



The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) and the Embassy of Ireland in South Africa invite you to the next Women and Youth in STEM Series 2023 Edition.

Women in STEM Entrepreneurship – Challenges and Opportunities

Date: Wednesday 27 September 2023
Time: 10:00 to 11:30 (SAST)
Register: [Click here](#) to register
Venue: Zoom (link to be provided upon registration)
For more information, contact Marvin@assaf.org.za or Elias.Ledwaba@dfa.ie

BACKGROUND

South Africa and Ireland recognise the importance of women's inclusion in science, technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship, including for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and developing human capital. The strategic partners: The Embassy of Ireland in South Africa and the Academy of Sciences of South Africa (ASSAf) will host a panel of Irish and South African women thought leaders and entrepreneurs in STEM to highlight the challenges, opportunities and support systems in which can be put in place to encourage and support greater participation by women from STEM backgrounds in entrepreneurship.

PROGRAMME

Facilitator: Paul Deane, Trade and Education Counsellor, Embassy of Ireland in South Africa

Time	Activity	Responsible
10:00 – 10:05	Welcome Remarks	Prof Himla Soodyall, ASSAf Executive Officer
10:05 – 10:10	Opening Remarks	H.E. Austin Gormley, Ambassador of Ireland to the Republic of South Africa
10:10 – 10:45	Panel Session	- Prof Shirley Motaung, Founder and CEO of Global Health Biotech, Director: Technology Transfer and Innovation at the Durban University of Technology - Queen Ndlovu, CEO and Founder of QP Drone Tech - Dr Nqobile Gumede, Director, Technology Transfer Office, Nelson Mandela University - Jacqui O'Connor, Founder and Managing Director, MedScan3D - Dr Patience Mthunzi-Kufa, CSIR Principal Researcher and Head and Research Group Leader: Biophotonics
10:45 – 11:25	Engagement: Q and A	All
11:25 – 11:30	Closing Remarks	Dr Tozama Qwebani, ASSAf Programme Officer: Africa and Overseas Partnerships





BIOGRAPHIES



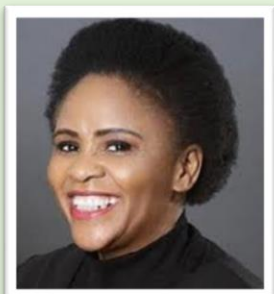
Prof Himla Soodyall is the Executive Officer of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf). An ASSAf member since 2003, she was elected to the ASSAf Council in 2011 and appointed general secretary in 2014. Prior to joining ASSAf on 1st November 2018, she was employed as a Principal Medical Scientist in the Division of Human Genetics at the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS) and University of the Witwatersrand (Wits). Her research focusses on using molecular genetic tools to reconstruct the evolutionary history and affinities of sub-Saharan African populations. She has been the recipient of numerous awards and accolades, including the Order of Mapungubwe (Bronze Medal), by President Mbeki in 2005.

Austin Gormley is Ambassador of Ireland to South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Mauritius, Zimbabwe and SADC. He previously served as Ambassador of Ireland to Sweden (2020-2023) and Director General of the Corporate Services Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs (2017 – 2020). From 2015-2017 Austin Gormley was Director of Ireland's Passport Service. He served as Consul General of Ireland in Shanghai, People's Republic of China from 2011 to 2015 and prior to that was Communications/Education Director for the Irish Aid programme. He has served in the Department of Foreign Affairs for over thirty years including at the Consulate General in New York City, as Chargé d'Affaires in Sofia, Bulgaria and at the Embassy in New Delhi, India. Other positions held include policy roles in the political, development cooperation and trade divisions within the Department. Private sector experience includes three years in Paris, France.



Prof Keolebogile Motaung, a distinguished Biomedical Scientist, Full Professor and Director Technology Transfer & Innovation at DUT, boasts over 24 years of experience in Higher Education. Her expertise lies in stem cells, tissue engineering, and regenerative medicine of bone and cartilage earning her international recognition. She serves as the president of the African Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine International Society (ATERMIS) and has an extensive publication record in her field. She is an advocate for science, innovation, and technology, promoting entrepreneurship and research commercialization, especially for women in Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics & Innovation (STEAMI). She founded Global Health Biotech Company, creating La-Africa Soother, a natural anti-inflammatory ointment for athletes, and licensed technology for a plant-based pump protein shake.

Queen Ndlovu is the CEO and co-founder of QP DroneTech, the main hosting organization of South Africa Flying Labs. She has founded and co-founded various other businesses such as Artisan College, Laundry, and Management Consulting businesses in the past. She was nominated as the Finalist for Women in Tech (2020) by the South African Tech Innovation Summit. Queen Ndlovu also works as a Deputy President of African Alliances of YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association). Her passion for the YMCA is to drive the social enterprise agenda to make YMCAs more sustainable.



Jacqui O'Connor is Founder and Managing Director of MedScan3D, helping healthcare professionals and research engineers access a seamless route to Patient Specific Medical 3D Printing through a high level of support, accessibility, and knowledge of the technology. Jacqui is an experienced Biomedical Engineer with a 1st class honours degree in chemistry with a demonstrated history of working in the R&D industry. She is skilled in Biomaterials, Regulatory Requirements, Technical Sales, Polymer Chemistry and Research and Development (R&D). Her skills have been recognised within the STEM community with multiple awards under her belt and is passionate about promoting woman in STEM.

Dr Patience Mthunzi-Kufa, CSIR Principal Researcher and Head and Research Group Leader: Biophotonics. 2023 winner of the Department of Science and Innovation Distinguished Woman Special Award (South African Women in Science Award). Bestowed with the Order of Mapungubwe in Bronze for her national and international contribution in the Biochemistry and Biophotonics fields, Dr Patience Mthunzi-Kufa has dedicated 18 years spearheading the development and design of novel healthcare solution, with the past 3 years focusing mainly on photonics-based Point-of-Care (PoC) diagnostic devices and biosensors for HIV, TB, Covid-19 and non-communicable diseases, machine learning for PoC diagnostics, as well as counterfeit drug screening devices.

