

KIE to research on Bamboo as an alternative energy source



Dr. James Vuningoma.

BY TONY BARIGYE

Kigali Institute of Education [KIE] is going to be jointly involved in research efforts with the University of Antwerpen in Belgium on bamboo plants as an alternative energy source.

The researchers will try to ascertain whether bamboo could be a dependable alternative source of energy to fossil fuel in order to reduce pollution.

James Vuningoma, KIE Vice Rector, said that the relationship with the University of Antwerpen was sealed with a Memorandum of Understanding signed with it in June this year.

"In the understanding we signed, we promised to exchange lecturers and send students for Masters' programmes to carry out joint research and trainings," he explained.

Dr. Geert Potters, a Bioscience Engineer and lecturer at the Belgian University, said that preliminary findings from a research started two years ago proved that bamboo is a potential alternative energy.

"Bamboo is chipped, then fermented and it produces biogas. It also reduces soil pollution," he explained in his lecture at KIE.

"The rate of energy consumption in the world is always 3 percent more than the year before and the shortage of oil is going to come much sooner. This therefore requires alternatives," Potters noted.

Vuningoma said that currently in the country, bamboo is used to manufacture baskets and furniture but the research could lead to another commercial benefit to the country. The lecture follows a workshop held last week at KIE to emphasise the significance of research to its teaching staff.

"This is a continuation to the research week. We need to have science out of the laboratory to know what science can contribute to our society," underscored Vuningoma.

He also revealed that in a bid to make KIE a renowned centre of teaching, learning and research, it has initiated partnerships with Kenyatta University [Kenya] and a South African university (he did not disclose).