

FINAL REPORT ON

“SCIENCE COMMUNICATION IN A DIVERSE WORLD”

7th International Conference on the Public Communication of Science and Technology

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

4 – 7 DECEMBER 2002

“Science communication in a diverse world” was the theme of an international conference, organised by the Public Communication of Science and Technology (PCST) Network in Cape Town, South Africa at the end of 2002. The 7th international biennial PCST conference (PCST-7), and the first held in Africa, was attended by 409 delegates from 41 (nine African) countries around the globe, more than half of them from outside South Africa.

The conference explored innovative approaches in the public communication of science and technology. Science communication within different cultures and multi-cultural societies was a central theme. This conference provided a forum for leaders in science communication from around the globe to interact, with emphasis on enriching exchanges between developed and developing countries.

PCST conferences are the main networking events of this global community of people committed to developing research and practice in this fast-developing field. The PCST Network's scientific committee was responsible for the PCST-7 content, and the meeting was organised by the Foundation for Education, Science and Technology (FEST) in South Africa, with primary sponsorship from South Africa's Department of Science and Technology (DST).

PCST-7 was held from 4 - 7 December 2002 at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in Rondebosch on the slopes of Table Mountain. The conference programme (Appendix 1) consisted of three well-attended plenary sessions, 47 parallel sessions and 36 poster presentations, and various social activities.

Delegates who arrived early were treated to a viewing of the solar eclipse and an eclipse theatre presentation at the MTN ScienCentre, at a Cape Town shopping mall early on the morning of 4 December.

Registration started at a cocktail and networking event at the Two Oceans Aquarium at the Cape Town Waterfront at 18:30 on 4 December 2002, where delegates had the opportunity to meet one another in a wonderful “underwater” atmosphere and experience the diverse educational activities of this aquarium for themselves.

Conference highlights

Day 1

On 5 December, the conference opened with a plenary session, chaired by Dr Rob Adam, Director-General of the Department of Science and Technology, South Africa. Women Unite, a Xhosa Dance Group, provided a vibrant performance by dancers and drummers that set the lively pace for the rest of the conference.

Conference Chair, Marina Joubert of FEST, welcomed the delegates, and the opening address was delivered by Dr Ben Ngubane, Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology.

Professor David King, Chief Scientific Adviser to HM Government and the Head of the Office of Science and Technology, United Kingdom, delivered a keynote address on "Science communication in a diverse world".

"Public understanding of science - pick your favorite flavour" was the theme of keynote speaker Dr Alan Leshner, CEO of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The rest of the day consisted of 18 parallel sessions, and ended with poster presentations and a cocktail reception for delegates hosted by the British Council. A letter of intent on scientific and technological co-operation between the South African Department of Science and Technology and the Office of Science and Technology of the government of the UK and Northern Ireland was signed on this occasion. This letter of intent hopes to facilitate a process for promoting scientific research and technological advancement on foot and mouth and priority livestock diseases.

Day 2

The second day of the conference started with a plenary session on "Science and Art", with presentations by Siân Ede of the Gulbenkian Foundation, UK; Frank Burnet and Ben Johnson of the University of West England, UK; Eric Heller, Harvard University, USA; and Brian Schwartz, of the Graduate Centre of the City University of New York, USA. The session proved to be extremely popular with most delegates. It was chaired by Dr Adi Paterson of DST and the presentations provided much material for lively discussion.

The 18 parallel sessions were well-attended on this day. The formal activities of this day were concluded with further poster presentations.

The conference dinner was held at Marco's African Place in Cape Town, where Dr Khotso Mokhele, President of the National Research Foundation, presented the SA Science Lens Awards to the winners in the three categories

of South Africa's first science photography competition, organised by FEST and the *Mail & Guardian*. Reports on the competition appeared in the *Mail & Guardian* of 6 December (Appendix 3), and in Summer 2003 issue of the magazine *Sci2Tech* (Appendix 4).

Day 3

The theme of the third day's plenary session was: "Different cultures and new challenges". Elizabeth Rasekoala of the African-Caribbean Network for Science & Technology, UK; Alex Tindimubona of the Network of Ugandan Researchers and Research Users, Uganda; and Rick Borchelt of the Whitehead Institute, MIT, USA delivered excellent addresses. "The third plenary session really set the scene and had people thinking about the theme of the conference," commented one delegate.

