



UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY

**UNU-GTP**

Geothermal Training Programme

Orkustofnun, Grensásvegur 9,  
IS-108 Reykjavík, Iceland



## **GRADUATION SPEECH ON THE 41<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 2019 UNU-GTP 6 MONTHS TRAINING PROGRAMME, PRESENTED BY JOHN J. SHIRPUTDA (NIGERIA) ON BEHALF OF 2019 FELLOWS**

Okay folks!!!

Góðan daginn, please permit me to stand on existing protocols.

I began this speech with the catch phrase Ludvik uses when addressing fellows. I think it is proper to pay respect to Ludvik, who is the director of the UNU-GTP but most of all; a geothermal pillar, a teacher, a football administrator, an Icelandic historian, a mentor, a friend, a brother, a husband, a father, a grandfather and an extra-ordinary gentleman. May I beg your indulgence to give this great man a standing ovation, please. We are privileged to be the last set of 6 months Fellows to see him as the director of the UNU-GTP.

On behalf of the 2019 UNU-GTP Fellows, I wish to express our profound gratitude to the people and government of Iceland, who have extended their benevolence to us by sustaining this programme and taking care of us all the way. We are greatly indebted to the UNU-GTP family for all they have done for us. The excursions to the Reykjanes peninsula, the north of Iceland and Þórsmörk exposed us to the rich history and culture of a wonderful people. The landmarks and natural wonders, associated with the geothermal capacity of Iceland truly singles it out as one of the wonders of the world and a true land of ice and fire. Thank you for the opportunity to experience this.

Some of you may wonder why I referred to the UNU-GTP as a family. Well, it is because they have always treated us so. They have made Iceland home away from home. Ludvik treat's us like a father, listening to every complaint, encouraging us, not mindful of our faults but always emphasizing our positives. He has truly brought out the best in us. Thank you so much Ludvik. Ingimar has been a solid base on which fellows rest all their computer related problems, among many others things. He finesse in addressing issues and smart looks have made some fellows to compare him with the legendary fictional MI6 character, James Bond (007). Thank you very much Ingimar. Friða has been impeccable in attending to our needs at the UNU-GTP and does so with an infectious smile. She has surpassed every fellow's expectations and gone beyond the call of duty with free Icelandic and swimming classes, as well as haircuts for some fellows. Don't be surprised if one of the Fellows is sporting a fabulous haircut from Friða. Thank you so much Friða. Markus has attended to Fellows with so much dexterity and you wonder how he has been able to cope with so many issues with dispatch. We will always remember his catch phrase when addressing Fellows, "Hello Fellows". Thank you very much Markus. Þórhildur cannot be forgotten. The iron lady will be remembered for her stern appearance but kind treatment of Fellows. She was instrumental to the smooth journey from our countries and settling well in Iceland. Wherever she may be, we are very thankful. Vigdis, despite joining the UNU-GTP while we were here, has already done a yeoman's job. She has been accommodating and kind, endearing her to many fellows. She has always been swift in addressing issues concerning fellows. Thank you so much Vigdis.

At a time when the world seems to be falling apart around us with; the Kashmir impasse, the US-Iran-Saudi Arabia issue, the ever present Israeli-Palastine issue and the South African Xenophobic attacks, the UNU-GTP was able to bring together 24 Fellows from 15 countries, with diverse cultures and background to study, live and work together for 6 months, without starting a war. This is incredible and demonstrates the positive aspects of building bridges rather than walls.

We are greatly appreciative of Orkustofnun and ISOR. They have hosted us so well and all fellows who have had the need to go upstairs have always testified to the acceptance and helpfulness of the staff of ISOR and Orkustofnun. To our supervisors, words cannot adequately express our thanks. Your patience, guidance and discussions have been invaluable to the successful completion of our projects. I believe some of us see you as mentors already, I hope you will accept us as your mentees. May I use this opportunity to plead that you respond when we need your help back in our countries because the link has already been created and challenges will arise. We also acknowledge the various lecturers at the Introductory and specialized classes, we are grateful and will surely put some of the things we learnt to good use. We will not forget the computer wizard, Issi, and the librarian, Rosa. Issi was able handle all computer issues from Fellows, particularly the way he resurrected Shimeng and Frida's computers from the dead. Rosa has been a great help with her quick response to book requests by fellows and she does with some adroitness. Although they may not be here today, the season of thanks would not be complete without appreciating Viliya: the cleaning lady, Hjörvar: the cook at the cafetaria, Silla: the receptionist and Auðunn: the bus driver for the northern trip and Þórsmörk excursions, the added value to our experience in their own way.

The journey has been long but fruitful and Fellows have had both good and bad experiences. some celebrated birthdays, some were ill at one time or another, and some, unfortunately lost loved ones (Benise lost her cousin and Lyn lost her dad – a moment's silence for both). Finally, I wish to appreciate the 2019 Fellows who were always there for each other. However, may I use this opportunity to remind my colleagues, 2019 UNU-GTP Fellows, that with this training comes greater responsibility. Allow me to tell you a short story about the wise old man. There once lived a wise old man who was known for his great wisdom and people came from far and wide to consult him. In the village where the old wise man lives was also a young man who could not understand why the old man attracted so much people. He, therefor, decided to prove that the old man was not wise after all. He caught a small bird, covered it with his hands and hid it behind him before visiting the old man. At the old man's house, after sharing pleasantries, he said, "I have something in my hands and I want you to tell me if it is dead or alive". His plan was to kill the bird by breaking its neck, if the man said it was alive and showing him the bird alive, if the man said it was dead. Whichever way, the wise old man had to be wrong. The old man looked at him for some time, smiled and said, "My son, whether the thing you have in your hands is dead or alive rest in your hands". Similarly, we can chose to remain docile and allow what we have learnt here gather dust and fade away or we can become proactive and devise ways and strategies to contribute to the growth and development of geothermal in our countries, the choice rests entirely in our hands.

Þakka ykkur fyrir.