

## **GRADUATION SPEECH ON BEHALF OF GRO-GTP 2022 FELLOWS**

**By Peter Ndirangu,**

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, all protocols observed,

Good afternoon,

It is a great pleasure and honour to stand before you to speak on behalf of the 23 exciting GRO-GTP class of 2022, as we celebrate the culmination of this year's Six months course geared towards geothermal resource capacity building in developing countries. As we bid farewell to an exciting six months journey, a door closes, but an even wider door opens to the future. A future that most certainly looks bright for all of us. Through interaction with one another, our facilitators, supervisors and our new networks, we have had an opportunity to learn and grow, to fail, try again, fail, dust up and try some more and to constantly strive to better ourselves. I have every reason to believe that we leave Iceland better persons than we came.

Ladies and gentlemen! Please allow me to briefly summarize our untitled 6 month story.

It began in late April, with a good number of fellows arriving just in time to join the Icelandic community in celebrating the famous first day of summer. Twenty-three unique individuals, all with their own unique professional, personal and social talents. From the generosity of Yanira, Achmad and Marissa, the peacefulness of Carlos, William, Heiner and Yessy, the loving kindness of Hugo, Claudia and Diana, the resourcefulness of Aylmer, Shisha, Leboo and Julia the enthusiasm of Andres, Dennis (Scott), Aron and Sheila to the braveness of Yenny, Ricardo (The Warden), Deepak and Mathew (The Best).

This is a story of a bunch of 23 fellows from 11 countries, each on a journey in pursuit of knowledge towards becoming more productive and useful to their nations and make their contribution towards a sustainable energy future. We have undergone training in four different specialisation areas, a testament of the multi-disciplinary nature of the fellows group of 2022. I must congratulate each one of the fellows for having worked together towards professional development in our various disciplines.

We truly are privileged to be recipients of this specialized on the job training in geothermal energy. Well executed lectures in utilization, chemistry, environment and project management and finances equipped us with knowledge to advance the development of geothermal energy in our home countries. This is a story that features the opportunities presented to us to work side by side with professionals in the geothermal industry, as we began our various specializations. The holistic approach of this training course has prepared us to transfer the knowledge gained and skills attained to our colleagues back home. Field visits gave us the opportunity to be marvelled by the magnificently designed geothermal power plants, fish farms and greenhouses across the width and breadth of Iceland.

Various fieldtrips consequently provided us with an opportunity to be awed by the pristine beauty of the land of fire and ice. Exploring Iceland and enjoying its breath-taking views and

landscapes, standing inside a transform fault, seeing with your own eyes a volcanic eruption, the beauty of glaciers and the welcoming nature of the people will forever remain imprinted in our memories. We sure did go chasing waterfalls, glaciers and even puffins. Perhaps one of the most amazing experiences was looking up at the sky to enjoy the dancing northern lights. Our devices, I am sure, are inundated with photos of the blue lagoon, sky lagoon, Reykjanes peninsula, Hengill area, Northern Iceland, Thórsmörk, Eya-fiatla- jokull, among other spectacular sites. Trying to pick the most memorable experience, I'm lost for choice between the Northern field trip and the Hengill hiking trip..... (If you know you know). What better place to have gained this than in a country where geothermal is much more than a means to achieving sustainable development goal number 7, but is indeed a way of life.

The simple question of what we will miss in Iceland, simply has no answer. There have been so many experiences, emotions and memorable situations, not to mention the sensationally unpredictable weather experienced here in Iceland. I never thought I could experience the four seasons all in a single day. And of course we tried to learn the crazy Icelandic tongue (Godan daginn, takk fyrir, Bardarbunga, Eyjafjallajökull, Hallgrímskirkjatur), but for that we would need another intensive course of six months (or maybe longer). We choose to keep the great memories.

The last three months have been quite interesting and challenging at the same time. A period of putting down our ideas in black and white, some which were never quite clear and many of us did not know where or how to start. Sometimes we felt frustrated, hopeless, stressful and lacked confidence, but thanks to our supervisors, we trod through the journey and finally made it. Well, it is hard to say exactly when it was finished, yesterday or today, depends on when Ingimar and Frida left the office yesterday evening.

Now we are ready to move on. With a mind full of knowledge, eyes full of happy tears and our spirits filled with huge motivation to better the geothermal stories of our different nations and play our part in making the World a better place for all of us. A world that shall enjoy global net-zero by mid-century and keep 1.5 C degrees within reach by amongst other reasons, encouraging investment in renewables.

And now to the most important section of our story entitled Acknowledgements:

It would be remiss of me not to explicitly recognize the invaluable support of all the amazing staff at GRO-GTP, who have been our parents, our care givers, our elder brothers and sisters the last six months.

