

INVITATION

THE FUTURE OF SCIENCE DIPLOMACY: AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES IN A CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER

*A high-level dialogue convened by CREST, Stellenbosch University,
in partnership with the African STI Leaders' Forum (ASTIL)*

Thursday, 17 September 2026 | 09:30 - 16:45

5th Floor Krotoa Building, Ryneveld Street, Stellenbosch

The Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology (CREST) at Stellenbosch University, in partnership with the African STI Leaders' Forum (ASTIL), invites you to a high-level dialogue on the future of science diplomacy in a changing global order.

The dialogue is convened on the occasion of the visit to CREST of Sir Peter Gluckman, President of the International Science Council and Director of Kōi Tū: The Centre for Informed Futures, in New Zealand. It brings together leading voices from across the continent and beyond to reflect on the evolving global science diplomacy landscape and to examine its role in advancing science as a global public good under conditions of polycrisis and political fragmentation. The discussions aim to open space for strategic reflection on how science diplomacy can be mobilised to address structural imbalances in the global science system, and to contribute to the development of an Africa-centred science diplomacy agenda that supports more equitable, impactful and strategically aligned global partnerships with and across the continent. Reference to programme below.

We would be delighted to welcome you to this event. As seating is limited, we encourage you to register early to secure your place.

Registration: Participation is free, but spaces are limited. To register, please complete the attached registration form and return it to Marlo van Wyk at marlo@sun.ac.za by **28 August 2026**.

Once your registration has been received, you will receive a confirmation email confirming your participation.

Register Here: <https://forms.office.com/r/Nz2KcYdkG8>



PROGRAMME

The Future of Science Diplomacy:

African Perspectives in a Changing Global Order

A high-level dialogue convened by the Centre for Research on Evaluation, Science and Technology (CREST), Stellenbosch University, in partnership with the African STI Leaders' Forum (ASTIL)

Thursday, 17 September 2026 | Stellenbosch, South Africa

09:30 – 09:45

Welcome and opening remarks

Dr Heide Hackmann – Chair: Science Futures, and Director, CREST, Stellenbosch University

09:45 – 11:00

Session 1 | Science diplomacy in an era of fragmentation

Keynote address: Sir Peter Gluckman – President: International Science Council

Moderator: Professor Sibusiso Moyo – Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research, Innovation and Internationalisation, Stellenbosch University

Indicative questions:

- *How is geopolitical fragmentation reshaping the purpose and practice of science diplomacy?*
- *Is science still a neutral bridge, or has it become an arena of strategic competition?*
- *What does science as a global public good realistically mean under conditions of nationalism and securitisation?*
- *How can trust be built or rebuilt when multilateralism itself is under strain?*

11:00 – 11:30

Break

11:30 – 12:45

Session 2 | Africa as agenda-setter: rebalancing power and position in global science diplomacy

Moderator: Dr Ndumiso Cingo – Chairperson: Steering Committee, Science Diplomacy Capital for Africa & Manager: Strategic Partnerships, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research

Panellists:

Mr Daan du Toit – Deputy Director-General: SA Department of Science, Technology and Innovation
Professor Alinah Segobye – Board Chair: Science for Africa Foundation
Professor Lise Korsten – Past President: African Academy of Sciences
Professor Aldo Stroebe – Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research: Innovation and Internationalisation, University of Mpumalanga

	Indicative questions: • <i>What would it take to amplify Africa's role as an agenda-setter in global science diplomacy?</i> • <i>Which structural asymmetries (funding, infrastructure, epistemic authority) most constrain Africa's influence – and how can they be shifted?</i> • <i>What might the priorities for an African-centred science diplomacy agenda include?</i> • <i>How can African science diplomats coordinate and collaborate more strategically at continental level?</i>
12:45 – 14:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	Session 3 Universities as strategic actors in science diplomacy Moderator: Prof Sizwe Mabizela- Board Chair: African Research Universities Alliance. Panellists: Professor Deresh Ramjugernath – Rector and Vice-Chancellor: Stellenbosch University Professor Thandi Mgwebi – Vice-Chancellor: Walter Sisulu University Professor Francis Petersen – Vice-Chancellor: University of Pretoria Professor Daya Reddy – University of Cape Town Indicative questions: • <i>What unique role can universities play that governments and international organisations cannot?</i> • <i>How can universities align their internationalisation strategies with national and continental science diplomacy goals?</i> • <i>Are universities sufficiently equipped, institutionally and culturally, to engage in diplomacy – or do they need new capacities?</i> • <i>How should universities balance global partnerships with commitments to local and regional impact?</i>
15:15 – 15:30	Break
15:30 – 16:45	Session 4 From dialogue to action: advancing science diplomacy in and for Africa Moderator: Professor Albert van Jaarsveld – Advisor: Special Projects, Stellenbosch University Panellists: Dr Nelson Torto – Senior Science Fellow: Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education Dr Sepo Hachigonta – Executive Head: Strategic Partnerships, Networking and Resourcing, NRF / African Science Granting Councils Initiative

	Dr Jackie Kado – Executive Director: Network of African Science Academies Dr Judith Omumbo – Head: Partnerships and Resource Mobilisation, Science for Africa Foundation Prof Brando Okolo – Head and Senior STI Advisor: African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) Indicative questions: • <i>What are the key elements of an Africa-centred science diplomacy agenda for the next decade?</i> • <i>What would success look like for Africa in reshaping global science diplomacy?</i> • <i>What concrete actions should follow this dialogue?</i>
16:45 – 17:00	Conclusion and vote of thanks Dr Nico Elema - Director: Centre for Collaboration in Africa

[Register Here](#)