During the meeting titled "Looking towards the future of PCST", Vladimir de Semir of the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Spain, gave a preview of PCST-8 that is to take place in Barcelona in 2004. Korea was announced as the host country for PCST-9 in 2006. Marina Joubert and her team were given a standing ovation from the audience for the organisation of PCST-7.

A further 11 parallel sessions were presented on day 3, mostly in the form of practical workshops and discussions.

A tour to the penguins of Boulders Beach, Simonstown, and supper at a restaurant near the beach presented the ideal opportunity for delegates to wind down and network after the conference.

MARKETING

An intensive campaign was launched over a year prior to the conference to market PCST-7 amongst South African scientists and communicators, as well as those from other countries. A special effort was made to inform stakeholders in other African countries of the event, which resulted in 14 delegates from nine African countries other than South Africa attending. The South Africans at the conference numbered 199.

On the web

- PCST web site and several electronic mail listservs
- The FEST website had a section dedicated to PCST-7, with links to the PCST website (www.fest.org.za/pcst/index.html), the conference secretariat and tour operators for online registration and booking for accommodation and social events. The conference programme was available on this site and was regularly updated. Papers and presentations, and the book of abstracts were made available on the website after the conference. Photos in an album on this website include those taken during the conference and pre-conference tours.

All papers received from speakers at the conference is now available on this site.

Print ads

- Paid advertisements were placed in the UCT's weekly newspaper, *Monday Paper* Vol 21, No. 11 (Appendix 5); and Rhodes University's *Rhodes Journalism Review*, August 2002 (Appendix 6).
- Free editorial was obtained in *Monday Paper*, the National Research Foundation's external newsletter, *News@nrf*, *Rhodes Journalism Review*; and the University of Stellenbosch's staff newsletter.

Posters and folders

A set of 1 000 promotional conference posters, another 3 000 posters calling for papers for PCST-7, and 1 000 A4 folders containing preliminary programmes and other information relevant to the conference were produced and disseminated by FEST to the South African Department of Science and Technology and other members of the science communication community in South Africa as well as abroad. Sets of these posters were also sent to the 22 PCST committee members to disseminate around the globe. The Chairperson distributed posters by hand to a large number of people at relevant events on her two visits abroad in 2002.

Personal marketing

The Conference Chair and members of her organisation made use of every opportunity to market the conference. During two visits abroad in 2002, the Chairperson utilised several opportunities to promote PCST-7. She formally presented a preview of the conference at the Annual Conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington DC in February 2002. During a visit the UK in March 2002 (on invitation of the British Council) she made formal and informal presentations on the conference at various relevant organisations. There was a significant increase in both American and British delegates, thanks to these marketing efforts.

The marketing proved so successful that registration had to be closed and people put on a waiting list in case of cancellations three weeks before the conference.

SELECTION OF ABSTRACTS

Following the call for proposals for PCST-7, close to 500 abstracts were received and jointly reviewed by all the PCST committee members. An electronic interface, developed by Vene Muskett of FEST for this purpose, allowed the committee members to post their remarks on the abstracts while also having access to the comments from all other members. This greatly facilitated of the selection process and simplified the logistics.

CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT

The Conference Management Secretariat of UCT's Faculty of Health Sciences provided these services for PCST-7. Organisation from their side was excellent and many delegates expressed their appreciation for the efficient, friendly services provided.

There were complaints, however, that the accommodation arranged by the conference secretariat was too expensive for local delegates. It was suggested that the university residences could have been used to supply accommodation for people on a strict budget.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The administration and organisation of the conference were significantly boosted by the acquisition of the services of Michelle Riedlinger, an experienced science communicator from Australia who had been deeply involved in the organisation of previous PCST conferences. Michelle joined FEST in July 2002 as volunteer worker, and worked with the PCST-7 conference team until after the event. Her services and experience proved to be invaluable in organising this event.

