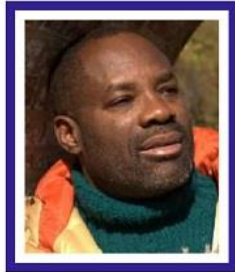


## 1 How Do We Reverse the Brain Drain?

*Philip Emeagwali*



# My Quest for an Internet

In this, the 31st installment of our weekly series at [emeagwali.com](http://emeagwali.com), we present Part 7 of Philip Emeagwali's lecture on reversing the brain drain of scientists and technologists from developing nations to the United States. It was delivered in Geneva, Switzerland on April 26, 2010.

The Union Jack cast its shadow in every global time zone, giving rise to the saying, "**The sun never sets on the British Empire.**"

## How Do We Reverse the Brain Drain from Nigeria?

by Philip Emeagwali

[emeagwali.com](http://emeagwali.com)

Once upon a time,  
West Africa was not behind Europe

in terms intellectual capital and  
development. Ten centuries before

## 2 How Do We Reverse the Brain Drain?

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Christopher Columbus set sail for the Americas,  
and Mungo Park sought the course of the River Niger,  
Timbuktu loomed large  
in the European imagination  
as one of the most mysterious  
and remote places on Earth.

Timbuktu which emerged  
from the banks of the River Niger  
was a metaphor for the end of the  
ancient world. Yet, that fabled city,



Timbuktu, was only upstream  
along the River Niger from the twin  
cities of Onitsha and Asaba.

Timbuktu was great not because of its petroleum reserves but because of its unsurpassed intellectual capital, the collective knowledge and wisdom of its people. Nigeria will join the world's top 20 economies, not because of its petroleum revenues but because of the technological knowledge of future generations.

For Nigeria to join the top twenty economies, it must turn its brain drain into brain gain. Timbuktu, as a region of intellectual excellence, attracted the best brains, benefited from brain gain, and inspired the ancient west African proverb:

"Salt from the north, gold from the south, silver from the white man's land, but the word of God and the treasures of truth are found only in Timbuktu."

For Nigeria to build the Timbuktu of tomorrow and become a top twenty economy, it must increase its technological capital, increase brain gain from its Diaspora to the motherland.

Nigeria needs more men and women of ideas, especially technology visionaries and futurists to help its people answer the larger question of who they are and where they want to go.

It was Britain's control of maritime technology that enabled it to reshape the destiny of Africa via 500 years of slave trade and colonization.

### 3 How Do We Reverse the Brain Drain?

*Philip Smeagwali*



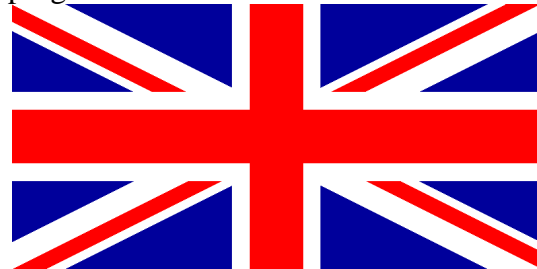
While the United States was beginning to profit from the brain drain from Europe and Africa, Timbuktu was being sacked by invaders from Morocco and by slave traders from the Americas, and its best brains fled.

It lost its human capital needed for growth and development. Timbuktu was brain drained and never recovered as a center of intellectual excellence.

Nigeria is the tenth most populous nation but cannot join the top ten economies without, first and foremost, turning its brain drain into brain gain.

Nigeria will be 50 years old in five months. Put differently, Nigerians over 50 years old were born in a British West African colony named "Nigeria."

The nation that controls critical technologies rules the world. For centuries, Great Britain ruled a quarter of the Earth through its unparalleled command of maritime technology and its conquest of the Seven Seas. Britain undoubtedly established itself as the world's first superpower through its rapid and ruthless colonial expansion program.



The British raised their Union Jack over Canada and Australia, India and Hong Kong, Egypt and Kenya, and countless other countries even the United States.

