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Remembering Prof Denardo



Photo: Winter college on fibre optics, fibre lasers and sensors - ICTP, Trieste, 12-23 February 2007. 2nd row, far left (seated): Gallieno Denardo; 3rd row far left (standing): Ahmadou Wague.

Talking about Prof. Gallieno Denardo is a very difficult task for me. Difficult task because I feel always very sad thinking about a great man, a great mentor who suddenly disappear one terrific day of July 2007. I met Prof Denardo for the first time in Trieste at ICTP in 1986 during the Summer school on Atomic physics. Then I wrote a paper on atomic resonance to be published in ICTP preprint. For this purpose I was told to meet Prof. Denardo for the submission process. It was the starting point for almost twenty years of my strong relationship with him.

From this period with Prof. Denardo we started organizing the so called LAMP seminars (Lasers, Atomics and Molecular Physics seminars) during the Sumer School on Atomics Physics at ICTP. These seminars were devoted to establish connections between the participants of Summer School in sharing their scientific works with full participation to the school. The Summer school later became Winter college in Optics. I was appointed by Prof. Denardo to chair, to run and to organize these LAMP seminars and it was an occasion for all the participants of Winter college coming from different corners of the world to know each other. During the Winter college the LAMP seminars took place every afternoon from 3.00pm to 4.30 pm. It was a great momentum at ICTP when seeing enthusiastic young scientists from all over the world talking and competing about their scientific works and presentations. I was also appointed by Prof. Denardo to organize night sessions with participants at Galileo building showing video experiments from MIT on laser instrumentation and spectroscopic techniques. These videos were donated to ICTP by MIT-thanks to Denardo to set up an optics lab at ICTP. It was not easy for Denardo to set up an optics Lab at ICTP, because there was a strong opposition for this initiative arguing that ICTP is an international center for theoretical physics; not for experimental physics. However, he was able to set up an optical lab at the

basement of ICTP main building where many scientists from Africa, Latina America, India, Pakistan, Iran, Malaysia etc, were exposed to optical experiments and different applications of laser experimentation.

Prof Denardo was very instrumental for the creation of ICTP affiliated centers in Senegal, Ghana, Cameroon, Sudan, Cote d'Ivoire, Zimbabwe, Tunisia, Morocco and many other ICTP related partners in Easter Europe, Middle East, Asia and Latina America. These ICTP Affiliated centers later with a strong support of Prof. Joe Niemela played an important role in Africa for the creation and support of optical group in Senegal, in Ghana, in Cameroun and also establishment and support to regional Ph. D courses in atomics Physics in Senegal, Ghana and Cameroon.

These centers were also focal points for the development of optical groups in countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, Kenya , Chad, Congo, Gabon.

Prof Denardo and Prof Abdus Salam founding Director of ICTP, Nobel laureate of Physics , were also instrumental for the creation of African Laser Atomic Molecular and Optical sciences Network (LAM Network) in 1991 in Senegal . With a strong support of Prof.Denardo and ICTP, the LAM have organized regular international workshop on lasers and applications in all the regions in Africa (with coordinators in all the African countries) and become in 2000 an international organization member of ICO playing an important for the development of optical sciences in Africa The Lam network in close collaboration with Prof. Denardo have established strong cooperation relationships and partnership in optical science in Africa as wel as at regional and global levels. Thanks to the effort of Prof. Denardo, the scientific partnership of IUPAP was establish with LAM Network and African Physical Society. In addition LAM network establish scientific collaboration with Lund institute of technology and ISP at the university of Uppsala thanks to the effort of Prof. Denardo, Lennart Hasselgren and Sune Svanberg

In collaboration with International Atomic Energy Agency ,Prof. Denardo with ICTP have launched the STEP (Sandwich training program) to train students from developing countries in so called sandwich Ph.D program between laboratories in the North and counterpart lab in the South mainly in Africa. This was a fantastic program which help many students to get their Ph.D avoiding at the same the brain drain of qualified scientists.

Prof Denardo was also instrumental together with international Commission for the creation at ICTP, of the ICO/ ICTP Galieno Denardo award in Optics, one of ICO prizes devoted to optical science for young scientists. In Addition Prof Denardo also established the TSOSA group (Trieste System for Optical Science and Application). TSOAS members are ICTP and international commission for Optics (ICO), together with the international optical societies (Optica. SPIE, EOS, OWLS, LAM network and others). TSOSA role is to prepare ICTP winter college on Optics, to take initiatives and support ICTP program in optical sciences, and also the establishment of frontiers research in optical science. With TSOSA the thematic of ICTP winter college in Optics are established one in advance together with the selection of directors and participants to the College.

Prof Denardo was a real mentor for many scientists from developing countries at ICTP. In addition, I can say that Prof Denardo was like a minister of foreign affairs of ICTP in his multiple actions including meeting with political leaders and ministers of sciences from different countries. Prof Denardo legacy is an establishment of the strong partnership of ICTP with scientists from developing countries and the development of scientific activities in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Prof Denardo with his generosity gave opportunity to many scientist all over the world to establish sustainable scientific groups and laboratories in optical science and applications.

The spirit of Prof Denardo will remain for eternity in my heart.

In every day scientific challenges in many universities and research centres in Africa Denardo will remain an example to follow.

Thank you my dear Prof Denardo.

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