EXHIBITS

- The winning entries and finalists in the SA Science Lens photographic competition provided an attractive and extremely popular exhibit in front of the main lecture hall where the plenary and some parallel sessions took place.
- The British Council's exhibit: "Innovation UK".
- Professor Jeff Bindon of the University of Natal's Department of Mechanical Engineering exhibited easy-to-assemble steam cars, used to excite children about science and technology.
- The University of West England, UK, provided an exhibit of posters used in their Science-on-the-buses campaign.
- SciQuest science activity material for children was exhibited by the MTN ScienCentre. Some delegates found this very entertaining!
- The solar eclipse poster series "Madam and Eve" and "The Pezoolies", developed for the total solar eclipse experienced in parts of South Africa on 4 December 2002, was exhibited to illustrate local Puset projects.
- Two mobile outreach units were parked outside the conference venue: The Discovery Mobile from Cape Town's Discovery Centre and a small mobile aquarium from the Tow Oceans Aquarium.
- A craft market showcasing and selling crafts produced by people from Cape Town's Khayelitsha township proved very popular with delegates from abroad.

ADDITIONAL PRINTING AND PROMOTIONAL ITEMS FOR THE CONFERENCE

- 1 000 copies of the Final Programme was printed for marketing the conference during the final weeks before the conference, and for use of delegates during the conference;
- 500 copies of a comprehensive Delegates' Manual containing all abstracts were printed;
- Special DST and FEST banners were printed for display at the conference
- Special banners were printed for a PCST-7 desk at the domestic and international arrivals halls of Cape Town International Airport (were PCST-7 delegates could report for free transfers to their hotels)

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Technical support was of a high standard and received praise from delegates. A special preview room was available for speakers to pre-load their presentations to ensure smooth running of events during all sessions. Delegates could also get Internet and PC access in this preview room.

MEDIA EXPOSURE

Several journalists from the daily newspapers in Cape Town and surroundings attended sessions and reported on the conference. An SABC television/radio journalist attended most of the conference sessions and conducted numerous interviews with speakers, including with Minister Ben Ngubane, Minister of Science and Technology and of Arts and Culture.

Telephone interviews with the chairperson and committee members were conducted daily by both local and overseas journalists. She was, for example, interviewed by a journalist from an international medical radio programme.

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

Some of the social and accompanying persons' programmes, as well as pre and post conference tours, were provided by Affinity Africa Tours. Delegates were very complimentary about the friendly service, and especially their pre-conference eclipse safari to the Kruger National Park proved to be a great success.

There were some complaints from (especially local) delegates that their services were expensive. Despite this, most tours were full booked or nearly full. There also proved to be a need for more regular bus services between the UCT venue and the CBD/Waterfront.

Catering for the coffee and tea breaks, as well as the lunches provided during the conference, were more than adequate.

The opening cocktail in the Two Oceans Aquarium was well-attended, the catering was superb, but the acoustics and sound system were not adequate for addressing the audience. Delegates thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to explore the magnificent facility.

The British Council reception at UCT at the end of the conference activities on the first day was very elegant and the catering excellent. An agreement

The conference dinner was held at Marco's African Place in the Cape Town CBD. The venue has a typical African décor and specialises in local cuisine. Some delegates were of the opinion that the restaurant did not provide good value for money, that it was extremely hot inside and the live music too loud. The acoustics were not adequate for the presentation of the prizes in the SA Science Lens competition. Many delegates, however, indicated that they thoroughly enjoyed this "different" evening.

The tour to view the penguins at Boulders Beach, Simonstown, and the informal dinner near the beach was highly successful and provided the opportunity for delegates to unwind and network in a relaxed atmosphere.

PARALLEL SESSION HIGHLIGHTS

The session on training scientists to use the media effectively by Jenni Metcalfe, Econnect Communication, Australia and Toss Gascoigne, Federation of Australian Scientific and Technological Societies (FASTS), Australia (Session 40) was excellent, highly interactive, and with lots of audience participation. The presenters were seasoned, professional and knowledgeable.

"Show time at science centres" – all three presenters were brilliant. It was interactive, amusing, entertaining and informative – everything science shows for children should be to demystify science.

The sessions: "Conceptual developments in science communication" and "Trends in teaching and learning science communication" (Sessions 2 & 27) had interesting content and led to fruitful discussions.

Judy Mann-Lang of Sea World Education Centre impressed with her presentation: "Reaching out - marine science and resource management training for rural coastal communities" (Parallel Session 5).

Lilly Whiteman's workshop: "Signs of intelligible life in the scientific community - the sciences begin to embrace plain language", a hands-on workshop and tips on communicating science in plain language, was extremely well-received. "This is what we need more of – hands-on activities," commented one delegate. It was comprehensive, to the point, relevant, and contained useful tips for science communicators.

