



2nd AFRICAN SCIENCE COMMUNICATION CONFERENCE

Shaping Africa's future

Science Communication's contribution to Science, Technology and Innovation, and the development of democracy in Africa

18 – 21 February 2009

Gauteng



**SAASTA is a business unit of the
National Research Foundation (NRF)**

**1st
ANNOUNCEMENT
By
The South African Agency for Science and Technology
Advancement (SAASTA)**

1. INTRODUCTION

As Africans, we need to define our destiny and change our mindset with respect to science, engineering and technology, as well as research. For the success of our continent and its people, it is imperative that significant investment in the popularisation and public understanding of Science and Technology development is made. It was this realisation that led to the development of Africa's Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (August 2005).

The specific objectives of this consolidated plan are to strengthen the African flagship research and development clusters. These include:

- Biodiversity, Biotechnology and Indigenous Knowledge;
- Energy, Water and Desertification;
- Materials Sciences, Manufacturing, Laser and Post Harvest Technologies;
- Information, Communication and Space Science Technologies;
- Improving Policy Conditions and Building Innovation Mechanisms; and
- Implementation, Funding and Governance.

With these flagship R&D clusters in mind, the objectives of the consolidated plan includes:

- Build African scientific and technological capacity by increasing the number of scientists, technicians and engineers;
- Ensure that regional economic communities mainstream science and technology for socio-economic development and competitiveness;
- Promote innovative ways and means of financing science and technology in Africa;
- Support the development and harmonisation of science and technology policies on the continent; and
- Promote Research and Development to achieve specific Millennium Development Goals.

The African Union realised that key to achieving these objectives, is the participation and support of the populace and their political Institutions. If the African public and politicians can speak about the benefits of science, not only will the investment in Africa improve but the public opinion on matters of science and technology will be enhanced. Given the continent's science, technology and innovation needs and challenges, SAASTA will be hosting its 2nd African Science Communication Conference bringing together individuals across the various sectors in realising Science Communication's role in driving economic growth and long term sustainable development.

2. BACKGROUND – African Science Communications Conference 2006

The South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancements (SAASTA, a business unit of the National Research Foundation (NRF). SAASTA is to take a leadership position in promoting broad public awareness, appreciation and understanding of science, engineering and technology in South Africa.

In December 2006, the SAASTA hosted the first African Science Communication Conference focusing specifically on the need to develop the field of Science Communication and establish collaborative networks on the African continent engaging academics, universities, the public, science centres and private research centres, as well as industry, the media, the education field and professional practitioners.

Communicators, ICT specialists, science centres, educators, discipline specific researchers and science communicators, and many more found a platform for promoting science communication. The delegates represented 20 countries from around the world and from more than 17 different fields. Of the 149 delegates who attended the conference, the majority rated the overall value of the first ASCC and the experience as excellent and highly commendable.

3. CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES of the 2nd ASCC

The conference objectives of the 2nd ASCC are to:

- Mobilise experts, civic groups and policy-makers to investigate how Science Communication can be used as a pillar for the democratisation of science in Africa.
- Showcase international benchmark activities where Science Communication is used to
 - link industry with academia, science and technology institutes and R&D activities;
 - link science and policy in order to strengthen the decision making process
- Consider strategies where Science Communication can assist in strengthening the continent's human skills base by supporting initiatives such as The African Science Academy Development Initiative, and ensuring that more Women enter Science, Engineering and Technology.
- Identify the role Science Communication can play in facilitating inter- and trans-disciplinary research and entrepreneurial activities.
- Advance Science Communication in order to build a strong political and civil society constituency for science and technology in Africa.

4. TARGET AUDIENCE AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- International and national science communicators, science centres, industry partners, policy makers, ICT specialists, educators, scientists, researchers and academics.
 - African Development Bank
 - African Ministerial Council for Science and Technology
 - African Science and Innovation Facility
 - African Union
 - Centre for Human Rights
 - European Union
 - Higher Education Institutions
 - Inter Academy Panel of International Issues
 - International Council for Science
 - International Science Communication Networks
 - National Research Foundation
 - National Science and Technology Forum
 - NEPAD
 - Public Communication of Science and Technology Network
 - South African Association of Science and Technology Centres
 - Third World Academy of Science
 - Third World Network of Scientific Organisations
 - Third World Organisation for Women in Science
 - UNESCO
 - United Nations Development Program
 - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
 - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisations
 - World Federation of Science Journalists
- And many more...

5. CONFERENCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ms. Beverley Damonse – SAASTA Executive Director. (*South Africa*)

Mr. Diran Onifade – health and environment science reporter on Nigerian Television Authority (NTA). Vice president of the World Federation of Science Journalism (WFSJ). (*Nigeria*)

Prof. Sospeter Muhongo – Executive Director ICSU Africa Regional Office (*Tanzania*)

Mr. Andrea Bandelli – Coordinator of the 1st ASCC programme (*Europe*)

Prof .Anusuya Chinsamy-Turan – Palaeobiologist at the University of Cape Town (UCT). (*South Africa*)

Mr. Lorenzo Raynard – Manager, Science Communications Unit (SAASTA).

6. CONFERENCE DATE AND VENUE

The conference will be held in Gauteng from 19- 21 February 2009 with a welcoming reception being held on the evening of the 18th. Conference venue is still to be announced.

7. CALL FOR PROPOSALS, CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS AND POSTER PRESENTATIONS

A CALL FOR CONFERENCE PROPOSALS, CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS AND POSTER PRESENTATIONS WILL FOLLOW ON THE 30TH OF July 2008.

7. ENQUIRIES

Enquiries can be sent to:
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