



In  
Conversation  
with...

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)  
invites you to a conversation between

**Professor Debra Roberts**

&

**Professor Coleen Vogel**

on

**Global plans on climate change adaptation.**

*In this conversation, hosted by Prof Himla Soodyall, ASSAf Executive Officer, you will be taken on a journey into the world of climate change. Both these scholars have had many firsts not only as women, but as South African scientists on the international stage of climate change.*


Date: 2 April 2024  
Time: 11:00 – 12:00  
Venue: Zoom  
Register: [Click here](#)

**About the Speakers**

**Professor Debra Roberts** is a scientist who has spent the last four decades working at the science-policy-practice interface in the fields of biodiversity planning and management, climate change adaptation and mitigation and sustainable development and resilience at local and international levels. Her pioneering work has helped reduce vulnerability in human and natural communities, enhanced local level sustainability and resilience, created socio-economic development opportunities and driven institutional change. Through her ongoing documentation of this transdisciplinary research, she has contributed to and influenced the climate change and development debate at multiple scales. Professor Roberts headed the Sustainable and Resilient City Initiatives Unit and Environmental Planning and Climate Protection Department in eThekweni Municipality (Durban, South Africa) between 1994 and 2024. In 2015 Professor Roberts was a lead author of Chapter 8 (Urban Areas) of Working Group II's contribution to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). She was elected as IPCC Co-Chair of Working Group II (Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability) for the sixth assessment cycle (2015-2023).



She is an Honorary Professor at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in the School of Life Sciences and has been an advisor to the Global Commission on Adaptation, United Cities and Local Governments, ICLEI and the United Nations Secretary General's 2019 Climate Summit. In 2019 and 2022/23 she was included in a list of the World's 100 Most Influential People in Climate Policy. Professor Roberts has been awarded Honorary Doctorates for her local and international climate change and environmental work by the University of Twente (The Netherlands), University of Cape Town (South Africa) and Rhodes University (South Africa). She currently holds the Professor Willem Schermerhorn Chair in Open Science from a Majority World Perspective at the Faculty of Geo-Information Science at the University of Twente.



**Professor Coleen Vogel** is a Distinguished Professor at the University of the Witwatersrand. She is a climatologist by training but has increasingly worked in the social dimensions of climate change, focusing particularly on climate change adaptation. She currently serves on various local and international boards. She has, for example, chaired and been the vice chair of international global environmental change scientific committees (e.g. IHDP and LUCC and involved in the Earth System Science Programme), groups that preceded the current Future Earth developments. She was also one of the lead contributors to the preparation of the Disaster Management Act in South Africa. She has been Chapter Lead Author and co-author of chapters in the IPCC (4th and 5th assessment reports). She is now also involved as a lead author in the IPBES transformative assessment. She has also received the Burtoni Award for international excellence in adaptation research and received the University of the Witwatersrand Vice Chancellor's award for excellence in teaching.

**Programme**

11:00 – 11:05	<b>Welcome, background &amp; introductions</b>	Prof Himla Soodyall
11:05 – 11:35	<b>Q&amp;As, Discussion</b>	Profs Coleen Vogel & Debra Roberts
11:35 – 11:55	<b>Q&amp;As from the audience</b>	Facilitated by Prof Himla Soodyall
11:55 – 12:00	<b>Closing</b>	Prof Himla Soodyall