Pierre Marie Fayard of the Université de Poitiers, France (Parallel Sessions 1, 7 and 23) impressed his audiences with his thorough research and good presentations.

Useful presentations to media persons were Sessions 24, especially Massimiano Bucchi's presentation "Does information matter? Media exposure, information and attitudes to biotechnology in the Italian public"; and Session 11, especially Mary Woolley's presentation: "Impact of media-science roundtables and training programmes for researchers".

The workshop presented by Will Rifkin of the University of New South Wales, Australia (Session 41), titled: "25 Ways to Spot an Expert - How people decide who is worth listening to" was excellent. It was interactive and encouraged participation by delegates.

Chris Krishna-Pillay's workshop (Session 44) on theatre and dance in science communication was interesting, thought-provoking and engaged the audience.

Fiona Barbagallo of the British Association (Session 8) presented a paper titled "Should we continue to pursue dialogue?" The audience felt she did well by not going along with the mainstream, one-dimensional focus of "science for the public".

Session 39, "Evaluating science communication programmes", provided good, relevant discussion on a highly relevant issue.

Delegates who attended Session 31 (Visualising science communication) found the papers particularly useful and relevant.

GOALS REACHED

This conference provided a forum for local and international leaders in science communication to interact, with emphasis on enriching exchanges between developed and developing countries. By successfully bidding and hosting PCST-7 in South Africa, both local and international science communicators benefited from learning about best practice in this field.

The promotion of science and technology to the general public, and specifically formerly disadvantaged communities, is recognised as a key mechanism to promote socio-economic development in South Africa. Hosting PCST-7 in South Africa was a significant milestone to promote the public communication of science and technology among its citizens, and was a welcome impetus for local efforts, increasing public awareness of science, engineering and technology, which started in 1998 with the Year of Science and Technology.

PCST-7 also provided a unique opportunity to develop science communication expertise in the wider Southern African region. The presence of world leaders in this field and the opportunity to learn from them about what is being done elsewhere was most beneficial to local science communicators.

The discipline of science communication was brought to the attention of the general public, and its status in South Africa to international attention, through numerous media reports on the conference, through interviews with the chairperson and other keynote speakers, including with Minister Ben Ngubane, Minister of Science and Technology and of Arts and Culture.

The PCST-7 conference supported South Africa's National Priorities for the Science & Technology Community throughout its programme, which included sessions on trends in teaching and learning science communication, reaching out to rural communities, indigenous science communication, mobile outreach programmes, environmental communication, science education, inspiring the youth, and using technology to communicate science.

The PCST scientific committee unanimously voted the conference as the most successful one to date.

LESSONS LEARNT

The conference could possibly have been spread over one more day to allow for:

- Fewer parallel sessions
- More networking opportunities
- More small-group discussions

Guidelines to chairs

Guidelines for chairs of sessions could have included firmer rules and advice on better time-keeping. Many of the speakers did not keep within their allotted time, to the great frustration of delegates. The result was very few questions and too little time for open debate.

Bad time-keeping furthermore regularly caused tea and lunch breaks (essential networking opportunities) to be curtailed. The organisers would suggest extended lunch breaks (perhaps even 90 minutes in stead of (the cramped and often shortened) 60 minute breaks that almost never started on time. This will also help pad the following sessions so that a speaker's time is not compromised by prior undisciplined speakers and non-time conscious chairs.

The time problem could further be alleviated by not letting talks run concurrently without a short speaker-change-break in between. Scheduled, three to five minute breaks in between will help smooth out accumulated time loss and not handicap later speakers.

Chairs should also ask of speakers to answer in a concise manner and not to diverge from the question. It happened on a number of occasions that the speaker got carried away when answering a direct question and almost started another presentation.

CVs of speakers

Short CVs of speakers would be most helpful and informative if published as part of their synopses. Delegates had difficulty in trying to decide whether a speaker was a communicator, a scientist, affiliated to a Science Centre or Museum, a school teacher, a university lecturer. In many instances speakers were not sufficiently introduced.

Science communication “audience” inputs

The organisers would suggest to organisers of future PCST conferences to strive to include inputs from the “audiences” of science communication in the programme, i.e. education sector and decision-makers.

