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Meetings' Report



CALESTOUS JUMA EXECUTIVE DIALOGUE

Theme: Science and Technology Communication

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; February 12 – 13, 2026

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International Training and Capacity Building is a hallmark of Michigan State University. Through the grant from Wallace Genetic Foundation, a two-day workshop on science communication was jointly organized by Michigan State

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University (MSU) in collaboration with the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). This training program was held on February 12 – 13, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as a side event of the African Union (AU) Annual Summit (Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Participants at the CJED Meeting (Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA; Feb. 12-13, 2026)

The goal of this program was, through South-South and North-South collaborations, to share experiences and best practices on agricultural science communication from experienced science educators and communicators in Africa, Asia and USA with scientists and diverse stakeholders, and create a platform and networking opportunities for information and experience sharing. The ultimate goal is to address issues of misinformation, disinformation and miscommunication and remove barriers to adoption of improved crop varieties and modern agricultural technologies through effective communication so smallholder farmers and consumers in developing countries can harness and reap benefits from these technologies and experiences for enhanced food and nutritional security and livelihoods (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2(a-f). Participants during the intersession breaks were seen intensely engaged in discussion on ‘science communication’ on the sideline of key event “Science Technology & Innovation Week 2026 – Shaping Africa’s future through Science, Technology and Innovation” (Addis Ababa; Feb. 10-12, 2026).

WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS

The workshop brought together a diverse group of 41 CEOs, journalists, communication experts, media and communication consultants, professors, science communicators, and other stakeholders from media outlets, the private sector, NGOs, foundations, government agencies, universities, and intergovernmental organizations from 8 countries across Africa (Cameroon, Cape Verde, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa), 4 countries in Asia (India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines), and the U.S.

Table 1. Participants of the Workshop on Science Communication held February 12 – 13, 2026 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Name	Role	Institution	Country
1. Alexandre Essome	Co-chair	Centre of AI and Sustainable Development (CAISD) of Africa	Cameroon
2. Olugbenga Adesida	CEO and co-Founder	Bonako	Cape Verde
3. Fekremichael Zeyede	Journalist, News producer and Anchor	NBC Ethiopia TV	Ethiopia
4. Melkam Asrat	General Manager	DM Agro Industry PLC	Ethiopia
5. Alemayehu (Alex) Teshome	Founder and Executive Director	Livelihood Improvement for Vulnerable Ethiopians (LIVE)-ADDIS	Ethiopia
6. Minyamir Ashenafi Alemu	Assistant Expert	Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Ethiopia	Ethiopia
7. Zeynu Seid	Journalist	HBS Media	Ethiopia
8. Firezer Negash	Journalist	HBS Media	Ethiopia
9. Tigist Endashaw Bealem	Consultant, Climate Action Policy Advocacy		Ethiopia
10. Mersha Tiruneh	Spokesperson	Ethiopian Mass Media Professionals Association (EMMPA)	Ethiopia

Name	Role	Institution	Country
11. Tiblets Tesfaye (Ritha?)	Journalist and Correspondent	BRICS Africa TV	Ethiopia
12. Bamlak Kassahun	Journalist	Addis Ababa University	Ethiopia
13. Teklehaimanot Haileselassie Teklu	Professor	Addis Ababa University	Ethiopia
14. Yared Beyene Kidanemariam	Urban Environmental Law and Policy Media Consultant	Mekuria Enviro Friendly Consultancy	Ethiopia
15. Gemechu Debela Morka	Lecturer and Researcher	Mekele University	Ethiopia
16. Lediya Abebe Negussie	Journalist	Ahadu Radio and TV	Ethiopia
17. Surafel Zelalem	Journalist	Menaheria Radio	Ethiopia
18. B. Reddya Naik	Senior Professor and Head of the Department of Zoology	Osmania University	India
19. Rashmi Singh	Editorial Manager	National Academy of Agricultural Sciences (NAAS), India	India
20. Brij K. Tyagi	President	Society of Medical Arthropodology	India
21. Meghaa Ahuja	Head of Somaiya Centre for Experiential Learning	Somaiya Vidyavihar University	India
22. Antonius Suwanto	Lecturer for the IPB Biotech Centre	IPB University	Indonesia
23. Bibiana Iraki	Science Communications Manager	Science for Africa Foundation	Kenya
24. Nyawira Gikandi	Stakeholder Engagement Manager	Science for Africa Foundation	Kenya
25. Susan Kiambi	Regulatory Affairs Manager	Bayer Crop Science	Kenya
26. Davies Mbela	Communications Advisor	Science for Africa Foundation	Kenya
27. Saarani Vengadesen	Lecturer for the Department of Law	Universiti Malya Malaysia	Malaysia
28. Joseph Ishie	Business Development Director	Nina Jojer	Nigeria