The Union Jack cast its shadow in every global time zone, giving rise to the saying, "**The sun never sets on the British Empire.**"

The [video](#) of this speech is posted at [emeagwali.com](#).



Press [CTRL-D](#) to SAVE this page for easy revisit

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#### 4 How Do We Reverse the Brain Drain?

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Below are lecture companion photos taken on April 26, 2010 at Intercontinental Geneve, Switzerland. The captions were as provided by the conference planner.



Gov. Uduaghan and lead speaker, Prof. Philip Emeagwali, Nigerian-born world acclaimed-computer programmer and inventor of the internet.



## 5 How Do We Reverse the Brain Drain?

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Gov. Uduaghan watches as Prof. Emeagwali displays a memorabilia on Delta State presented to him after his captivating address in Geneva, Switzerland.



Mrs. Moremi Soyinka-Onijala, Special Assistant to the President on Migration at the launching of the European hub of the Delta Diaspora Direct (D3) programme in Geneva, Switzerland.



A cross-section of Delta Diasporans at the launching of the European hub of the Delta Diaspora Direct (D3) programme in Geneva, Switzerland.

## 6 How Do We Reverse the Brain Drain?

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Mr. Gordon Bristol, Nigeria Ambassador to France in a warm handshake with Prof. Emeagwali during the launching of the European hub of the Delta Diaspora Direct (D3) programme in Geneva, Switzerland.



A cross-section of diplomats and guests listen to a presentation with rapt attention during the launching of the European hub of the Delta Diaspora Direct (D3) programme in Geneva, Switzerland.



## 7 How Do We Reverse the Brain Drain?

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Mr. Bernard Okumagba, Commissioner for Economic Planning with Dr. Lucky Akaruese of the University of Port Harcourt listening to a presentation with rapt attention during the launching of the European hub of the Delta Diaspora Direct (D3) programme in Geneva, Switzerland.



Emeagwali captures the attention of the audience with his riveting presentation during the launching of the European hub of the Delta Diaspora Direct (D3) programme in Geneva, Switzerland.

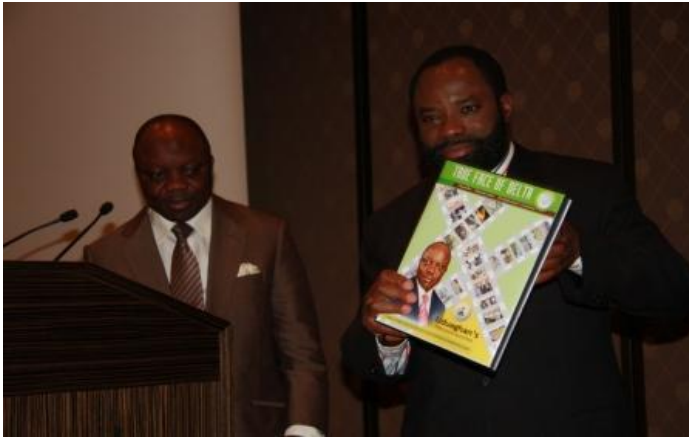


Amb. Torn York Chor, Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations, Geneva, Gov. Uduaghan, and Dr. Martins Uhomoibhi, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria Ambassador to Switzerland and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Geneva, who was chairman of the event.

## 8 How Do We Reverse the Brain Drain?

*Philip Emeagwali*

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Prof. Emeagwali (right) displays a souvenir of the True Face of Delta presented to him by Gov. Uduaghan at the Delta Diaspora Direct (D3) summit held in Geneva, Switzerland



Mr. Simon Ighofose, a Deltan Diasporan in the UK, Mr. Sam Omatseye, Chairman, Editorial Board of The Nation Newspaper, Mr. Okumagba, Prof. Emeagwali, Mr. Oma Djebah, Mr. Eddy Odivwri, Member, Editorial Board of Thisday Newspaper, and Dr. Akaruese.