



CIENTÍFICOS ESPAÑOLES EN EL SUR DE ÁFRICA
SPANISH RESEARCHERS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA
IZAZINZULU ZASESPAIN EMAZANTSI EAFRIKA
CIENTISTAS ESPANHÓIS NA ÁFRICA AUSTRAL

3rd Research Forum Southern Africa - Spain

3 NOVEMBER 2023

9:00 CAT

Residence of the Ambassador
of Spain to South Africa

1 Glastonbury Drive,
Bishops court, Cape Town

acesda.org

RSVP at admacesda@gmail.com



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3rd Southern Africa – Spain Research Forum

Science for the Global Good: A North-South Dialogue

FOREWORD

H.E. Mr. Raimundo Robredo Rubio

Ambassador of Spain to South Africa, Madagascar, Comoros, Lesotho and Mauritius

Welcome to the 3rd Southern Africa – Spain Research Forum

As Ambassador of Spain to South Africa, it is a great honor and an even greater pleasure to host at the Residence of the Embassy of Spain the annual Southern Africa - Spain Research Forum organized by the Society of Spanish Researchers in Southern Africa (ACESDA). One year and one month ago the President of the Government of Spain visited South Africa and requested to meet with the representatives of ACESDA, the only Spanish Scientific Association in Africa. I think that conveys better than anything I can say the unwavering support of Spain to the work that ACESDA carries out. The yearly Forum is an essential part of that work, facilitating the connection and collaboration among Spanish and Southern African researchers, as well as various stakeholders from universities, government institutions, and technological companies. I commend ACESDA's dedication to spearheading this pivotal initiative. The Embassy of Spain in South Africa will continue supporting this endeavor, as we collectively strive to advance scientific knowledge and foster science diplomacy, as well as promoting peace, cooperation, and sustainable development among all the nations represented here.

I look forward to sharing with you in person the exchanges at the third edition of the Forum this year, as I did last year, and as I will certainly do in future editions. Science is a common language to understand the world and, as such, a fantastic tool to build bridges between different peoples. That is a goal that we all share at the Embassy of Spain, at ACESDA and I believe also at the scientific community in South Africa at large. Let us use this new edition of the Forum to build better, bigger, stronger bridges.



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Science for the Global Good: A North-South Dialogue





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PROGRAMME

08:15-08:45 REGISTRATION & TEA/COFFEE

9:00-9:15 WELCOME & OPENING

Dr. Fabiola Quesada | Co-Chair of the Research Forum 2023, Deputy President of the Society of Spanish Researchers in Southern Africa (ACE Sur de África) & Wild Spirit Fund

H.E. Mr. Jesús Silva Fernández | General Consul of Spain in Cape Town

H.E. Mr. Raimundo Robredo Rubio | Ambassador of Spain to South Africa

9:15-10:00 SESSION 1 - ALKEBULAN AWARDS 2023 RECIPIENTS

Chair: Ms. Maia Belzunegui | ACE Sur de Africa & Spanish Section - Department of Languages and Literature, U. of Cape Town, South Africa

9:15-9:30 Dr. Delfino Vubil | Centro de Investigação em Saúde de Manhiça (CISM), Mozambique
Antibiotic resistance in Manhiça District, rural area of Southern Mozambique

9:30-9:45 Prof. Alberto Garcia Basteiro | ISGlobal & Manhiça, Mozambique
Building a TB research portfolio in a high HIV burden setting in southern Mozambique

9:45-10:00 Discussion

10:00-11:00 SESSION 2 - SOUTHERN AFRICA - SPAIN COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Chair: Fabiola Quesada Fernández | Wild Spirit Fund Founder & CEO, Deputy President ACE Sur de Africa

10:00-10:12 Prof. Helen Scanlon | Department of Political Studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa
Memory Wars and the Coming to Terms with the Past: Lessons from South Africa and Spain



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- 10:12-10:24 Mr. Kevin Toro | University of Leuven, Belgium and Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, South Africa
Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa: trends and perceptions
- 10:24-10:36 Prof. Mangaka Clara Matoetoe | Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa
Application of Gold nanoparticles and their composites in sensors
- 10:36-10:48 Dr. Rosephine Georgina Rakotonirainy | Department of Statistical Sciences, University of Cape Town, South Africa
Optimisation modeling: Applications to educational timetabling, healthcare mobility, and packing problems. in logistics
- 10:48-11:00 Discussion

11:00-11:30 TEA/COFFEE BREAK - NETWORKING (15 min)

11:30-12:15 SESSION 3 - ROUND TABLE. NAVIGATING RESEARCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WITH A FOREIGN/EU BACKPACK - TO COLLABORATE OR NOT TO COLLABORATE?