Number of delegates

The large number of delegates compared to previous PCST conferences indicates a growth in the need for information, as well as a growing interest, in the field of public communication of science and technology. These large numbers, however, caused a few logistical problems, resulting in some of the lecture halls being too small to cater for all those who wished to attend the parallel sessions.

As an international conference, due regard should be taken that if English is the lingua franca there will be many delegates whose first language is not English. This means that some will have pronounced accents. If they have to hurry through their talks because of time limitations (and almost all had to), the audience often could not follow what was said. (Talking clearly and very fast in a foreign language is not easy for most of us.)

The delegate list is very useful but it should contain affiliation information in order to make networking and later follow-up an easy task.

DELEGATES’ COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS

Chairs and presenters

More guidelines to presenters of parallel sessions would be of value. Russell Stevens, Two Oceans Aquarium.

Time-keeping in the sessions should be really strict so as to allow time for each speaker AND questions. – Sophie Nicholson-Cole, UEA, Norwich, UK.

Comments on the Conference Programme

A very well-organised conference. Good choice of plenary speakers and well-thought of themes for parallel sessions. – Marlene B Ferido, Philippines.

Include the education sector as a major role player in PCST/PUSET. – Malie van der Merwe, Science Education Publisher, South Africa.

The “communication” in PCST should be changed to “dialogue”. Almost all the presentations were from the “supply” side – we need more inputs from the “demand” side in future. – Snijders, Netherlands.

More about the **goals** of science communication was needed – how to answer the needs of the users of science (policy makers, teachers) – Marie-Carmen Bex, Belgium.

The conference was extremely well organised with good support to visitors; perhaps too many parallel sessions; very diverse and interesting.

There should be more emphasis on technology and mathematics communication. – C E Coetzee, South Africa.

Programme too full – did not meet all the people I had hoped to meet.

More small group discussions would have been useful.

It should have been spread over more days to allow participation in more sessions.

Follow the example set by this conference for future ones! A great, inspiring and well organised conference. Sue Southwood, Rhodes University, South Africa.

Limit the presentation of practical activities to poster sessions.

The poster sessions were good, but very late in the day and not fair to the presenters.

Include one or two high quality science presentations as examples of good science communication. – DSC Bohm, Denmark.

Too many sessions were “show and tell”. Papers need to be screened better for theoretical and methodological rigour.

The focus was too broad. Perhaps PCST can focus in different areas so that participants can fit their needs better.

Add an extra day to reduce the number of parallel sessions. I missed out on some good talks. – Mike Gaylard, HartRAO, South Africa.

The Saturday's plenary session should have been earlier on the programme as it reflected the theme of the conference. – Sharyn Errington, Australia.

Venues

It was good to have the venues close together. – Mathole Reuben Maselwe. There was confusion about where the poster presentations were taking place.

Poster presentations should have been where the posters were displayed. – Kenneth M Ngcoza, South Africa.

General

Keep up the good work and standards you have set! – Connie Israel, Mangosuthu Technikon.

Proceedings should be made available to all participants – also proceedings of PCST-6.

A few sessions could be presented in “regional languages” to provide an opportunity to non-English speaking experts – supported by communication systems. – Dr Mano Patariya, editor of the Indian Journal of Science Communication, India.

Too bad that not more black participants attended. – Sergio Bellucci, Switzerland.

I consider the confrontation between “developing” and “developed” countries very valuable. For this the location was perfect and I learnt a lot! – Sooike Stoops, Belgium.

A well organised and enjoyable conference, although the quality of presentations was very variable and of questionable academic value.

Social programme and logistics

The days were too long and the conference short on socials. – Diran Onifade, Journalist, Nigeria.

We needed better and more networking opportunities.

The conference dinner was too loud and hot to socialise. I was stuck at one table, not necessarily with people relevant to my interests. – Wendy Sadler, UK.

I really enjoyed the eclipse tour and the networking opportunities that it offered. I thought the overall organisation of the conference was excellent and all the people involved were most helpful. – Peter Burke, New Zealand.

Buses should run at various times for people who do not wish to stay for the whole day – very tiring.

Affinity Africa was very expensive. No transport was available to the airport. Accommodation and registration fees were very high for South Africans. What about UCT residences for accommodation? – Joyce Sewry, Rhodes University.

