



**SAASTA**  
South African Agency for Science  
and Technology Advancement

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**To all Media**

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**For immediate release:**

**“Local knowledge can lead to climate resilience”**

***That’s the message Letago Kgomoewana, a young South African scientist, will share with the world, when she takes to the international stage in the FameLab Final on Thursday at 18:00 (SAST).***

Kgomoewana, an environmental geographer and Masters student from North West University in South Africa, will bring a uniquely African perspective to the global climate change conversation when she shares how gathering stories can play an important role in responding to climate change.

With her own gift for story-telling and her tales of science with and for society, Letago was selected as one of the top ten international finalists from 23 countries participating in the FameLab International semi-finals on 10 and 11 November. Letago was chosen as the South African representative in the international competition when she won the South African FameLab final in October.

Kgomoewana is researching the impact of climate change on smallholder farmers and agriculture in the Mopani District in Limpopo Province. Her research advocates that indigenous knowledge be incorporated in disaster risk management strategy and in climate change policies. Her inclusive and locally-relevant research is an example of science and research that aim work with local communities to address challenges affecting the communities.

In responding to the opportunity to talk about her work on an international stage, she acknowledged all the men and women who have trusted her with generations of knowledge and contributed immensely to her research. She also said, “I hope that my journey from Limpopo to the world stage inspires a new generation of bold, young researchers who will take up careers in STEM, research and science communication.”

FameLab in South Africa aims to develop science communication and public speaking skills and confidence in young scientists, while also profiling locally-relevant and world-class South African science and research. Letago’s research, inclusive of local communities and advocating for the importance of indigenous knowledge in responding to threats such as climate change, is an example of proudly South African research that will be given global attention on the international stage.

FameLab, an initiative of Cheltenham Festivals in the UK, has been running a local competition in South Africa since 2013 through a partnership between the British Council, Jive Media Africa and the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA).

The international FameLab final will be aired on 25 November 2021 at 18:00 (SAST), on the FameLab International YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/famelab/>).



*Letago Kgomoeswana talking science.*

## **ENDS**

### **Notes:**

To find out more about FameLab in South Africa, go to: <https://www.saasta.ac.za/competitions/famelab/>

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### **About the British Council**

Founded in 1934, the British Council is the United Kingdom's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide. We are a global organisation with more than 190 offices in 110 countries and territories. We touch the lives of around 500 million people every year – almost a tenth of the world's population

### **About Jive Media Africa**

Jive Media Africa supports top researchers with innovative, cutting edge communications. Winners of the National Science and Technology Forum Award for Science Communication, they brought the FameLab competition to South Africa in 2013.

### **About the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA)**

SAASTA is a business unit of the National Research Foundation (NRF) with the mandate to advance public awareness, appreciation and engagement of science, engineering and technology in South Africa. SAASTA's contribution to the NRF's vision is to grow the pool of quality learners today who will become the scientists and innovators of tomorrow. It aims to be the leading science advancement agency in the country by promoting and communicating the value and impact of science, technology and innovation in a dynamic knowledge economy. It also intends to contribute significantly towards building a science, engineering and technology (SET) human resource base. For more information on the operations and programs within the NRF please visit [www.saasta.ac.za](http://www.saasta.ac.za)

**About the National Research Foundation (NRF):**

The National Research Foundation (NRF) was established on 1 April 1999 as an independent statutory body in accordance with the National Research Foundation Act. The NRF is a key public entity responsible for supporting the development of human resources for research and innovation in all fields of science and technology. The organisation is one of the major players in educating and training a new generation of scientists able to deal with South African and African needs. The organisation encourages public awareness and appreciation of science, engineering and technology, and facilitates dialogue between science and society. Its vision is to contribute to a prosperous South Africa based on a knowledge economy. For more information on the operations and programs within the NRF please visit [www.nrf.ac.za](http://www.nrf.ac.za)