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I represent two organizations:

TWAS – The World Academy of Sciences – and IAP – the InterAcademy Partnership.

A major objective of TWAS is to build scientific capacity in developing countries. To achieve this, TWAS runs a series of programmes, many of which are targeted towards young scientists. Research grants, for example, allow young scientists to purchase equipment and consumables required for their research in their home country, and thus allow them to build up the capabilities of their own laboratories. TWAS also offers a number of fellowship and exchange programmes designed to offer scientists (again, mostly young scientists – either PhD students or postdocs) the opportunity to study and carry out research in top class universities in other developing countries, e.g. in Brazil, China, India, Malaysia, etc. It is important to note that this ‘South-South’ methodology results in very little brain drain, and more than 90% of awardees return to their home countries on completion of their fellowship.

TWAS began working in the field of science diplomacy in 2012. Among our recent activities (March 2017) was a workshop on ‘Scientific Refugees: Transnational resources’, which developed a series of more than 60 recommendations targeted at different constituencies and stakeholders on how to deal with scientists, engineers, medical doctors, etc, who have been displaced by war or civil strife. (The workshop report is available at <https://twas.org/article/refugee-scientists-way-forward>). TWAS and various partners are now aiming to implement several of these recommendations. The main idea is that, with the support of the scientific community, such ‘refugee scientists’ will be lost from the scientific workforce. If they are kept engaged, not only will they be able to apply their knowledge and contribute their skills in laboratories in their host countries, but they will also be ready, with up-to-date scientific information, to contribute in the rebuilding of their home countries when it is safe for them to return. Indeed, the research and education institutions in Trieste and Friuli Venezia Giulia are working together to see how these internationally-renowned science centres can assist in such activities.

Finally, IAP is currently engaged in a project: ‘Harnessing Science, Engineering and Medicine to Address Africa’s Challenges’, which is unfolding through the academies of science on the African continent. Academies are an important source of independent, credible scientific advice to governments, and thus can contribute to national development and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, many African academies are relatively weak

institutions. Under a new phase of this project, expected to kick off in 2018, IAP would support scientists in the African diaspora to engage with their home academies (or others in Africa) to assist them with developing policy papers, recommendations, etc, in areas of their scientific expertise. This not only provides a direct route for African diaspora scientists to engage in Africa, but also helps to strengthen African academies of science and build their reputations in the science-policy arena.