

MURENZI NAMED TO KEY UNESCO POST

✍ by Edward W. Lempinen

TWAS's executive director will be leaving to take a policy post in Paris. Founding Executive Director Mohamed Hassan will return temporarily to his former role.

After five years as TWAS's executive director, Romain Murenzi has been appointed by UNESCO Director General Irina Bokova as director of the Division of Science Policy and Capacity Building in UNESCO's Natural Sciences Sector. Murenzi, a physicist born in Rwanda, will be based in Paris.

Mohamed H.A. Hassan, the academy's founding executive director, will fill the TWAS post on an interim basis beginning 1 July 2016.

Murenzi led TWAS in a period of significant growth and evolution. During his tenure, core PhD and postdoctoral fellowship programmes grew significantly. TWAS built a new initiative in science diplomacy, and its communications initiatives dramatically increased the Academy's global audience. He has been a prominent voice for science policy in the developing world, speaking frequently before high-level bodies of the United Nations and other organisations.

Murenzi previously served from 2001 to 2009 as a minister in the government of Rwanda, overseeing science, education and technology. He "will bring

a wealth of experience and knowledge to the position," said Flavia Schlegel, UNESCO's assistant director general for the natural sciences. He "is expected to take... the programmes of the Division forward in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals."

"I want to thank Romain for the excellent work done with TWAS," said Academy President Bai Chunli.

Said Murenzi: "I have been privileged to work with some remarkably committed people – the TWAS Council and staff, and our many global partners – to build science for the developing world.... I am confident that many of us will continue to work together toward the goal that we all share: using science and engineering to support sustainable development and better lives for people everywhere."

Hassan was a Sudanese

mathematician when he met TWAS Founder Abdus Salam. As the Academy's first executive director, he was a close adviser to Salam and other elite scientists who sought to harness scientific innovation to advance the strength of developing nations. After Salam's death in 1996, he used his experience and diplomatic skill to help build global networks with far-reaching impact.

Hassan retired as executive director in 2011, but took the post of TWAS treasurer. He currently serves as president of the InterAcademy Partnership and of the Sudanese National Academy of Sciences.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has named Hassan chair of the Governing Council of the new Technology Bank for Least-Developed Countries. The bank, said Hassan, is "an innovative and very promising tool for scientists, innovators and entrepreneurs, and it will have a central place in the innovation ecosystem of many developing countries." ■

▼ TWAS Executive Director Romain Murenzi (left) met with Mohamed Hassan before his move to UNESCO headquarters in Paris.