Chair: Prof. Roman Roth | School of Languages and Literature, University of Cape Town

Prof. Mattia Vaccari | eResearch Director, University of Cape Town

Dr. Nikita Bernier | University of the Western Cape and National Institute for Theoretical and Computational Science

12:15-13:15 LUNCH BREAK - NETWORKING (60 min)

13:15-13:45 SESSION 4 - SOUTHERN SKIES WITH A SPANISH TWIST

Chair: Dr. Alvaro de la Cruz Dombriz | President of ACE Sur de Africa & University of Cape Town & SARAO collaboration

- 13:15-13:27 Dr. Brenda Namumba | University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
The growth and structure of nearby galaxies based on HI observations: Capabilities of SKA pathfinders



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13:27-13:39 Dr. Encarni Romero Colmenero | South African Astronomical Observatory & SALT Collaboration

Optical astronomical research infrastructure in South Africa: The SAAO, SALT, the Intelligent Observatory and the Innovation Hub

13:39-13:45 Discussion

13:45-14:00 TEA/COFFEE BREAK - NETWORKING (15 min)

14:00-15:00 SESSION 5 - ROUND TABLE. MEDIA AND SCIENCE MADE IN AFRICA: STEREOTYPES, CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Chair: Ms. Katherine Wilson | Communication & Marketing Manager, Faculty of Science at UCT

Mr. Barry Christianson | Freelance documentary photographer and journalist

Prof. Lolie Makhubu-Badenhorst | Director of Multilingualism Education Project, University of Cape Town

15:00-15:30 FINAL REMARKS & CLOSURE

Dr. Álvaro de la Cruz Dombriz | President of ACE Sur de Africa & University of Cape Town & SARAQ collaboration

Prof. Daya Reddy | Interim Vice Chancellor of the University of Cape Town

EARLY-CAREER TALENT ALKEBULAN AWARDS 2022 CEREMONY

awarded to

Dr. Delfino Vubil
Centro de Investigação em Saúde de
Manhiça (CISM)
Mozambique

Prof. Alberto Garcia Basteiro
ISGlobal & Manhiça
Mozambique

15:30 – 17:00 COCKTAIL RECEPTION

Hosted by H.E. Mr. Raimundo Robredo Rubio, Ambassador of Spain to South Africa



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OPENING



H.E. Mr. Raimundo Robredo Rubio

Ambassador of Spain to South Africa, Madagascar, Comoros, Lesotho and Mauritius

Raimundo Robredo Rubio holds a Degree in Economic and Business Sciences (University of Oviedo), a Diploma in Law (UNED), a Diplôme d'Études Européens (Université de Toulouse), and he has graduated from several postgraduate studies, including Foreign Trade Specialist Training Program (ICEX) Global Leadership Program (Korean Development Institute, KDI) and a Leadership Program for Public Management (IESE). Amongst other portfolios, prior to his present position, he was Head of the European Disarmament Issues Service, SDG International Disarmament Affairs (2001), First Secretary at the Embassy in Tokyo (2002), Counsellor at the Spanish Embassy in Pretoria (2006-2009), Second Chief of Mission at the Spanish Embassy in Dakar (2009-2011) and Santiago de Chile (2014-2017) and Director General for Africa at the Foreign Office, Spain (2017-2022).



H.E. Mr. Jesús Silva Fernández

General Consul of Spain in Cape Town

Jesús Silva Fernández graduated in Law from the Complutense University of Madrid, he entered the Diplomatic Career in 1990. He has been technical advisor at the Protocol Headquarters of the Presidency of the Government of Spain, Consul General of Spain in Rosario (Argentina) and cultural advisor at the Spanish Embassy in Bonn and in Berlin (Germany). In 2000 he was appointed director of the Cabinet of the Secretary of State for International Cooperation and for Ibero-America. In 2001 he was appointed general director of Cultural and Scientific Relations of the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain. From 2005 to 2010 he was Spain's ambassador to Jamaica, also accredited as non-resident ambassador to the Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica, Saint Lucia and Saint Kitts and Nevis. Recently, he has been the ambassador of Spain in the Republic of Panama (2010-2014) and in the Republic of Venezuela (2017 - 2020).



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SESSION 1 – ALKEBULAN AWARDS 2023 RECIPIENTS



Dr. Delfino Vubil

Centro de Investigação em Saúde de Manhiça (CISM),
Mozambique
Antibiotic resistance in Manhiça District, rural area of Southern Mozambique

Delfino Vubil is assistant Researcher at Centro de Investigação em Saúde de Manhiça (CISM) in Mozambique. He holds a PhD degree in Medicine and Translational Research, MSc in Cellular and Molecular Biology and BSc in Biology. He started his career as a Laboratory Technologist in microbiology and molecular Biology in 2009. His roles included diagnostic testing, implementation of procedures, staff training and coordination of research projects. As part of technical activities, he was a manager of the Molecular Biology Laboratory from 2010 – 2012, and then assumed the position of Laboratory Director from 2019-2023. One of his roles as Laboratory Director was to leverage the quality management system towards ISO 15189 accreditation which was achieved in October 2020. Delfino's research interests in infectious diseases, providing diagnostic testing, epidemiological surveillance, microbiologic aetiology, including antibiotic resistance mostly in diarrheal diseases, invasive bacterial infections and other vaccine preventable diseases.



