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High-level Dutch delegation visits UCT to strengthen scientific collaborations

14 October 2023 | 21:00-00:00 | Department of Astronomy, RW James Building, Upper Campus, UCT

The Department of Astronomy at the University of Cape Town (UCT) will receive a high-profile delegation from the Netherlands on 14 October 2023, to foster and strengthen scientific collaborations between South Africa and the Netherlands around astronomy. The visit will be held under the theme “The multi-colour Universe”.

UCT Vice-Chancellor interim Emeritus Professor Daya Reddy will receive the delegation comprising the Netherlands Minister of Science, the Vice-Chancellors of the University of Twente and the University of Eindhoven and other distinguished delegates from the Dutch universities, scientific research facilities and the Dutch government.

Dr Lucia Marchetti, senior lecturer in astronomy and project scientist in the IDIA visualisation Lab, said: “Astronomy is an international research field that is fostered through collaborations. At UCT we strive to keep international collaborations ongoing which are great opportunities for our students to engage with the world and grow their profile in the field. This will be an occasion to highlight how collaborations between countries like South Africa and the Netherlands can provide opportunities for scientific growth in both countries”.

Central to the site visit will be the highlight of astronomy excellence in South Africa, and, especially, at UCT. During the visit, the strong bond between the Netherlands and South African astronomy will be highlighted, including the upcoming Square Kilometer Array and the Big Data processing of astronomical data.

Professor Paul Groot, South African Chair in Fast Transients and Gravitational Wave and professor of astronomy at Radboud University, said: “South Africa and the Netherlands have a strong tradition and bond in studying all aspects of the Universe. Using, among others, the MeerKAT radio telescope and the MeerLICHT optical telescope, South African and Dutch astronomers combine efforts to study galactic and extragalactic phenomena in unprecedented detail. The current collaboration will be extended with the upcoming Square Kilometer Array (SKA) and the African Millimeter Telescope, in which South Africa and the Netherlands are partners.”

During the visit, the esteemed guests, including representatives from the South African National Research Foundation and the Department of Science and Innovation, will have an opportunity to engage with the astronomical research conducted at UCT and in preparation for the SKA. They will learn how the Inter-University Institute for Data Intensive Astronomy

(IDIA), based at UCT, is supporting the scientists providing cutting-edge solutions concerning Big Data handling, Big Data interrogation and Big Data visualisation. A live remote observing session with the MeerLICHT telescope (based in Sutherland) will be participated in, as well as a tour of the IDIA Visualisation Lab, and demos of the Virtual Reality tools locally developed at UCT in support of astronomical and interdisciplinary research. There will also be an opportunity to watch the stars through UCT's telescopes on top of the RW James Building.

For more information about the visit please contact: [Dr Lucia Marchetti](#).

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