

Young Scientists' Conference Announcement and Call for Abstracts

Jointly hosted by the:

Department of Science and Technology

Academy of Science of South Africa

South African Young Academy of Science

The World Academy of Sciences Regional Office of sub-Saharan Africa

Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World -South Africa Chapter

National Research Foundation

Date: 19 July 2017

Theme: Young Scientists' Role in Science Advice

Venue: Birchwood Hotel and OR Tambo Conference Centre, Boksburg, Johannesburg

1. Introduction

The Department of Science and Technology (DST), the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS), the World Academy of Sciences Regional Office of sub-Saharan Africa (TWAS-ROSSA), the Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World - South Africa National Chapter (OWSD-SANC) and the National Research Foundation (NRF) will be hosting the Annual Young Scientists' Conference on 19 July 2017.

ASSAf, together with its partners, is seeking young scientists based in South Africa to participate in this conference. This multilateral conference will provide a platform for scientific exchange among senior and young scientists in the area of harnessing the demographic dividend through investments made in young scientists.

Evidence-based science advice in support of policy development is an area receiving much attention as governments are faced with addressing many challenges that are science-based. This conference will explore the role that young scientists can play in bridging the divide between science and policy.

2. Background

Young scientists represent the future of a country's Science and Technology development and their inclusion and capacitation from an early stage in the processes that build a country's system of innovation and policy is critical. They are recognised as providing the pool for the next generation of distinguished scholars. As the latter participate in conferences and joint research and exchange programmes, they get the chance to think through and beyond science to its applications in solving some of the biggest global problems of our time for society's benefit.

Funding challenges however stunt the development of young scientists and early career researchers especially on the African continent, where few learning opportunities provided for joint learning exist. It is therefore important to empower young researchers to organise and lead international, interdisciplinary, and inter-generational dialogue with the goal to make global decision-making evidence-based and to strive for inclusive outcomes.

In July 2006, African Union Head of States and Governments meeting in Banjul, Gambia, endorsed the African Youth Charter (AYC). The Charter is a political and legal document which serves as the strategic framework that gives direction for youth empowerment and development at continental, regional and national levels.

A further policy document by the African Union (AU) – the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024), underpins science, technology and innovation as multi-function tools and enablers for achieving continental development goals. In pursuing this vision, the AU emphasises the importance of “building our universities as centres for excellence” and a further call for Africa to “harvest its population demographic dividend, especially women and youth, whose energy, creativity and courage must drive its development agenda”.

This conference will aim to engage young scientists on the importance of their increased participation in science advice in support of policy development, discuss barriers to

effective engagement and the use and adoption of scientific knowledge and its application in technological innovations is responding to developmental challenges.

3. Conference Themes

The conference will focus on the three key issues below:

1. Advocating the importance of placing young scientists and Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) at the heart of national strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
2. Application of a gender lens in science in addressing SDGs
3. Building scientific capacity and capability in young scientists to advance science policy

4. Eligibility

This call is open to early career researchers who are based in South Africa. Applicants should meet the following criteria to participate:

- Be based in South Africa
- Be under the age of forty (40)
- Be in possession of at least a Master's degree
- Have research interests in the conference sub-themes
- Commit to be present for the duration of the conference
- Submit an abstract that will be the basis for a presentation at the conference
- Be willing to present and share current research results at the conference

5. Conference Participation and Application

ASSAf invites submission of abstracts for oral and poster presentations in one of the sub-themes outlined above. The attached application form should be completed and sent to Edith@assaf.org.za Tel: +27 (0)12 349 6614 by **Tuesday, 9 May, 2017**. There is no registration fee to attend the conference. Further information about the conference will be circulated to successful applicants.

6. Call for Abstracts

6.1. Abstract Format and Submission

The abstracts should follow the following format:

- Abstract must not be more than 300 words (excluding Title, Author and Institution) in the attached form
- Abstract must be written in English
- Abstract title must be in boldface, capital letters (lowercase) and centered
- Abstract font must be Century Gothic 11 with A4 set up margins
- Abstract must include the following information:
 - o Title, Author(s), Institution(s)
 - o Name of first-author should be underlined (Please do not underline co-authors)
 - o Institutional affiliations, city, province for all authors
 - o The superscript numbering must be in front of each initial and surname of each author
- Where appropriate, the text may be structured using the following headings:
 - o Introduction or Objectives
 - o Methods
 - o Results

- o Conclusions

6.2. Example of an abstract title

Assessment of risk factors associated with maternal mortality in rural Tanzania ← 14 pts, centered, lowercase and bold

¹ E Allah, ²G Mbaruku, ³K Kahn ← 11pts, centered
(presenting author to be underlined, number superscript in front of initial and surname)

¹ KEMRI/CDC Research and Public Health Collaboration, ²Ifakara Health Institute, ³MRC/Wits Rural Public Health and Health Transitions Research Unit (Agincourt)
(number superscript in front of organisation)

6.3. Oral Presentations

All oral presentations will be conducted in English.

6.4. Poster Presentations

Accepted posters will be displayed at the conference venue and full details and specifications will be provided in the abstract acceptance letter.

7. General Conference Information

For any further information on the conference please contact:

Ms Edith Shikumo Tel: +27 (0)12 349 6614 Email: Edith@assaf.org.za

Application Deadline: 9 May 2017