Prof. Alberto Garcia Basteiro

ISGlobal & Manhiça, Mozambique
Building a TB research portfolio in a high HIV burden setting in southern Mozambique

Alberto García-Basteiro is the TB and HIV research coordinator at Centro de Investigação em Saúde de Manhiça (CISM), Mozambique. He is also an Associate Research Professor at the Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal) and the University of Barcelona. Currently, he coordinates several large epidemiological studies as well as diagnostic and drug clinical trials in the field of tuberculosis. Dr. Garcia-Basteiro's scientific interest focuses on assessing and understanding the burden of TB in Africa, particularly Mozambique, and characterizing the disease at microbiological, clinical and social level.



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Ms. Maia Belzunegui

Spanish Section - Department of Languages and Literature, U. of Cape Town, South Africa and ACE Sur de Africa

Maia Belzunegui is an educator with a background in Philology and Art Education from the Complutense University of Madrid. She received scholarships for studies at the University of Edinburgh and Loyola University of Chicago. Specializing in Spanish language instruction, Maia has taught at various institutions including the University of Washington and the University of Namibia. Currently, she serves as a Spanish lecturer at the University of Cape Town through the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation.



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SESSION 2 - SOUTHERN AFRICA - SPAIN COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS



Prof. Helen Scanlon

Department of Political Studies, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Memory Wars and the Coming to Terms. with the Past: Lessons from South Africa and Spain

Helen Scanlon is the convenor of the Justice and Transformation Programme at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. The JT Programme seek to promote scholarship concerning the legacies of historic human rights violations and conflicts, as well as to advance the comparative study of transitional justice. Prior to UCT, Dr. Scanlon worked for the International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) where she was directly involved in programmatic engagement in Asia, the Americas, MENA and Europe as well as in Africa. She recently co-edited a book with Jelke Boesten *Gender, Transitional Justice and Memorial Arts: Global Perspectives on Commemoration and Mobilization* (London: Routledge, 2021).



Mr. Kevin Toro

University of Leuven, Belgium and Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, South Africa

Unconstitutional Changes of Government in Africa: trends and perceptions

Kevin Toro Sánchez is a professional with six years of experience in the areas of public advocacy, research, policy development, project monitoring and evaluation, human rights and transitional justice. He currently serves as an advisor to the Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum. In parallel, he conducts a PhD research on the role of civil society organisations in Zimbabwe at the University of Leuven (Belgium). In South Africa, Kevin supports the work of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation as a research scholar.



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Prof. Mangaka Clara Matoetoe

Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa

Application of Gold nanoparticles and their composites in sensors

Mangaka C. Matoetoe is an Associate Professor at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) in the Department of Chemistry. She is a C2 NRF rated materials electroanalytical researcher that has graduated 14 students; 3 PhDs, and 11 Masters with 6 students; 4 PhD's and 3 Masters in progress. She has worked in a number of institutions locally and internationally such as the National University of Lesotho (NUL), Visiting researcher through ANSTI staff exchange programme to University of the Western Cape (UWC), 2009 and University of Stellenbosch (US), 2006 as well as in Bondo Kenya In 2014. She has published and participated in conferences as an organizing committee member, session chair, oral presenter, poster present as well as keynote/ invited speaker. Currently has 640 citations of 44 articles with an h-index of 14 and i10 index of 18 (google scholar). In 2016 and 2021 her research was recognized internationally when she won the competitive The Women for Africa Foundation (Fundación Mujeres por África) research visit to Barcelona (ICFO) and she became one of the two SA women in electrochemistry to be a quest editor for the Focus Issue on Women in Electrochemistry publication by the electrochemical society respectively. Her academic progress can also be seen in academic bodies where she has participated in the foundation of a founding member in two academic bodies; south eastern African network for analytical Chemistry (SEANAC) and SEATAC (Africa Chapter).



Dr. Rosephine Georgina Rakotonirainy

Department of Statistical Sciences, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Optimisation modeling: Applications to educational timetabling, healthcare mobility, and packing problems. in logistics

Rosephine Georgina Rakotonirainy is a lecturer at the Department of Statistical Sciences at the University of Cape Town. Her main research area lies in Operations Research, focusing on the application of mathematical optimization techniques to solve complex decision-making problems. She has a particular interest in the field of cutting and packing problems, and works on various related projects.



