



PROGRAMME LAUNCH

ASSAf Inclusivity Initiative: Gender Equity And Persons With Disabilities

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Date: 7 December 2023
Time: 15:30 - 17:00
Venue: NRF II, NRF Building, Pretoria

- 15:00 - 15:30** Arrival & Registration
- 15:30 - 15:35** Welcome Remarks
Prof Olubukola Babalola, OWSD Vice President (African Region), ASSAf Member (**Facilitator**)
- 15:35 - 15:45** Overview of the ASSAf Inclusivity Initiative
Dr Tebogo Mabotha, Academy of Science of South Africa
- 15:45 - 16:00** Lead Address
Dr Anlia Pretorius, Head of Disability Rights Unit, Wits University
- 16:00 - 16:40** Panel Responses (10 mins per speaker)
Ms Dineo Mmako, Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities
Mr Mark Bannister, Department of Water and Sanitation
Ms Bongive Mkhithika, Department of Science and Innovation
Mr Gerhard Coetzee, INVEN-D
- 16:40 - 16:55** Discussion and Q&A
Ms Susan Veldsman, Academy of Science of South Africa, **Moderator**
- 16:55 - 17:00** Closing Remarks
Dr Tozama Qwebani, Academy of Science of South Africa



BIOGRAPHIES



Olubukola Oluranti Babalola, the Vice-President of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) and Vice-President of the Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) (Africa region), is an NRF-rated scientist, an MBA graduate, a Research Director and Principal Investigator at North-West University. After a PhD with a Fellowship from the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA) and OWSD, she had postdoctoral experiences at the Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel, and the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. She has over 21 years of experience focusing on rhizosphere metagenomics. She is a member of many editorial boards and an International Advisor to several others. Olubukola has completed the supervision of 31 doctoral fellows, 24 masters, and numerous Honors students. Her international experience spans the Americas, Asia, Europe, and Oceania. She enjoys research grants and international partnerships across the globe. Olubukola has ~ 350 publications, an H-index of 60, with over 17,700 citations. Her effort has received many awards, including being the finalist in GenderInSite 2020 and Clarivate highly cited research top 1% for the field year 2022. Her recent Springer book is "Food Security and Safety: Africa's Perspective." Olubukola is #1 in Africa for Soil Science and Plant Nutrition.



Tebogo Mabotha is a National Liaison Officer-Strategic Partnerships at the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). Her role at the Academy is to foster and facilitate partnerships with national stakeholders from different sectors within the national system of innovation (NSI). She holds a PhD in Chemistry from UCT. Dr Mabotha is a dynamic professional with a broad range of hands-on knowledge in Academia, Biotech, Pharmaceutical Industries and the public sector, spanning over fourteen years. Her academic and professional work focused on projects relating to HIV, Malaria, TB and Vaccines, ranging from the development of diagnostics tools to drug development and manufacturing and quality assurance.



Anlia Pretorius is a registered Counselling Psychologist and is currently the Head of the Wits Disability Rights Unit. Anlia previously worked at the University of Johannesburg as a psychologist where she started the Office for People with Disabilities, and is also one of the founding members of Higher Education Disability Services Association. She serves on advisory bodies, advising on policy formulation e.g. Chair of the Ministerial Committee to develop a Disability Policy Framework for the Post School Environment in South Africa. Anlia is the author and co-author of research papers and book chapters in the field of disability and student support.



Dineo Mmako holds the position of Acting Deputy Director General responsible for Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Coordination, her key position is Chief Director: Monitoring and Evaluation in the Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD). She is the Commissioner of the Commission for Employment Equity representing the government sector. She has held various positions in the Presidency and Department of Planning Monitoring and Evaluation including Programme manager for the Frontline Service Delivery Monitoring (FSDM), Information Communication Technology Project Manager, Business analyst and Government systems administrator. She has a Master's Degree in Management: Public sector monitoring and evaluation; a Bachelors of Science and a number of Postgraduate certificates qualifications. She has more than 15 years of experience in data management and analysis, monitoring and evaluation; as well as coordination and facilitation of government programmes and interventions.



