

Memorial Tribute to Prof Laban Ayieko Ogallo

Joint CR4D SAC and ICP Meeting 24-25 September 2021, Dakar, Senegal

The objective of these series of *paying Memorial Tribute to those sons and daughters in Africa who have passed on after having distinguished themselves in scientific work, especially in weather and climate sciences as well as related geosciences* is to inform and encourage young people on the continent and those in the diaspora to know men and women who have risen from the continent to attain greatness and leadership in their fields of specialization and to motivate these youthful minds to believe in themselves by following in the footsteps of these eminent men and women of renown to pursue excellence in productive spheres that spur sustainable development in Africa. The youthful minds should have a rallying cry that says, “If the eminent men and women from our continent did it, we can also emulate them and do even better for the welfare of our mother continent. It can be done.”

Nativity, Location of Birth and Exit

Professor Laban Ayieko Ogallo was born in Kenya on 20th January 1950 and died on Thursday, 19th November 2020 after a short illness. He was 70 years old.

Who was Prof Laban Ayieko Ogallo?



Prof Ogallo was a student at the University of Nairobi, Department of Meteorology, where his teacher and mentor, Prof G.O.P. Obasi was Chair of the Department and Dean of the Faculty of Science. Laban Ayieko Ogallo also rose to be Professor of Meteorology at the same University and became the Director of the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Climate Prediction and Application Centre (ICPAC), in Nairobi, from where he retired.

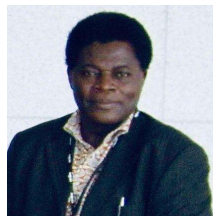
Research Interests

Prof. Ogallo held BSc (Hons), MSc and PhD degrees in Meteorology from the University of Nairobi. His main research areas of interest included climate change, regional climate modelling, prediction, early warning services and applications for addressing climate change and integrated disaster risk reduction challenges.

Achievements

Prof Ogallo was a pioneer meteorologist who committed his work to understanding the climatic characteristics of the Eastern African sub-region and how to apply and use the climate information and services. Prof Ogallo contributed significantly to innovations in meteorology in Africa through support of research and training in the predictability potential of the Eastern Africa seasonal rainfall and application of the science of meteorology in various socio-economic activities among communities in Africa. He was also engaged in the establishment and maintenance of centres charged with the provision of climatological services in many parts of the world.

Having started his profession as a meteorologist in the mid-1970s, Prof Ogallo rose from a junior scientist to a



full Professor of Meteorology at the University of Nairobi. During his tenure at the University of Nairobi, he guided many undergraduate and post graduate students, most of whom were from African countries, through their studies and research, thereby enhancing regional human capacity requirements for professional meteorologists required by the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and related institutions. He held key leadership positions at the University of Nairobi, including Chairman of the Department of Meteorology, which is the University component of the WMO Regional Training Center (RTC) -Nairobi.

In the early years of his professional work, Prof. Ogallo pioneered major research initiatives that focused on the impacts of Climate Change and on predictability of the African Seasonal Rainfall, work that earned him recognition and for which he was awarded the “*WMO Award for the Encouragement of Young Scientists*” in 1982. His research initiatives on the Eastern African seasonal rainfall predictability potential used predictors such

as sea surface temperature (SST) indices, El Nino/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) indices, Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), Quasi-Biennial Oscillation (QBO) and Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) relating the linkages to extremes in rainfall and temperature over the African region and anomalies in the global climate systems.

The results of Prof. Ogallo's research work have contributed enormously to the WMO's regional and national efforts to enhance seasonal climate prediction and early warning systems, products and services within its Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS). The research has been key to the identification of leading modes of climate variability, such as the Decadal Variability Mode.

Spearheaded the development of seasonal climate prediction programmes for Africa

Prof Ogallo effectively spearheaded the development of seasonal climate prediction programmes for Africa at a time when frequent droughts ravaged vast areas of the continent with adverse consequences including migration of people across borders and internal displacement of populations often leading to social conflicts. He took the frontline to oversee full institutionalisation and operationalisation of seasonal prediction programmes in the Eastern and Southern Africa sub-regions as initial steps towards effective early warnings of drought risks and management in the region.

