

The logo features a stylized sun with yellow rays at the top. Below the sun is a blue shape resembling a person's head or a stylized 'V'. To the left of this blue shape is a red shape, and to the right is a green shape, both resembling stylized human figures. The text 'Science Forum' is written in a large, bold, dark blue font, and 'SOUTH AFRICA' is written below it in a smaller, bold, light blue font.

# Science Forum SOUTH AFRICA

## Science Forum South Africa 2020 Confirmed – Still igniting conversations about science

The South African Department of Science and Innovation (DSI) is delighted to confirm that the 2020 Science Forum South Africa (SFSa) will take place on a virtual platform presented in partnership with the CSIR International Convention Centre (ICC), from Wednesday 9 to Friday 11 December 2020. Albeit smaller and without the vibrant crowds gathered at the CSIR ICC, which will remain the home for the Forum, we are confident that the Forum will still do justice to its maxim of ***Igniting Conversations about Science***. As always, participation in the Forum will be open to all and free of charge. We warmly invite anyone with an interest in the role of science and critical thinking in society to join the debate.

In 2020, the DSI is proud to present the SFSa in partnership with the Human Sciences Research Council's (HSRC) Radical Reason Consortium. The HSRC-led consortium of South African social sciences and humanities institutions are engaged in a series of activities which, prompted by the events of 2020 that saw life, science and race raised to new profiles, seeks to stimulate critical knowledge that reflects the full complexity of the lived experiences and conditions of the world. The HSRC Radical Reason Consortium partners include: Sol Plaatje University; the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf); the National Research Foundation(NRF); the International Science Council; Universities South Africa; the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria; the Centre for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape; as well as the Environmental Humanities South cluster at the University of Cape Town. The HSRC, like the NRF and ASSAf, is an entity of the DSI.

The SFSa 2020 will also be an opportunity to reflect on the various science, technology and innovation partnerships initiatives led by the Department as part of South Africa's chairing of the African Union in 2020. As usual, pan-African cooperation in science will be a significant focus of the Forum agenda. As

tradition, the diplomatic community in Pretoria number among the Forum's strongest supporters and will be presenting several Forum sessions. Through the European South African Science and Technology Advancement Programme (ESASTAP), there will be a special focus on cooperation with the European Union, with several sessions presented by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and the Africa-Europe Innovation Partnership.

On Wednesday afternoon 9 December 2020, the SFSA 2020 will commence with an opening address by Dr Blade Nzimande, South Africa's Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation followed by messages from the Forum's strategic international partners including the African Union Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, Prof Sarah Anyang Agbor. Two internationally acclaimed South African scientists, renowned for their work in the fight against HIV-AIDS and recently COVID-19, Prof Quarraisha Abdool Karim and Prof Salim Abdool Karim, will be delivering the SFSA 2020 plenary lecture. Prof Quarraisha and Salim recently received the prestigious "500th anniversary of the discovery of the Strait of Magellan" award in recognition of their pioneering scientific work and contribution to humanity.

On Thursday 10 December 2020, the Forum programme will comprise 32 different panel discussions and debates, all interrogating the critical interface between science and society. Highlights on the programme will include sessions on topics such as the future of trans-disciplinarity in research, African histories of technology, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the future of data protection. An exciting new addition on the Forum programme will be a series of provocative conversations with global thinkers, especially from the Global South and Africa. Active audience engagement and debate will continue to be a hallmark of the SFSA programme.

The Forum will conclude on Friday morning 11 December 2020 with a series of panel discussions interrogating the role of science in advancing social justice, which will be the theme for South Africa's hosting of the World Science Forum in 2021. A final plenary discussion facilitated by the South African Affiliate Centre of the World Economic Forum's Center for the Fourth Industrial Revolution will focus on the impact of disruptive technology in narrowing and widening inequality.

We are confident that SFSA 2020 like its predecessors, will continue to enrich the public discourse on the role of science in society, advance Pan-African cooperation and integration, and bolster the global solidarity and friendship our world so desperately needs.

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Programme and registration: <http://www.esastap.org.za>