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## **PRESS RELEASE**

**African Gong** Introduces its Flagship Science Communication Capacity-building Programme - **Africa Scientifique** - to the first cohort of African researchers - at the **AIMS South Africa**

**African Gong & AIMS House of Science - Introductory Workshop on the Africa Scientifique: Leadership, Knowledge & Skills for Science Communication Programme – 22 July 2020**

### **Growing Africa's Capacity for Science Communication Impact**

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2020, **African Gong** in partnership with the **AIMS House of Science** conducted the **Africa Scientifique** introductory online workshop for the current cohort of AIMS Masters' students. The **Africa Scientifique** programme is a flagship initiative of **African Gong** focused on the advancement of Leadership, Knowledge & Skills for Science Communication, in Africa. The workshop featured thought-provoking, informative and inspiring presentations by the President of **African Gong** – **Dr. Elizabeth Rasekoala** and the Manager of the **AIMS House of Science** – **Dr. Rejoyce Gavhi - Molefe**. Dr Rasekoala gave an overview of the **Africa Scientifique** programme background and rationale; its pan-African contexts and perspectives, as well as its envisaged outcomes and benefits for participants. She particularly focused on the programme's vision of growing Africa's capacity for Science Communication impact:

*“The profound developmental challenges on the African continent, posit an imperative for African researchers, academics and science communicators, to leverage and transform the pace and scale of the delivery of research dissemination, public engagement and scientific literacy for the benefit of the quality of life of Africa's citizens.”*

Dr. Rasekoala went on to further highlight the challenges of growing the capacity for Science Communication impact on the African continent and the critical role that the **Africa Scientifique** programme seeks to play.

*“Through its advocacy and partnership programmes, **African Gong** has come to realise that a critical challenge to the growth of science communication on the African continent is*

fundamentally, that of the poor skills, knowledge, motivation and expertise of African researchers, academics, and science communicators. The **Africa Scientifique** programme has thus, been conceptualised and framed to meet these critical needs and deliver capacity for change and transformative impact across the African continent.’

**Dr Gavhi - Molefe** drew on her Science Communication journey as an emerging African researcher in mathematics to engage participants on how they can advance their science communication skills and knowledge and strive for enhanced societal impact with regards to their mathematical research:

*“My journey in Science Communication started after my PhD. The transition from PhD to postdoctoral research shaped my perspectives about myself and how I can use my knowledge and skills to make a positive impact on society. During my stint as a postdoc in Canada, I established and consolidated my professional identity. I got involved in science communication activities that inspired me to upskill myself and to aspire for greater societal impact using my research in Computational Mathematics as a tool.”*

The main **Africa Scientifique** programme features a 3-day intensive and interactive workshop that will take place in September 2020 and will be followed by a six-months’ post-Workshop mentoring and science communication/public engagement project activities’ support phase for the participants. The programme has been customised to fit with and address the specific requirements, gaps and challenges of AIMS researchers and academics.

The **Africa Scientifique** programme is being delivered as part of the partnership programmatic framework that **African Gong** has established with the **AIMS South Africa** to further enhance the programmatic delivery framework of both organisations, with a particular focus on advancing the communication of Mathematics and upscaling the public engagement skills, capabilities and capacities of AIMS Students’, Researchers and Lecturers’. The partnership has been formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) document which was agreed on by both organisations, and adopted at a signing ceremony which took place on the 10 May 2019, at AIMS South Africa, in Muizenberg, Cape Town, South Africa.



## **About African Gong**

Established in 2014, **African Gong** is the Pan-African Network for the Popularization of Science & Technology and Science Communication and aims to advance the Public Learning and Understanding of Science (PLUS), scientific outreach and scientific literacy on the African continent. It is developed with the strategic support of the UNESCO Africa Region. Since its founding in 2014, **African Gong** has gained a strong and dynamic reputation, locally, across Africa and internationally, for its unique voice, platform, and advocacy for the development of socio-culturally inclusive and empowering scientific outreach, public engagement and capacity-building programmes in Africa and internationally, that will particularly impact on and uplift disadvantaged and underserved communities and groups in society. For more information visit: [www.africangong.org](http://www.africangong.org)

## **About AIMS South Africa**

Established in 2003, the **African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS)** is a Pan-African network of centres of excellence for postgraduate education, research and public engagement in mathematical sciences. The first AIMS centre was opened in Cape Town, South Africa, in 2003 as a partnership project among six local and international universities. Since then AIMS centres have been opened in Senegal (2011), Ghana (2012), Cameroon (2013), Tanzania (2014) and Rwanda (2016). The pan-African network of AIMS centres is coordinated by the AIMS Next Einstein Initiative (AIMS-NEI) located in Kigali, Rwanda. The AIMS-House of Science with the secretariat based in AIMS-South Africa is a Coordination Hub of the AIMS Network for public engagement. For more information visit: [www.aims.ac.za](http://www.aims.ac.za)

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