Establishment of the ICPAC – RCC and Building its New Centre at Ngong, Nairobi

Prof. Ogallo engaged with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Member States and negotiated for the successful transformation of what was then a WMO Drought Monitoring Project for Eastern Africa into an IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) serving the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA) with climate prediction services. This initiative has had worldwide replication reaching as far as South America, Asia and Europe. Along with these activities, Prof. Ogallo pioneered initiatives, which led to scientific consultations among sectoral players in food security across many parts of Africa, thereby enabling preparedness and early action in situations of drought risks.



Pioneered Research and Prediction Models for Malaria and Using Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)

Prof. Ogallo was one of the lead scientists drawn from many parts of Africa who worked with sector researchers to develop a climate-based malaria epidemic prediction model for tropical Africa. Some of his recent researches have integrated Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) **for nature-based local disaster risk management.**

Had many Memberships and Advisory Roles including member of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) for the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) for the Climate Research for Development (CR4D) in Africa initiative and member of the WMO Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP), among many others

Prof Ogallo was a founder member of the Kenya Meteorological Society (KMS) as well as the African Meteorological Society (AfMS), where he also served as Chief Editor. Prof. Ogallo's initiatives led to significant contributions in the development of meteorological sciences in the region. He provided leadership as a founding member of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) for the African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) in Niamey, Niger, where he played a critical catalytic nurturing role for over twenty years. His contribution had immense benefits to the establishment of a strategic and sustainable institution with immense benefits not only to Africa but globally.

Prof Ogallo provided science advisory roles at national, regional and international levels as can be seen from his membership to the Kenya National Academy of Sciences (KAS); Kenya Meteorological Society (KMS); African Academy of Sciences (AAS); Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) for the Climate Research for Development (CR4D) in Africa initiative founded through the partnership between the African Climate Policy Centre (ACPC) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Ministerial Conference on Meteorology (AMCOMET), the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the World Climate Research Programme (WCRP) and the Global Framework for Climate Services (GFCS). He has been a member of the recently formed WMO Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) and a member of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) as well as chairman of the Prize Committee on Earth, Astronomy and Space Sciences.

The Legacy of Prof Laban Ayieko Ogallo

Professor Ogallo leaves behind a long legacy of innovations and contributions to the science of meteorology and will be greatly missed by the meteorological community not only in Kenya and Africa but globally by the WMO

Members. Of crucial importance, however, is that Prof Ogallo was a great and decent man, a good person of integrity and kindness who always strived to see the applications of science to societal problems as well as its applicability to conserve the environment we live in.

If he was here today, Prof Ogallo would have been happy to participate in this CR4D SAC-ICP meeting in Dakar, Senegal. His message on Research would have resonated well with that of the WMO Secretary General, Prof Petteri Taalas that Research for Services or Applied Research and Human Capacity Development initiatives are essential ingredients for National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) and partner institutions if they have to provide an integrated service required by user communities including those users at the “Last Mile”. He would have also called for advocacy for the proper application of the Climate Science through Outreach programmes in key economic sectors to enhance productivity in all African Member States. He would have emphasised on demonstration of socio-economic value of NMHS and partner institutions to key sectors impacted by weather and climate. He would have called on Member States in Africa to increase funding in their budgets by allocating 5% of the GDP to Research to help build information necessary for Climate Change Adaptation for Resilience Building, especially developing the intended Nationally Determined Contributions for the Paris Agreement (2015) on Climate Change.



It is my hope that the CR4D will come up with an Integrated Strategy and Action Plan which ensure that all the members in the Institution Collaboration Platform (ICP), including the NMHSs, can demonstrate their social-economic benefits to key sectors (including agriculture, water, health, energy and DRR, tourism, transport, building industry, aviation, economic planning and climate change) in support of sustainable development.

The passing on of Prof Laban Ayieko Ogallo left a big gap in the scientific community, but we extol his contribution to the development of regional and international meteorology and its applications in Africa.

The CR4D SAC and ICP members and participants (both in person and online) attending this meeting in Dakar, Senegal, having extolled his contribution to the development of regional and international meteorology and its applications in Africa and the broader world, are all united in communicating their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, friends and relatives of Prof Laban Ayieko Ogallo.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

RIP Laban!

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