To the GRO-GTP Director Gudni Axelsson, thank you for being there for us. Thank you for playing a father figure for all of us and calming our nerves by your now famous words, '**relax and enjoy**' whenever too much pressure tended to get over us. Please send our regards to your lovely wife Svancy' for opening the doors of your home and organizing that wonderful party

which we will never forget. I have a good friend here who comes from a country starting with the letter 'P' who went three days straight, drunk from the party.

To the Deputy Director, the ever so cool Ingimar Haraldsson, thank you for making our stay in Iceland possible. Thank you for always ensuring our accounts are replenished every end of the month. Thank you for that much awaited Monday morning email that was always titled 'This weeks menu'.

Special thanks to Vigdis for proving such a reliable support, ensuring we arrived safely in Iceland, spent under a safe roof, and doing everything possible to ensure our comfortable stay in Iceland.

And to Alexander, our ever smiling IT guru, thank you for being their for us and supporting our journey in various ways, including replenishing the store with milk stocks. Its always the small things that make the difference.

And then to the wonder woman, the ever energetic, industrious, multi-tasking one. This one who is ever more close to us, more than a sister, this one who sacrificed her personal time to take us through swimming lessons during the weekends, this one who came to hospital to check on us and drove us home when some of us fell ill, this one who organised the Northern field trip with meticulous precision, our photographer, our story teller, our field guide, our report editor, our 'references checker'.....and her name is.....

We are forever indebted Frida. Thank you for all the history stories about Iceland and for the unforgettable trip to the north.

We say thank you to the Government of Iceland and UNESCO for supporting this programme. We extend our gratitude to all our supervisors and lecturers, the staff at ISOR, Landsvirkjun, Verkis, ON power and all other institutions who contributed to the success of the programme.

To our colleagues pursuing Masters and PhD. programmes, thank you for you indellible support and friendship and for sharing your knowledge and experiences with us.

**The factorial clap.....**

Ladies and gentlemen, a book is never complete without an Appendix,

This section of our report features living the best Icelandic life. It entailed our dinner parties, sharing dishes from our countries, sharing cultures, enjoying swimming lessons and various trips. We organized potlucks parties and enjoyed our various delicacies, the adobo, the caribbean soup, manuelitas, nasi uduk, sweet potato pudding and off course the overwhelming favourite, the Chapati.....for this I choose to withhold the name of the chief chef.

For many of us, we have certainly fallen in love with Iceland. We carry with us memories of a magnificent country with beautiful people. Over and above the knowledge we have gained in Iceland, each one of us takes home valuable life experiences, lessons and great memories.

At least for me, coming from a great sporting nation that Kenya is, especially in athletics, I find great joy in recreational running. Iceland offered me more than I could ask for to challenge my physical and mental strength, especially in times when the weather was unforgiving. Well-manicured tracks, extensive flat gravel trails, mountainous routes, pedestrian walkways, all offered enough motivation for me to look forward and lace up for another training run, day after day, enduring the cold, wind, rain and long *hours of hard and often lonely runs*.

As a result, I travel back home with great pride and admiration for my extra-curricula achievements here in Iceland. Having run a cumulative mileage of one thousand, eight hundred and twenty five kilometers, I was motivated enough to participate at the famous Iceland Bank Reykjavik Marathon, my first ever official marathon achieving a respectable time of 03:13:50 and finishing at position 48 out of a registered total of over 700 participants. I will forever cherish this moment and keep the memories with me. Memories that include lovely crowds of people who lined up the streets with fruits, water and chocolate bars to support and encourage the runners on this day. I vividly remember my colleagues lining up at the finish line to cheer and bring me home. For this, more than anything else, I'm indebted to each one of you.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I sign out, allow me to send out my utmost appreciation to my colleagues, the 2022 Fellows! The best team GTP has ever had since inception. And this are NOT my words..... (If you know you know)

..... I wish each one of you every success in your future endeavours, in particular your professional journeys. Having arrived in Iceland as strangers, it's fulfilling to see us depart having networked and developed international connections. I pray that this friendship lives forever and inspires each one of you to develop professionally in your various capacities. May you always lead by example, work hard and play straight. May your successes be many and your tribulations be few and far between. May we cherish the life long friendships we have made, and continue to be cheerleaders to each other. In deed, you have been the best group GTP has ever had and congratulations for making it to this day.

Again, I ask Director Gudni to remind next years class that the best ever group has been here already!

**Long Live Class of 2022! Long live Iceland! Long Live GRO-GTP.**

**Takk Fyrir**