



INTERNATIONAL
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The International Bio-economy Forum (IBF) Secretariat
cordially invites you to the **IBF 4th Plenary Meeting** on

A Decade of Biomass for a Sustainable Development

Date: 29 November 2021
Time: 11:00 – 13:30
Platform: Zoom
RSVP: [Click here](#) to register

Programme

11:00 – 11:10 Welcoming Remarks

Dr Mmboneni Muofhe, Deputy Director-General: Technology Innovation - Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation

Dr John Bell, Head of Unit: Bioeconomy and Food System, Directorate General for Research and Innovation European Commission

11:10 – 11:20 Recorded Messages

Dr Bonginkosi Nzimande, Minister: Higher Education, Science and Innovation

Ms Mariya Gabriel, European Union Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

11:20 – 11:40 Keynote Address

Dr Julius Ecuru, Programme Manager, BioInnovate Africa, International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology

11:40 – 12:40 Panel Discussion

Moderator:

Mr Ben Durham, Chief Director: Bio-innovation, Department of Science and Innovation

Panelists:

- 1. Dr Julius Ecuru**, Programme Manager, BioInnovate Africa, International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology
- 2. Dr Peter Wehrheim**, Head of Unit for Bioeconomy & Food Systems, European Commission



3. Professor Bruce Sithole, Chief Scientist & Director, Biorefinery Industry Development Facility, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research

4. Dr Florian Graichen, General Manager: Forests to Biobased Products, Scion, New Zealand

5. Dr Edmund Mupondwa, Bioproducts & Bioprocesses, Saskatoon Research and Development Centre, Government of Canada

12:40 – 13:10

Q&A

12:10 -13:20

Closing remarks

Dr Mmboneni Muofhe, Deputy Director-General: Technology Innovation - Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation

Dr John Bell, Head of Unit: Bioeconomy and Food System, Directorate General for Research and Innovation European Commission

Biographies



John Bell is the “Healthy Planet” Director in DG Research & Innovation. He is responsible for leading the Research and Innovation transitions on Climate Change within planetary boundaries, Bioeconomy, Food Systems, Environment and Biodiversity, Oceans and Arctic, Circular Economy, Water and Bio-based innovations. This includes harnessing the investments of €10 billion Horizon Europe, Circular Bioeconomy, the EU Bioeconomy Strategy, and Governing Board of €3.7 billion in Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking, as well as delivering policy initiatives as FOOD2030, and the All Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance.



Ben Durham is a Chief Director: Bio-innovation at the National Department of Science and Innovation in South Africa. His responsibilities include the implementation of the South African Bio-economy Strategy, launched in January 2014, and he oversees innovation developments in Agriculture, Health, Industry & Environment, and IKS. Ultimately, the purpose is to develop and improve the efficiencies of the National System of Innovation through science and technology, ensuring socio-economic and environmental benefits to the broader society.

Amongst others, Ben has served or is serving on:

- International Advisory Committee of the Global Bioeconomy Summit
- GMO Act Executive Council (Deputy Chair)
- The Board of the National Health Laboratory Service

• Steering Committees of two Centres of Excellence.



Julius Ecuru, Ph.D., is the Manager of BioInnovate Africa at the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (*icipe*) in Nairobi, Kenya. He is an interdisciplinary scientist and researcher, working on issues related to technological innovation, sustainability transitions and business; and supports scientists to translate innovative ideas and inventions into practical uses in society. Dr Ecuru's research interests include developing interactive learning models, which make universities, firms, and related organisations more productive and catalytic mechanisms for innovation, growth, and social development. He also contributes to scholarly works in the chemical and bioengineering sciences and supports regulatory science and research ethics capacity development. Dr Ecuru

received his B.Sc (Chemistry) Honors and M.Sc in Environmental Science from Makerere University, Kampala, and holds a Ph.D in Technology (Innovation and Development) from the Blekinge Institute of Technology, Sweden. He is also a Fogarty Bioethics Fellow having received a postgraduate diploma in International Research Ethics from the University of Cape Town, South Africa. Dr Ecuru has published in refereed journals and co-authored book chapters, manuals, conference papers and other articles.



Dr Florian Graichen is General Manager for Scion's Bioproducts and Biomanufacturing Areas – which include the Portfolios covering High Value Biorefineries, Distributed and Circular Manufacturing, Bioproducts and Packaging and Integrated Bioenergy. These activities are directed at solving new product and process challenges and opportunities that arise through transition to a Circular Bioeconomy - a new economy focused on sustainable design and renewable resources. Customization and circular design thinking are at the heart of all innovations. Florian is board member of Packaging New Zealand and the Bioresource Processing Alliance. He also represents New Zealand on the ANZPAC Collective Action Group and is a member of several advisory groups to New Zealand ministers and ministries. Additionally, Florian

co-leads a Science for Technological Innovation National Science Challenge (SfTI) Spearhead around 3D and 4D Printing. Previously Florian worked as Senior Scientist and Commercial Manager at VITO (Belgium) and CSIRO (Australia).



Dr. Mmboneni Muofhe is the Deputy Director-General (DDG) for Technology Innovation at the Department of Science and Innovation in South Africa. He was previously the Deputy Director-General for International Cooperation and Resources in the Department during which time he oversaw, amongst other partnerships, South Africa's growing participation in EU Research Funding programmes, led the mobilization of Official Development Assistance funds to support South Africa science system, the establishment of partnerships with Multinational Companies and mobilising international support for South Africa's bid to host the Square Kilometer Array (SKA) radio telescope in Africa. Dr. Muofhe has experience in management of funding instruments to support innovation which started when he was at the National Research Foundation as Coordinator and then Manager for Technology and Human Resource for

Industry Programme (THRIP), a Programme designed to foster Public-Private Partnerships in technology and human capacity development. Today he is responsible for various funds supporting innovation and technology commercialisation. This includes the recently established Innovation Fund which aims at bridging the funding gap between research, technology development and translation of research outputs into products and services addressing socio-economic challenges. Dr. Muofhe's current portfolio includes Space Science and Technology, Bio-Innovation (Agriculture; Health; Industrial Biotechnology and Environment; and Indigenous Knowledge Systems Innovation), Hydrogen and Energy, Converging Technology Platforms and oversight of the National Intellectual Property



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Management Office. He is also the South African Group on Earth Observations (GEO) principal, a member of its Executive Committee.



Prof. Bruce Sithole is a Professor in Chemical Engineering at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Durban, South Africa) as well as a Chief Scientist and Director, Biorefinery Industry Development Facility, Council for Scientific & Industrial Research, in Durban. He previously worked at the Pulp & Paper Research Institute of Canada, Montreal, Quebec. His main research focus is on development and implementation of biorefinery technologies, specifically those aimed at the circular economy and beneficiation of waste biomass into high value products. The purpose of the research is to contribute to the revitalization and resilience of the biomass industries by diversifying into biorefinery activities that will add more value to the bottom lines of the mills and avoid unsustainable disposal of their wastes. His facility is used by SMEs and industry to develop, validate, and implement green and biorefinery technologies in the country.



Peter Wehrheim is Head of Unit for the “Bioeconomy and Food System” within the Directorate General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission in Brussels. Prior to this assignment, he worked for the European Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Phil Hogan. From 2010 to 2018 he was Head of Unit for Land Use and Climate Finance in DG Climate Action. Before 2004, Peter worked at the Universities of Bonn/DE, Maryland/US (with a Heisenberg scholarship of the German Research Foundation) and Kiel/DE. He received his doctoral degree in agricultural economics from the University of Giessen, Germany and comes from a vinery in southern Germany.