We are happy to welcome a colleague of her from the same university again this year!

It is only for a relatively short time in all these years that Prof. Kponyo left KNUST when he went to China to do his PhD. He finished it in 2015 at the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China in Chengdu in the province of Sichuan. Since KAAD has always had scholars from China also, this can serve as another connection between our work/network and Prof. Kponyo’s biography. Two of them are participants here today and you may try your Chinese in a conversation with them if you like... 😊

He has published over 50 articles in refereed Journals and Conference proceedings – a very impressive proof of his research and publication work. But he is also outstanding in coordinating projects and initiatives in his field of expertise: currently he coordinates the West Africa Sustainable Engineering Network for Development (WASEND), is the Scientific Director of the Responsible Artificial Intelligence Lab which is a 1 Million Canadian Dollar grant

sponsored by IDRC from Canada and GIZ from Germany. Leadership in another Project called “Partner-Afrika” connects him with Germany: The German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) aims at strengthening the conditions for private investment and so create more and better employment for the rapidly growing young population in Africa.

Prof. Kponyo leads another project at his university called “KEEP”, the KNUST Engineering Education Project. In this 5.5 Million Dollar project sponsored by the World Bank, an “Africa Center of Excellence (ACE)” is being build up with a focus on Digital Development and Energy.

What made him the ideal speaker for our keynote address today is of course his special focus on Artificial intelligence. And also here the connection with Germany is coming in again: He is Co-Founder of the Responsible AI Network (RAIN) Africa – a collaborative effort between KNUST and the Technical University of Munich. He has done extensive research about the “Internet of Things”, intelligent systems and AI and currently leads the Emerging Networks and Technologies Laboratory at his Faculty. According to him, Artificial Intelligence is a solution for many problems, but needs to be done in a responsible manner. It is interesting and remarkable that here the impetus for ethical use of technology does not wait for the input of philosophers or theologians but comes from an engineer who gathers other engineers around him to ensure “that AI is used for good”.

Dear Professor Kponyo, we are glad to have you today at the opening of our annual convention and to have you also during the next few days here with us! We are curious to learn from you and the floor is yours.