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ISS/SIC Travel Scholar of the 48th WCS, Krakow, Poland, August 11 to 15, 2019**

I express my gratitude to the ISS Foundation, and its generous donors, who kindly sponsored my trip, and stay in Krakow during this high quality international surgical congress, without which, I would not be able to attend. This Congress was very educational for me, and I believe I have enriched my surgical knowledge and practice, as well as my teaching skills, and research career as a young academic surgeon from sub-Saharan Africa. I have even started sharing the acquired knowledge, ideas, and skills with my peers and students in my home country. Indeed, I would like to share my Krakow experience as a diary.

Sunday 11th August: In the beautiful venue of Krakow Congress Center, I attended the Career Advancement Course for Academic Surgeons taught by a reputable faculty. This whole day session helped me to structure my academic career in Surgery, teaching, and research, mainly creating a clinical research database. Later I attended the ISS/SIC Travel Scholar reception at 4:00 pm, and connected with many of the ISS/SIC and its integrated societies' leaders and other great mentors who welcomed us into the Congress. I attended finally the opening ceremony of the prestigious 48th WCS.

Monday 12th August: A very exciting day; I was in the Congress official ceremony of the ISS/SIC Travel Scholars presentation. This session was my most exciting moment as being on the stage, receiving my award certificate from Prof. Marco Patti, the President of ISS-Foundation. A group photo was taken before we left the stage. Later during the same day, we had several sessions of lectures and abstracts presentations. In the afternoon, I had a special opportunity of an "eye to eye talk" with Prof. Michael Sarr, the Secretary-Treasurer of ISS-Foundation. We have exchanged for more than 1 hour, and we discussed my plans as an academic surgeon in sub-Saharan Africa. To be honest, I have never been highlighted like this before concerning my surgical career in detail. Prof. Sarr had encouraged me to keep on doing efforts of balancing clinical duties and research career. I felt so special that day, and I am grateful to have been part of the travel scholars. On the same day, I also presented my article on the ISS/SIC free papers on Education. This was a great privilege for me.

Tuesday 13th - Thursday 15th, August: During those 3 days, early in the morning, we had our writers' workshop by ISS/SIC /Springer Faculty. This was an efficient way of training me in generating high-quality research articles and improving my writing skills, and critical thinking. I had the privilege of being in Prof. Melina Kibbe's crew; she is such an amazing teacher with efficient communication' skills. I also had time to connect with travel scholars. During the rest of the day, I had the opportunity to attend several educational sessions highlighting up-to-date techniques. I connected with my peers, and senior surgeons, I exchanged ideas with the COSECSA team from the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland, the current and previous Presidents of COSECSA. I had some free time to visit the beautiful city of Krakow.

Wednesday 14th August: In the Afternoon, I attended the General Assembly of the ISS/SIC. It was very interesting to see how the leaders of the surgical societies are working on the advancement of surgery, and I involved in ISS. I also assisted in the announcement of the next 49th WCS in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2021. In the evening, there was a particular session with the International Association of Student Surgical Societies. A good discussion was generated between the group of aspiring surgeons and young surgeons (travel scholars), and I even connected with some of them for potential future projects.

To conclude, I am also grateful to all my home country great mentors, Prof. Moses Galukande, Dr. Joel Kiryabwire, and many others for their continuous guidance in my career as an Academic Surgeon.

Hervé M. Lekuya