Under embargo until 24 April 2014

# NEWS RELEASE

**Rotary, UNESCO-IHE announce the first graduating class from a scholarship program to improve water and sanitation in underserved communities**

**DELFT, The Netherlands (24 April 2014) —** The first class of five Rotary sponsored scholars has graduated with Master of Science degrees in water education from the UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education. The graduates now will apply their education to water and sanitation projects in their home countries of Argentina, Uganda, Nigeria, Ethiopia and Ghana.

Established in 2011, the partnership between Rotary and UNESCO-IHE -- the world’s largest graduate water education facility -- addresses the global water and sanitation crisis by increasing the ranks of trained professionals critically needed to devise, plan and implement solutions in countries where communities lack access to clean water and safe sanitation. Rotary provides scholarship grants that enable local Rotary clubs and districts to select and sponsor eligible students to the program. Rotary members mentor the students throughout the program, building positive relationships that continue after graduation.

“We’re proud of the Rotary and UNESCO-IHE partnership and especially proud of our first class of Rotary water scholars, who will now use their expertise to develop sustainable water and sanitation solutions in their home countries,” said Rotary Foundation Trustee Stephen R. Brown. “The mentoring of the students by Rotary clubs and Rotary members – during their studies at UNESCO-IHE, as well as after they return home – is essential to the success of the scholarship program. These relationships and networks will enable students to effectively implement their skills in their own local communities. Their work to improve water and sanitation conditions will have a positive, lasting impact around the world.”

His sentiments are echoed by UNESCO-IHE Rector András Szöllösi-Nagy. “I am confident that as these young professionals return home, they will continue to play a vital role in managing our water systems in a sustainable way for future generations,” he said. “As alumni, they will remain part of the largest network of water professionals and become part of an extensive network of fellow Rotary scholarship recipients and Rotarians worldwide.”

For example, graduate Bernice Asamoah, of Ghana, plans a hygiene project that will use solar power to disinfect water for communal toilet facilities. Graduate Kenechukwu “Kaycee” Okoli, of Nigeria, knows the value of public education, especially to empower children to become change agents. “The objective is to visit schools and to teach children and adolescents basic sanitation habits,” he said.

Another graduate, Temesgen Adamu, of Ethiopia, points to the World Health Organization’s statistics indicating that about 2.5 billion people worldwide do not have access to improved sanitation, and over 783 million people lack access to clean drinking water. “In my home country, the water quality is poor, safe water and sanitation facilities are inaccessible and water based diseases widespread,” Adamu said.

Graduate Gonzalo Duró, of Argentina, said he learned the critical importance of “cooperation between partners, institutions and professionals” in developing solutions to water and sanitation issues, while Uganda’s Godfrey Baguma appreciated the practical nature of the studies. “I am now able to address water and sanitation issues in a more integrated and technical manner,” Baguma said, adding that his interactions with Rotary members helped make Delft “a home away from home.”

Building on the success of the first class, the second class of students - 16 in total - began graduate studies in October 2013 and will graduate in 2015. Applications for the scholarship program can be found here: <http://www.unesco-ihe.org/node/15630>

The UNESCO-IHE graduates become part of a vast network of Rotary Foundation alumni, consisting of 120,000 leaders and change agents around the world. Since 1947, more than 43,000 students and fellows have received Rotary scholarships supporting studies in a variety of disciplines representing a total investment of more than US$557 million.

**About UNESCO-IHE**

UNESCO-IHE Institute for Water Education is the largest international graduate water education facility in the world and is based in Delft, the Netherlands. The Institute confers fully accredited MSc degrees, and PhD degrees in collaboration with partners in the Netherlands. Since 1957 the Institute has provided graduate education to more than 14,500 water professionals from over 160 countries, the vast majority from the developing world. A unique combination of applied, scientific and participatory research in water engineering is offered combined with natural sciences and management sciences. More information: [www.unesco-ihe.org](http://www.unesco-ihe.org).

**About Rotary**

Rotary brings together a global network of volunteer leaders dedicated to tackling the world’s most pressing humanitarian challenges.Rotary connects 1.2 million members of more than 34,000 Rotary clubs in over 200 countries and geographical areas. Their work improves lives at both the local and international levels, from helping families in need in their own communities to working toward a polio-free world. For more information, visit [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org). For images, visit Rotary’s [Media Center](https://www.rotary.org/en/news-features/media-center).

**###**

**Note to editors:**

**First class:**

* Temesgen Adamu (Ethiopia), thesis: “Impact of Climate change, land use changes and water resource management on the hydrology of Rib-Gumera Catchment, Ethiopia”,
* Godfrey Peterson Baguma (Uganda), thesis: “Pathogen removal in a low-coast Anammox Dwonflow Hanging Sponge reactor”,
* Kenechukwu “Kaycee” Okoli (Nigeria), thesis: “Hydraulic Modelling: Uncertainty Estimation and Comparison”,
* Bernice Asamoah (Ghana), thesis: “Disinfection of greywater from communal toilets using UVA enhanced with TiO2 after pre-treatment with slow sand filter” and
* Gonzalo Duró (Argentina), thesis: “Bar formation in channels with varying width: numerical analysis and practical engineering implications”.

**The graduation ceremony will begin at 15:00, 24 April, at the “Oude Kerk”, Heilige Geestkerkhof 25, Delft.**

Speakers include:

* Professor András Szöllösi-Nagy, Rector of UNESCO-IHE
* Dr. Fritz Holzwarth, Chairman of the Governing Board of UNESCO-IHE
* Paul Knyff, Rotary International Director 2011-2013
* UNESCO-IHE Honorary Fellow 2014, Em. Professor Brian Moss, University of Liverpool

**Contacts**: Rotary: Stéphanie Tobler, +41 387 71 16, [stephanie.tobler@rotary.org](mailto:stephanie.tobler@rotary.org)

UNESCO-IHE: Alida Pham, +31 15 21 51 722, [a.pham@unesco-ihe.org](mailto:a.pham@unesco-ihe.org)