Particularly good:

Fantastic opening for a conference in Africa!

Plenary session 3: Different cultures and new challenges. Simple solutions were offered that rely on knowledge of target audience (community), and provided strategies that recognise the target audience.

Plenary session 3 really reflected the theme.

The speakers of plenary session 3 should have been in the opening session of the conference to really set the scene and have people thinking about the theme of the conference.

Judy Mann-Lang had an excellent presentation, excellent graphics, positive message, success story, lessons to be learnt.

The media skills workshop (session 40)

I loved the session on science and art. It was good to see the diversity (reminded me how narrow my world is!) and see ways of getting science into society.

The plenary session on science and art was excellent. It caused a paradigm shift in the way I look at the relationship of science and the arts. It showed interesting ways to bring science closer to the public, which will be useful in my work. – Marlene B Ferido, Philippines.

The plenary session on science and art was absolutely fantastic, except for Eric Heller's presentation which was way too long and which he used to promote himself. – Sophie Nicholson-Cole, UK.

"Show time at science centres" – all three presenters were brilliant. It was interactive, amusing, entertaining and informative – everything science shows for children should be to demystify science.

Opening session offered a baseline for the conference. “Showtime at science centres” taught effective ways to communicate science to the public. – Motlalepule Moloto, SANSO & ESKOM, SA.

The session on HIV communication was truly international and culturally sensitive at the same time.

Pierre-Marie Fayard should have been a keynote presenter!

Maarten van der Sanden had a very thought-provoking poster presentation.

The sessions: “Conceptual developments in science communication” and “Trends in teaching and learning science communication” (2 & 27) had interesting content and fruitful discussions.

Whiteman’s workshop was what we needed more of – hands-on activities.

Particularly good: David King, Sian Ede, Elizabeth Rasekoala. Useful to me as media person: Massimo Bucchi, Mary Woolley.

Will Rifkin’s workshop was really good.

Sessions on theatre and dance in science communication were interesting, thought-provoking and engaged the audience.

Fiona Barbagallo did well – she did not go with the mainstream, one-dimensional focus of “science for the public”.

Session 39 (evaluating science communication programmes) provided good, relevant discussion on a highly relevant issue.

Frank Burnett and Lily Whiteman – good, practical, entertaining. Technical support was very, very good. – Peter Burke, New Zealand.

Friday’s plenary session was fascinating! It mapped new ways of thinking about science and art. – Connie Israel, Mangosuthu Technikon.

The most useful paper was from session 31 (Visualising science communication).

Some notes of thanks

Just wanted to say thank you for an excellent conference. I enjoyed every session of the conference. Thank you once again. -- Aydin Inal, Star International High School, Athlone.

Ek wil net baie geluk en baie dankie sê vir 'n heerlike verrykende kongres verlede week. Dinge wat ek daar gehoor en geleer het, spring nog gereeld in

my kop rond - ek dink ek het al selfs daaroor gedroom! - Engela Duvenage, Communications: Website Management and Interpretation, Western Cape Nature Conservation Board,

First, let me congratulate you and a wonderful meeting. Your leadership and administrative skills clearly combined to make a terrific meeting, and one enjoyed by all. Second, I want to thank you for your help concerning my own trip. I realize that if 400 people had been as needy as I we would have all been in big trouble. So, many thanks to you and your staff for your help. - Alan I. Leshner, Chief Executive Officer, American Association for the Advancement of Science.

Thanks ever so much for a wonderful conference ! I really think you added a new and important dimension to the conference tradition with the "diverse cultures". That underlined the necessity of thinking more about who we are communicating to and I hope that will have influences everyone, wherever they work ! - Suzanne de Cheveigné, CNRS-LCP, France.

Let me take this opportunity to thank you again for hosting such a well organized and carefully planned conference. – Dr Massimiano Bucchi, Italy.

Thank you for all the good times which we all participants had in Cape Town. In the conference, we talked about "the Giants" many times. I think you are one of the giants of PCST network. I appreciate your great effort and kindness - Sook-kyoung Cho, Programme Director, Korean Science Foundation.

Thank you for a wonderful experience at PCST-7. Undoubtedly the best organised and most valuable conference I have taken part in. - Dr Janice Limson, Editor-in-chief, *Science in Africa*.

