Seychelles now ranked 44th in first Global Challenge

Team Seychelles is now ranked 44th in the first Global Challenge following an overall performance rated by the judges of all Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) projects handed in by 175 participating countries.

It was the chief executive of the National Institute for Science, Technology & Innovation (Nisti), Xavier Etick, who made the announcement. Seychelles had paid a courtesy call on Vice-President Vincent Meriton at State House, yesterday.

After coming out 121st out of 160 countries in the competition held in Dubai last year, Seychelles took the 45th position in the virtual competition held between June 27 and September 25, 2020.

Mr Etick explained that the 45th position for Team Seychelles announced two weeks ago could have been preliminary and that the position on the first Global Challenge website bears testimony that Seychelles have the potential to perform very well on the global level.

"Now when all the participating countries scroll down the score sheets they will see Seychelles positioned. This is very meaningful to the country because it shows that we have students who can perform very well at global level. It is an encouragement for the country," Mr Etick said, noting that with the support of stakeholders, Seychelles can do higher up the ladder in future competitions.

"Our ultimate dream is to bring the award to Seychelles one day and I may live long enough to see this happen," he said.

Team Seychelles who was received by Vice-President Meriton at State House yesterday for a courtesy call included students Tahar Raghwani, Indrani Bhat (Independent School), Renuel Arachchi, Siemens, Paul Seblom, Anse Royal secondary, Ashlee Barbé, Anse Aux Pins primary, Mikaili Rudchenko, International School Seychelles, Miguel Malbrook, Anse Bour- leau secondary and mentors Joseph Raj and Cindhju Kamala, including professor Raphel Etienne Cummings from Johns Hopkins University (USA).

"Congratulating the young innovators on their achievements, Vice-President Meriton reminded them that when we work as a team on common and shared visions, eliminate obstacles and challenges, we can do a lot for our country. "We need innovation. Innovation is not an option but it’s the way forward. At you will have demonstrated, young minds have no boundary. Everything is limitless. Your imagination will make you fly and soar, and I think we need to do is that you must be rooted to the ground and see how your aspirations can really take you there. We are proud of you," Vice-President Meriton said, noting that their achievement is just the beginning of a long journey which have started with a very small step.

The students’ achievement follows 13 grueling weeks of social media and technical challenges faced by the world through climate change, energy production and consumption, including the topical coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic among others.

"Coming out 44th out of 175 countries is no small feat. Your parents, your team of mentors and the belief in yourselves and the application of this belief are the true realities that have brought you where we are today. So thank you very much and once again I am very proud of you," Vice-President Meriton said.

"Vice-President Meriton called on the students not to be afraid of ideas coming into their heads as there are people out there ready to support them. He said that ways should be found to emulate their work in schools and communities for better mass appreciation.

The students on their part thanked the office of the Vice-President and Nisti for their support and their mentors for guiding them through the competition. Ashlee Baebe, (left) Anse Aix Ann primary school teacher that she was chosen to be on the team as a result of her academic level.

On the team, she gave her input with regard to the invention of the robot’s helmet and in presenting the project online. She called on her fellow students, especially the girls, to participate in such activity as it will help them to improve their learning. With regard to innovation surrounding Covid 19, Professor Cummings from one of the world’s largest medical research universities (John Hopkins University), said that the university is undertaking innovative research for a cure against the virus. He said he was really happy to have been part to guide the Seychelles team and hailed the country for valuing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

Patrick Joubert

50 Million African Women Speak Networking Platform Project (50MAWS)

Local PR consultant being recruited to better create awareness, enroll users to the platform

Since Seychelles joined 37 other African countries on the African women entrepreneurs’ digital platform late August this year, a total of 7,165 women from 10 countries including Seychelles have registered.

At present a local PR consultant is being hired here, being recruited to better create awareness and enroll users on the platform.

The chief executive of Enterprise Seychelles Agency (Esa), Angelique Appoo, said the recruitment which is being done in collaboration with Esa is to be finalised soon and the consultant is expected in the position by next month.

With regard to the number of women entrepreneurs from Seychelles enrolled on the platform so far, Ms Appoo said the figures have not yet been segregated by Comesa which is operating the platform.

The aim of such a digital platform, which is available via web and on mobile devices as an app, is to empower millions of women in Africa to start, grow, and scale up businesses by providing a one-stop shop for their specific information needs.

The 50MAWS platform aims to facilitate a dynamic and engaging exchange of ideas among women entrepreneurs, using the social media to connect them with one another in ways that will foster peer-to-peer learning, mentoring and sharing of information and knowledge within communities and access to financial services and market opportunities between urban and rural areas, and across borders and between countries.

The project was successfully introduced in 15 of the targeted 17 Comesa member states between 2018 and 2019. Furthermore, development of the platform and the primary phase of generation of content were successfully undertaken between 2018 and 2019. The platform is now accessible at www.womensconnect.org. It is also available as an app on the Google Play and Apple stores. To unveil the platform to the world, Comesa in collaboration with its implementing partners and the AEDB held a global launch of the 50 Million African Women Speak platform on November 26, 2019 during the global Gender Summit in Kigali, Rwanda.

Marie-Anne Lepathy

A photograph after the meeting (Photo: Thomas Meriton)