

Press release

03 June 2016

## **New scholarships bring West African students to Oxford**

The Blavatnik School of Government is delighted to announce a new partnership to bring West African students to the University of Oxford.

From 2017, the Africa Initiative for Governance (AIG) will fund five scholarships each year at the Blavatnik School of Government, the UK's first school of government, as part of a new five-year partnership which is based on the shared purpose of building good governance and public leadership.

The announcement was made following a public event at the Blavatnik School of Government which saw the former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan speak on the theme of *'What should the UN be doing in the 21st Century?'*

### **Expressing support for initiatives that foster leadership and education, Kofi Annan said:**

"Education is a human right with immense power to transform. On its foundation rest the cornerstones of freedom, democracy and sustainable human development. Scholarships open the gates to more young minds to contribute to this process."

The AIG Scholarships will have an initial focus on candidates from Nigeria and Ghana, allowing the students to study for a Master of Public Policy alongside classmates from across the globe. The scholarships will be available to those who can demonstrate academic excellence, proven leadership and commitment to public service and who intend to return to the public sector in Africa after completing their studies.

Along with the scholarship scheme will be an academic fellowship scheme. The AIG Visiting Fellowship will also be available from 2017, open to candidates who can demonstrate an outstanding contribution to public policy that has yielded meaningful impact on the public good, and commitment to public service in their country, region, and globally. The Fellowship is open to senior officials or practitioners working in or with government and who are resident in West Africa.

**Professor Ngaire Woods, Dean of the Blavatnik School of Government, said:** "We are deeply grateful to the Africa Initiative for Governance for partnering with us. The Blavatnik School of Government shares with the AIG a clear purpose – to transform government through effective leadership and better governance. The shared programme will enable excellent West African scholars, from all backgrounds, to study for an MPP and will also bring senior practitioners from the region to the School as AIG Visiting Fellows – providing opportunities to help drive transformational public sector leadership across the African continent."

Recognising that Africa's poor record of public sector governance is a factor that currently prevents the continent from achieving its true potential, the AIG will work with



governments and other partners to improve governance and transform public sector performance. Founded by Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede – a lawyer, banker, investor and philanthropist – the AIG believes that the high-calibre individuals trained at the Blavatnik School of Government will drive best practice standards of governance across Africa, ensuring sustainable economic growth and social justice.

**Mr Aigboje Aig-Imoukhuede, Chairman of the Africa Initiative for Governance, said:** “The AIG Scholarship and Fellowship initiatives are scalable interventions aimed at tackling Africa's intractable challenge of poor public sector leadership. I am confident that with our partnership with Oxford University's prestigious Blavatnik School will become fertile ground for growing future statesmen and women who will change my continent for good.”

The School currently has 117 Master of Public Policy (MPP) students from 54 countries and territories, as well as nine students studying for a doctorate (DPhil) in Public Policy. Based on financial need and thanks to considerable donor support, around 80 per cent of the School's students receive some form of financial assistance, with over half receiving full funding to meet tuition fees and living costs.

**/Ends.**

#### **Notes to Editors:**

For more information or to request an interview, please contact:

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#### **About the AIG Scholarships**

As part of a 5-year partnership with the Africa Initiative for Governance, from 2017 five fully-funded scholarships (covering tuition fee and living expenses) will be awarded to students who meet the Master of Public Policy selection criteria (academic excellence, strong commitment to public service, demonstrable leadership). Applicants must be resident in Ghana and Nigeria. For academic years 2020- 21 and 2021-22, or if there are insufficient applications from Nigeria and Ghana in academic years 2017-18 to 2019-20 other West African nations will be considered. These include: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Togo. Other countries with the agreement of the Benefactor.

#### **About the Blavatnik School of Government**

Founded at the University of Oxford in 2010, the Blavatnik School of Government exists to inspire and support better government and public policy around the world. We teach current and future public leaders through innovative programmes, conduct deep research into pressing issues facing policy makers around the world, and convene leaders and experts to foster better public policy. With a strong global outlook, we combine insights from a range of academic disciplines and derive



lessons from the public, private and third sectors. The School was made possible through a £75 million donation to the University of Oxford by American philanthropist Leonard Blavatnik.

[www.bsg.ox.ac.uk](http://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk)

**About the Africa Initiative for Governance (AIG)**

Africa's poor record of public sector governance is a factor that currently prevents the Continent from achieving its true potential.

AIG's pioneering initiative brings proven private sector innovation, leadership and funding in a private-public partnership to attract, inspire and support future leaders of Africa's public sector. With AIG's continuing support, high-calibre individuals will be able to drive best practice standards of governance in Africa, ensuring sustainable economic growth and social justice.

<http://aigafrica.com/>