Name	Role	Institution	Country
29. Bryan Bantor	Biotechnology Regulator	Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain	Philippines
30. Pacifique Nshimiyimana	Chief Executive Officer	Alliance for Science-Rwanda	Rwanda
31. Pagal Agbanglanon	Statistician	African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)	South Africa
32. Nhlawulo Shikwambane	Author; Brand & Content Specialist	Lelapa AI	South Africa
33. Chifundo Kungade	Project Assistant – African Union Panel on Emerging Technologies	African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)	South Africa
34. Maria Namyalo	Programme Officer-Science Technology Innovation	African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)	South Africa
35. Onkgopotse JJ Tabane	Communications strategist, political commentator, businessman, and television presenter	eNews Channel Africa, University of South Africa, University of Botswana	South Africa
36. Brando Okolo	Head of Science Technology and Innovation	African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)	South Africa
37. Bhekani Mbuli	Lecturer and Researcher	University of Johannesburg	South Africa/ Eswatini
38. Barbara Glover	Prograamme Officer-Integrated Vector Management Programme (IVM)	African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)	South Africa/Ghana
39. Karim Maredia	Professor and Director, World Agriculture Center Programs	Michigan State University College of Agriculture and Natural Resources	USA
40. Callista Rakhmatov	Global Network Specialist	Michigan State University	USA
41. Aster Beyene	Global Regulatory Affairs Manager	Bayer Corporation	USA/ Ethiopia

THE WORKSHOP PROGRAM

During the first day, the workshop opened with a keynote presentation on the Current and Future of Science Communication in Africa and Asia. Afterwards, participants shared their experiences on and discussed issues of science communication in Africa and Asia, and then shared success stories of science communication in Africa, Asia, and the U.S. There was an open discussion, and then guided breakout sessions to discuss strengthening capacity for science communication in the food, agriculture, health, and climate and environment sectors. Participants discussed the current situation, issues, gaps, future capacity building needs, and brainstormed solutions for addressing miscommunication, disinformation, and misinformation.

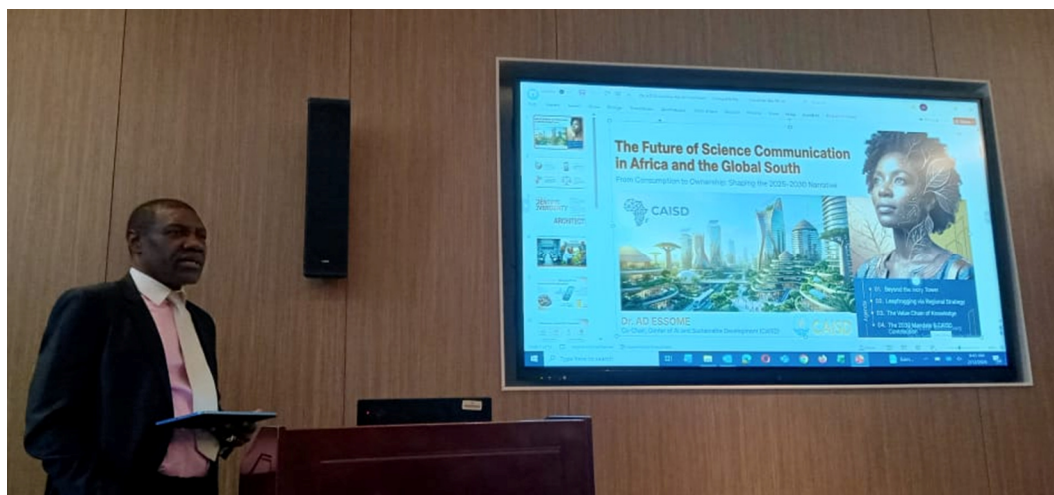


Fig. 3. Invited lecture by Dr Alexandre Essome, Co-Chair and Board Member, Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Sustainable Development, CAISD, Pretoria.

On the second day, in a panel format, the delegates discussed science communication tools and resources and the role of higher education institutions in strengthening capacity in science communication, and then participated in guided breakout groups on programs, training modules, and tools development. Participants discussed current training opportunities and brainstormed training needs and potential modules and training courses. The workshop concluded with an open discussion and formulated recommendations for a way forward. A five-member steering committee was formed for coordinating the follow-up activities.

Presentations, breakout group reports, and the recommendations for the way forward were shared on a Google drive which will be updated as further resources are identified, and delegates were encouraged to add their own resources. A WhatsApp group was formed for communication, rapid sharing of information, and establishment of the resource network.

Not only experts from different countries delivered highly informative, data-based, and informative lectures, even a school student, credited with an innovation in agriculture was invited to share her inspiring journey in science, technology and innovation.



Fig. 4 (a,b). Prof. B. Reddya Naik (HOD, Department of Zoology, Osmania University, Telangana, India) offering his presentation (a), and A brilliant young innovator from Ethiopia invited to express her journey in science and technology (b).

All the participants fully enjoyed expert deliberations and diverse interactions among each others. Later leaders of different teams presented their inputs.



Fig. 5. Participants attending scientific sessions.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS AND WAY FORWARD

Through open and interactive discussion, several recommendations emerged for the Way Forward during the final session of the workshop.

