



MEDIA RELEASE – 8 September 2020

Science Policy, Science Literacy: post-COVID education for the developing world during the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Embargo: 9 September 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic has had devastating impact across the globe. For developing countries, this has not only had a negative impact on the economy, but it has also crippled the education system and will take years to recover. Where to go from here? Governments will not only have to re-look their policies on education and finance, but the entire development strategy will have to be amended.

This is happening at a time when we are entering a new era of knowledge, as the automation of the Fourth Industrial Revolution will lead to an increasing number of jobs that require education in complex fields such as artificial intelligence. In the developed world, most education was able to continue online thanks to access to information-technology infrastructure such broadband connectivity at home and computer ownership. However, in most of the developing world and in Least Developed Countries in particular (34 of 43 LDCs are in Africa), this has not been the case.

The Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf), together with the University of Johannesburg (UJ) and the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), will host a public lecture titled "**Science Policy, Science Literacy: post-COVID education for the developing world during the Fourth Industrial Revolution**" by Prof Romain Murenzi, the Executive Director of The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), a leading institution in capacity building for the developing world through South-South cooperation. Prof Murenzi also oversees the administration of the Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) with over 7,000 members; the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), a global network of some 130 academies of science and medicine; and GenderInSITE , an international initiative to promote the role of women in science, innovation, technology and engineering.

In this lecture, Prof Murenzi will discuss areas of focus for the developing world and Africa to become better-equipped for a Post-COVID-19 world based on innovative learning mechanisms and STI systems, alongside resilient and environmentally friendly economies. These following major areas should be considered: a) capacity building in science and technology, b) scientific knowledge and preparedness, c) science literacy, d) restructuring school curricula integrating skills and technologies provided by the 4th industrial revolution, e) the role of science academies, f) women and gender-based perspectives, and g) international scientific cooperation in a world where major crisis, such as COVID-19, are transnational and require a global attention.

Public Lecture Date: 10 September 2020

Time: 15:00 – 16:30 (CAT)

Available on: <https://zoom.us/j/99996176994>

For more information please contact: Renate Venier renate@assaf.org.za