



Communication and Marketing Department
Isebe loThungelwano neNtengiso
Kommunikasie en Bemerkingsdepatement

Private Bag X3, Rondebosch 7701, South Africa
Welgelegen House, Chapel Road Extension, Rosebank, Cape Town
Tel: +27 (0) 21 650 5427/5428/5674 Fax: +27 (0) 21 650 5628

www.uct.ac.za

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**UCT panel discussion to tackle emerging sustainability challenges in Africa
1 November 2012, 18h00, Zoology Lecture Theatre 1, Upper campus**

A high-level international and African panel of experts, including Science and Technology Minister Derek Hanekom, will explore how "Future Earth" – a new global research initiative – can provide solutions for emerging sustainability challenges on the continent.

The panel discussion, hosted by the University of Cape Town on 1 November, will look at how Future Earth – a new international research initiative – can tackle global sustainability challenges in partnership with existing global environmental change networks in Sub Saharan Africa.

This is the first global research programme of its kind that brings together natural and social scientists to provide knowledge for challenges posed by Earth system changes in an era dominated by human activity.

Mark New, Pro Vice-Chancellor and director of the African Climate and Development Initiative at UCT said: "Future Earth will play in key role in setting national and international research agendas in environmental change and development over the next decade and beyond. This panel discussion, is an opportunity for South African researchers, and our society that is supposed to benefit from this research, to help shape this new research agenda so that it addresses problems specific to the African context."

Other issues to be discussed include questions on how Future Earth can fill knowledge and capacity gaps on global sustainability in Sub Saharan Africa; what are the research opportunities on sustainability science in Africa; and how global environmental change research can partner more effectively with the development community to provide relevant knowledge and solutions.

Panellists will include: Mark Swilling of the University of Stellenbosch, Harald Winkler of UCT, Edgar Pieterse of UCT, Martin Visbeck, Professor of Kiel University, Tanya Abrahamse, CEO of the South African Biodiversity Research Institute, Kobie Brand, Regional Director of ICLEI

Africa (Local Governments for Sustainability) and Camaren Peter of the University of Stellenbosch.

The event is jointly organised by UCT, the International Council for Science (ICSU), and the International Social Science Council (ISSC) with financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency.

Space is limited; please RSVP to Caroline Dumay [cdumay@mweb.co.za] or Loga Makwela [Loga.makwela@uct.ac.za] by 30 October 2012.

About Future Earth

Officially launched in June 2012 at the Rio + 20 Earth Summit by an alliance of international partners from global science, research funding and UN bodies, Future Earth intends to be an innovative 10-year global research programme which will provide a clearing house for sustainability solutions for users in government, business and society.

About ICSU

Founded in 1931, ICSU is a non-governmental organization with a global membership of national scientific bodies (121 Members, representing 141 countries) and International Scientific Unions (30 Members). The Council is frequently called upon to speak on behalf of the global scientific community and to act as an advisor in matters ranging from the environment to conduct in science. ICSU's activities focus on three areas: planning and coordinating research; science for policy; and strengthening the Universality of Science.

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Mologadi Makwela

Tel: (021) 650 5427 Fax (021) 650 5628

Cell: 078 258 3965

E-mail: loga.makwela@uct.ac.za

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Website: www.uct.ac.za