1. Continued networking:

- a. A WhatsApp Group was created during the workshop. Delegates suggested to make sure everyone was invited to the group and that everyone's contact information be circulated in the group.
- b. Quarterly Zoom meetings were suggested to keep up momentum.
- c. A follow-up meeting for next year was suggested to be held in Asia.

2. Leadership and Follow-up: A steering committee was formed to follow up with group members on promised actions. The committee is made up of representatives from each breakout group (Prof. B.K. Tyagi, Dr. Aster Beyene, and Ms. Saarani Vengadesen) and the session moderators (Dr. Callista Rakhmatov and Dr Bhekani Mbuli).

3. Media:

- a. Several journalists attended the workshop and were preparing articles to be published immediately. Delegates suggested that the journalists share anything they published in the WhatsApp group.
- b. Participants suggested that the group have dedicated social media channels, and Ms. Megha Ahuja volunteered for this role.

4. Publications:

- a. Delegates suggested that a short publication on issues raised and outcomes of the workshop be drafted and shared in the next 2 months.
- b. The Society of Medical Arthropodology, which has worldwide readership, will publish the highlights of the workshop in both its newsletter and its Journal of Medical Arthropodology and Public Health.
- c. The African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) should publish a policy brief or report on the workshop and widely distribute to policy makers and other key stakeholders.

5. **Financial Resources:** Delegates also discussed possible future financial resources to maintain the network and its activities. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds were suggested, as well as the United Nations as a potential source of funding for the future activities of the network.

NETWORKING AMONG THE SCIENTISTS

The CJED Meeting on “Science and Technology Communication” (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; February 12 – 13, 2026) offered an invaluable opportunity to the participants from nearly all the continents. Scientists exchanged views on various dimensions of science and technology, particularly the communication means. All agreed that science and technologies, despite their growth and development through difficult times and spaces, including financial and human investments, need a way of communication that reduces the burden of comprehending their applications by the common-man or the society, for whose benefits they are intended. A good and healthy discourse between innovators and the end-users is inevitably indispensable for advantageous application of science and technology.

Ample opportunities arose for the delegates to broach on the role of communication in science, technology and innovations, such as, for example, inter-session periods with the famous Ethiopian coffee and local cookies, savoury luncheons and intercontinental dinners – all that which will be sweetly remembered forever (Fig.6)!







Fig. 7(a-i). The CJED Meeting gave so much of novel thinking in advancing science, technology and innovation that parti.

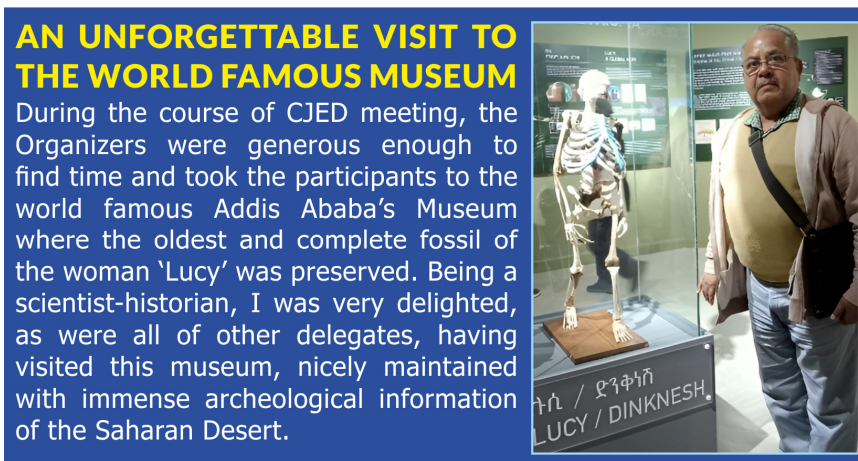


Fig. 8. Prof. B.K. Tyagi visited the National Museum, and witnessed 'Lucy'.

Organizing an international meeting of the nature and magnitude of The CALESTOUS JUMA EXECUTIVE DIALOGUE (Theme: Science and Technology Communication; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; February 12 – 13, 2026) is certainly a Himalayan task which requires a meticulous planning for months and, of course, an immaculate execution of an innovative subject pivoting around science communication. Amongst all inevitably indispensable planners and executioners of the meeting, the two most significant organizers, viz. Dr Callista Rakhmatov (MSU, USA) and Dr Chifundo Kungade (Project Assistant, APET, South Africa), and their teams of highly energetic colleagues, deserve a very special thanks from the bottom of ‘our’ (participants’) heart, for organizing such a significant, topical and hugely successful CJED Meeting on science communication. We hope that these efforts and messages of the CJED meeting will flourish in years to follow!

As discussed during the CJED meeting, we hereby take the opportunity to invite all to India for the next CJED Meeting – as a satellite meeting to the Society of Medical Arthropodology’s 20th International Conference in the Osmania University, Telangana, India – in December, 2027 (*Convenor*: Prof. B. Reddya Naik; *President* SOMA: Prof. Dr B.K. Tyagi).

