

Miss Christabel Ofori-Atta is one of Ghana's budding young engineers in the energy industry today. She holds a BSc. in Petrochemical Engineering from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Ghana and is on track for an MSc. in Sustainable Energy Futures from Imperial College London. Currently, she works as a Field Engineer with Schlumberger and is involved in multiple oil and gas projects across Ghana, Nigeria and West Africa.

Throughout her pursuit of academic and career successes, she remains driven, open-minded, ambitious, creative and forward-thinking. Furthermore, she is resilient and focused uniquely on continuous learning, developing relevant skills, pushing boundaries and influencing prodigious growth of world economies, especially Africa's.

In the future, she will be looking to join rising energy leaders to tackle energy challenges and reduce energy poverty globally. Through her efforts and collaborations, she will be at the forefront of sustainability, next-generation technology and turning ideas to value for human life. In tandem, as a firm believer in equal opportunities for all, she hopes to substantially empower young females through mentorship and training to increase women representation in STEM careers globally.

Miss Ofori-Atta is determined to make a lasting impact in the world. As she likes to quote: "The goal is not to live forever. The goal is to create something that will." - Chuck Palahniuk.

### **Why did you decide to take time out of work to study and how did you decide which course? Tell us a little about the course.**

As a young engineer in the oil and gas industry, I quickly became keenly aware of the major wave of transformation towards sustainability, greater efficiency and digitalization that is taking place especially within the energy sector. Energy companies are under increasing pressure each day to evolve and adopt innovative and sustainable practices and technologies in line with climate change action and decarbonization targets as a result. Schlumberger, for example, which is the company I work with, is poised to become a Sustainability leader and has already launched a corporate strategy and transition technology portfolio towards a net-zero future. Having realised this ongoing transition, I felt the pressing need to reposition myself to deeply understand the changing energy landscape and the strategies required by companies to remain competitive in global markets. This would be essential to my career growth as I would very much like to stay relevant in times ahead and actively support critical decision-making that turn ideas into value for people and businesses. Fueled by this reason, and coupled with my ambition to become a thought leader focused on tackling global energy challenges and reducing energy poverty, especially in Africa, I decided to take time out of work to pursue a postgraduate degree centered around providing a sustainable energy future. Deciding which course I wanted to study was easy. I already knew what I wanted to get out of the course so I scouted for courses that could deliver these objectives. I came across the MSc. Sustainable Energy Futures at Imperial College London in my search and it fit like a glove. It provided the perfect cross-disciplinary synergy between technology, environment, policy and economics that I was looking for. I was so sure that I was going to get opportunities to learn and develop new strategies to contribute to real-world solutions. And so far, I have not been disappointed.

### **What was challenging about going back to study?. How have your SLB colleagues reacted and how supportive SLB has been in your pursuit for the masters degree?**

I had been out of the academic world for about four years so, going back to study I was quite worried that I might struggle a bit to re-acclimatize myself to the scholastic nature of a learning institution. Besides, I was entirely new to the UK and the system of education here seemed quite different than I was used to. Already, the masters programme is very demanding of time and effort. But especially in Imperial College London, to me, it is relatively super intense than in other schools.

Additionally, if I am to be very honest, in spite of my interest in Sustainable Energy, it was still fairly an uncharted territory to me because I was coming from a region where renewable energy technologies, electric transport and energy storage among others were underdeveloped and merely a theory. So it definitely took awhile to readjust.

I am grateful for the massive support I have received from my SLB colleagues and management. My colleagues have motivated me every step of the way to press on. I think they are as equally expectant as I am of the new and improved impacts I could make to push the company's sustainability agenda for itself, its clients and the energy industry as a whole forward. Furthermore, rather than have to quit my job to pursue the masters degree, I was offered a study leave instead by SLB. It was a long arduous process to get my leave approved from top management because there are a lot of structures and stages in place that could sometimes be frustrating. However, I was humbled by the fact that my direct management did not give up eventually but kept pushing for the needed approvals. It boosted my confidence in SLB's commitment to supporting the personal and career growth of its people.

**Has it been what you expected so far, has anything surprised you? What were the key things you have learnt so far, soft skills and more specific on sustainability, that you think will change your career path going forward?**

Well, the exposure, for one, has been incredible and more than I expected. Meeting and collaborating with new people from different backgrounds and discussing ideas with a profound intellectual community that is aligned towards advancing a more sustainable future has been one of the biggest highlights. Going through the MSc. Sustainable Energy Futures course especially, I feel I have become more open-minded, forward-thinking and proactive with an undeniable foothold in international energy dynamics. I have expanded my knowledge appreciably on next-generation energy systems and technologies and learned new things as seemingly simple as how to write a good policy brief. Besides, the course is expandable in a way that it merges the technical part with the economics and policy and data science, digitalization and project management aspects making me well-rounded. This is very important if one wants to have a holistic view of the energy sector to fully take on energy projects subsequently.

Certainly, understanding the interplay that exists between renewable integration, storage, demand-side management, interconnected networks and energy markets provides greater insight into the level of flexibility and optimization that can be attained to ensure cost-effectiveness and sustainability for businesses and countries. Additionally, I think that not one-size-fits-all. As such, in order to fully deliver net-zero targets, different organizations, countries and regions might have to employ different approaches that is more suited to their economic and environmental climate. However, it is very imperative that we make a conscious effort everyday to not lose sight of the main goal. Going forward, I am very confident that I have the relevant toolbox to guide SLB and clients in future decision making to reach their sustainability targets. Similarly, I will be uniquely positioned to contribute to improving the energy sector substantially in my home country Ghana, Africa and the world at large.