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Top quantum technology experts in online conversation with UCT VC

University of Cape Town Vice-Chancellor Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng will be joined by Dr Divine Fuh, Professor Francesco Petruccione and Winnie Nakiyingi in the first of a four-part series of online sessions she will host with thought leaders from Africa and elsewhere under the theme “Using the science of the future to shape your present”.

Phakeng will host the sessions at the invitation of the [Geneva Science Diplomacy Anticipator \(GESDA\)](#), of which she is a board member, with the intention to involve African youths in conversations about issues where their voices are critical but often not heard. GESDA is a Switzerland-based ‘think and do tank’ whose mission is to anticipate, accelerate and translate into concrete actions the use of emerging science-driven topics.

The first session will be held on Sunday, 10 July from 16:00 to 17:00 SAST, on UCT’s [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) platforms. It will address “Quantum Revolution & Advanced AI”. Three more sessions will be held over the next Sundays in July, with each addressing the four areas of the [GESDA Science Breakthrough Radar®](#).

Fuh, a social anthropologist and Director of the Institute for Humanities in Africa at UCT, previously served as Director of Publications and Dissemination Programme at the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). He is a researcher in the Chair for Research and Methodology at the Institute for Sociology at the University of Basel.

Petruccione is a global expert on quantum technology and a contributor to GESDA’s Science Breakthrough Radar®. He is the interim Director of the National Institute for Theoretical and Computational Sciences at Stellenbosch University, and has held the position of Pro Vice-Chancellor: Big Data and Informatics at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Nakiyingi, an alumna of the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS) Ghana, is a statistician whose experience spans both the industry and academic fields. She is a teaching assistant for The Quantum Quest, an initiative aimed at helping high school students understand the quantum revolution.

- [Read more about the three speakers.](#)

This series of virtual engagements is aimed at “bridging our understanding of how science might shape our future, how we can use these predicted futures to shape the present, and how to ensure that decisions and discussions include voices of the African youth”, said Phakeng.

“The voices of Africa's youth must be included because they can work to mitigate emerging and longstanding inequalities. We need diverse voices and ideas to ensure we get the best thinking from every part of our society and corner of the world. We need their fresh perspectives in these dialogues and debates,” Phakeng added.

This was recognised by GESDA and led to the creation of the Youth Anticipation Initiative, which Phakeng will lead through these critical and thought-provoking conversations. “It is also part of my vision for UCT to ensure that we are a future-orientated university that creates leaders who tackle social injustices,” she said.

As part of these sessions, and to enhance the sharing of knowledge, there will be a challenge announced that invites participants to submit ideas about how they can use the future to shape the present, based on any of the topics covered in the sessions. The prize is an all-expenses paid trip to attend the [GESDA Summit 2022](#), a global summit of thought leaders, which will take place in Geneva, Switzerland from 12-14 October 2022.

- [Read the full communication by Professor Phakeng.](#)

ENDS

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