Just to thank you again for your great kindness, thoughtfulness and extraordinary efficiency and calm during my stay in South Africa, which I found extremely interesting in every way. I marvel at your continual calmness and everyone I spoke to was full of warm comments about the conference. - Sian Ede, Gulbenkian Foundation, UK.

I would just like to thank you most sincerely for a wonderful conference. The organisation was superb, the presentations were interesting and the networking sessions were valuable. I met many new people whose advice and support will help to strengthen our efforts here in South Africa. (Hopefully we can assist them too!) I know the huge amount of hard work that goes into a conference of that size and the many pitfalls that often arise, however, as a participant, I can honestly say that it was one of the best organised international conference that I have attended. The excellent organisation was a tribute to your dedication and hard work. Well done Marina, it was a job very well done. THANK YOU. Judy Mann-Lang, Sea World Education Centre.

Thanks for all your wonderful efforts for this fabulous conference. I had a great time and I am especially delighted to have connected with you in South Africa. I am now writing stories about penguins, sharks and the telescope for two magazines here (in Spanish) and Spain! That day I finally could not make it to the observatory because the penguins at SANCOB took all my time, and it was so worth it!! I helped out for hours, learning to catch the penguins and holding them steady for their shots, even assisting in a surgery of one of them. Adorable creatures. What a natural resource you guys have!! - Angela Swafford, Science and Environment writer, producer, researcher, translator, Discovery.

Having recently returned from Cape Town and the PCST conference, I felt moved to just send an email saying thanks for all the organisation. It was an interesting and enjoyable conference, and the Women Unite dance group was the best opening to a conference I've seen, heard and had the pleasure of clapping along to. - Dr. Richard Holliman, Lecturer in Science Communication/Public Understanding of Science Centre for Science Education Faculty of Science Open University, UK.

Congratulations on hosting a great meeting -- every comment I've heard has been positive, from the overall program to the local arrangements. - Bruce V. Lewenstein, Associate Professor of Science Communication, Editor, Public Understanding of Science, Cornell University, USA.

Well done on PCST-7: the conference has done credit to all concerned. – Professor Michael Kahn, UCT and Chairman of the FEST Board.

Just thought I'd congratulate you on the wonderful job you did with the PUST conference. Well done! - Prof. Anusuya Chinsamy-Turan, University of Cape Town, Zoology Department.

Marina, congratulations on a vast amount of hard work, they should give you a medal! - Professor Renfrew Christie, Dean of Research, University of the Western Cape.

Marina Joubert from FEST and her team must be congratulated on their tireless efforts and excellent arrangements. I made some good international contacts and I came away with some ideas in communicating science which I look forward to putting into practice in the near future. - Beverley Erickson, Port Elizabeth Technikon.

This is simply a brief message to thank you all for your efforts organising the PCST conference. I had a great time, had far too many ideas and met fabulous people. - Chris Krishna-Pillay, Manager, CSIRO Education, Victoria, Australia.

Sponsored Delegates

Sixteen delegates (13 Black) were sponsored fully or partially to enable them to attend the conference. Sponsorship was also obtained from the NRF to enable a group of 12 delegates from technikons and Historically Black Universities to attend the conference. All these sponsored delegates had to submit individual reports on their participation and benefits gained from the conference.

Important pre- and post conference events

- A group of 60 delegates from abroad participated in a 4-day pre-conference eclipse safari to the Kruger National Park. All comments about this events was extremely positive and this group of delegates arrived at the conference in high spirits. This luxury tour was organised by Affinity Africa an all costs were for the delegates' own accounts.
- The PCST-7 conference was followed by a 2-day workshop focusing on "science communication in the developing world", led by Professor Bruce Lewenstein from Cornell University in the US. He obtained financial support from the National Science Foundation in the US for this workshop, which enabled more than 60 delegates from developing countries to attend this workshop, as well as the PCST-7 conference.
- Several PCST-7 speakers stayed on in South Africa to participate and present at the conference of the Southern African Association of Science and Technology Centres (SAASTEC) which followed the second day after the closure of PCST-7.

Financial Report

The Department of Science and Technology contributed an amount of R280 000 towards the conference. Additional income came from registration fees mainly. Detailed statement of income and expenditure will be available later (some final payments are still being processed).

Marina Joubert

PCST-7 Conference Chair
Manager: Science Communication Unit
FEST