Mark Bannister is a Chartered Mechanical Engineer, Member of the Institute of Mechanical Engineers; Pr Eng. Engineering Council of SA, and Senior Fellow of the Water Institute of South Africa. He has 32 years of working experience: 13 years as Chief Engineer at the Department of Water and Sanitation, 8 years in the NGO sector (Mvula Trust, South Africa as Regional Manager of Limpopo Province), 8 years in Water Utilities (Umgeni Water, South Africa, Severn Trent Water and Welsh Water in the UK) , 3 years in the private sector (ECI Development Consultants). He is also an author of the book "Eyes Wide Open".



BIOGRAPHIES



Bongive Cordelia Mkhithika is a PhD candidate at Da Vinci Institute looking at Science Technology and Innovation policy coordination and coherence investigating the impact of poor coordination and incoherent implementation of STI policy on service delivery from a South African perspective. She is a mentor, life coach and a Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) practitioner. Bongive's mission is to enlighten, empower, inspire and motivate others particularly children from disadvantaged backgrounds. She joined DSI in 2006 and is responsible for Research and Development Planning, Science and Technology Investment, Stakeholder Management, establishment and maintenance of inter-governmental relationships, policy and strategy development and analysis, provides support to sector-specific departments to ensure that they make substantial investments on Research and Development (R&D) as well as technologies and infrastructure. Bongive provided secretariat support to the Economic Sectors, Employment and Infrastructure Development Cluster of government and its Project Management Unit (PMU), Cabinet and its Committees coordinating the implementation of the Nine Point Plan in pursuit of Vision 2030, the National Development Plan (NDP) of government. She has contributed inputs towards the 2019 White Paper on Science Technology and Innovation and the 2020 Science, Technology and Innovation Decadal Plan.



Gerhard Coetzee is a passionate innovator with a deep-rooted appreciation for craftsmanship. His journey began with a Fitter and Turner trade certificate in 2003, where he honed my technical skills and developed a keen eye for precision. In 2017, he reached a significant milestone by obtaining a Master's Degree in Universal Design, a field that resonates with his commitment to inclusivity and accessibility. He is Director and Founder at INVEN-D, a cutting-edge innovation company that's redefining the way we approach design. INVEN-D is at the forefront of creating ground-breaking solutions, with a strong emphasis on Universal Design. INVEN-D's mission is to make the world a more inclusive and accessible place for all.



Susan Veldsman is the Director of the Scholarly Publication Unit at the Academy of Sciences in South Africa, where she is, among other things, responsible for driving the Open Science agenda, to raise the visibility, discoverability, and accessibility of South African scholarly journals, improve the quality of SA research output, and support the development of policy frameworks in order to facilitate optimal use and access to publicly funded research. In 2013 she received the Electronic Publishing Trust (EPT) award for her outstanding contribution to the promotion of Open Access in Developing Countries. Recently, she was the Co-chair of the IAP Report on *Combatting Predatory Journals and Conferences*, which was launched on 16 March 2022.



Dr Tozama Qwebani is a Programme Officer for Africa and Overseas Partnerships at the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). She was the 2022 Co-Chair of the South African Academy of Science (SAYAS) and Project Manager in the Faculty of Applied and Computer Sciences at Vaal University of Technology (VUT) 2016-2022. Before joining VUT, she was a lecturer at Tshwane University of Technology 2014-2016 and at Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Biosciences unit 2009-2014. She is the recipient of the 2011 DST Women in Science Award, 2016 Mail and Guardian Top 200 Young South African. She was a grant holder for the NRF-SAASTA National Science week grant in 2016 at TUT and 2018 at VUT as well as judge for Eskom Expo for Young Scientists in 2015 and 2016. In 2018, she was the recipient of TechWomen fellowship from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs which is a platform for emerging women leaders in STEM and the 2019 Inspiring 50 South Africa. Her second book is titled, '100 Nuggets: Pearls of wisdom'.