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SESSION 3 - ROUND TABLE. NAVIGATING RESEARCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WITH A FOREIGN/EU BACKPACK - TO COLLABORATE OR NOT TO COLLABORATE?



Prof. Mattia Vaccari

eResearch Director, University of Cape Town

Mattia Vaccari is trained as an astrophysicist and is currently eResearch Director and Astroinformatics Research Professor at the University of Cape Town. As eResearch Director, he coordinates a distributed organisation that promotes the use of advanced information technologies to support innovative research practice and partners with research groups to accelerate and transform research, connecting them to the most appropriate services to support the research lifecycle. In his research, he uses ground-based as well as space-based telescopes to observe distant galaxies at all wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum and study their formation and evolution over cosmic time. He also applies Artificial Intelligence techniques to longstanding problems in observational astrophysics such as source detection, identification and classification as well as to weather forecasting and food quality.



Dr. Nikita Bernier

University of the Western Cape and National Institute for Theoretical and Computational Science

Nikita Bernier is an associate researcher in experimental nuclear physics at the University of the Western Cape (UWC) and the National Institute for Theoretical and Computational Sciences (NITheCS) in South Africa. Originally from Québec in Canada, she did her postgraduate studies in Vancouver and moved to Cape Town in 2019 to join the research group of Prof. Nico Orce. She is leading the analysis of large data sets collected at state-of-the-art nuclear physics facilities in South Africa, Switzerland, France, and Canada, with an emphasis on teamwork and developing the initiative of students. She is also coordinating the UWC Physics & Astronomy Honours programme, with streams in nuclear physics, material science, and (soon!) astronomy. Outside of university settings, she has been participating in after-school programmes in townships in Cape Town with organisations providing educational opportunities for disadvantaged and at-risk learners.



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Prof. Roman Roth

School of Languages and Literature, University of Cape Town

Roman Roth is Professor of Classics at the University of Cape Town where he has been employed since 2008. He has been a Research Fellow of Peterhouse (Cambridge) and a Fellow of the Alexander-von-Humboldt Foundation, and has been elected as the AD Trendall Fellow at the Institute of Classical Studies in the University of London for the year 2024. His research focuses on the history and material culture of Italy during the Republican and Imperial periods; publications include the monograph *Styling Romanisation* (Cambridge 2007), numerous journal articles and book chapters, as well as the edited volumes *Roman by Integration* (with J. Keller, Portsmouth, RI 2007), and *Empire, Hegemony or Anarchy* (with S. Karataş and K.-J. Hölkeskamp, Stuttgart 2019).



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SESSION 4: SOUTHERN SKIES WITH A SPANISH TWIST



Dr. Brenda Namumba

University of Witwatersrand, South Africa

The growth and structure of nearby galaxies based on HI observations: Capabilities of SKA pathfinders

Brenda Namumba is the first Zambian to have a PhD in astrophysics. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Witwatersrand, South Africa. She obtained her BSc. in Physics at the University of Zambia and later moved to South Africa to pursue her postgraduate studies in Astronomy. She received her PhD in 2019 from the University of Cape Town, focusing on the neutral hydrogen (HI) properties of dwarf galaxies in the Local Group. Her interests include neutral hydrogen in nearby galaxies, galaxy formation, evolution, and star formation. In this pursuit, she uses radio interferometers such as KAT-7 and MeerKAT combined with other multi-wavelength observations. She is a recipient of the “Center of Excellence Severo Ochoa” award to the Instituto de Astrofísica de Andalucía (SEV-2017-0709)”, Women by Science “Mujeres por Africa fellowship” as well as the Loreal Women by Science fellowship awards. Apart from doing research, Dr. Namumba spends her time mentoring young girls through the Kuongoza Mentoring Program and participates in outreach programs. such as giving astronomy talks to the public.



Dr. Encarni Romero Colmenero

South African Astronomical Observatory & SALT Collaboration

Optical astronomical research infrastructure in South Africa: The SAAO, SALT, the Intelligent Observatory and the Innovation Hub

Encarni Romero Colmenero was born and grew up in Spain. She completed her undergraduate studies and PhD in the UK and moved to South Africa at the beginning of the SALT project, becoming the first ever SALT Astronomer in 2004. She became the Head of SALT Astronomy Operations in December 2017. She has contributed to over 100 astronomical research papers, mainly on the area of Active Galaxies.



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SESSION 5: ROUND TABLE. MEDIA AND SCIENCE MADE IN AFRICA: STEREOTYPES, CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS



Mr. Barry Christianson

Freelance documentary photographer and journalist

Barry Christianson is a freelance documentary photographer and journalist from Cape Town, South Africa. Before entering the journalism field in 2019 he spent 17 years working as a web developer. He has worked on diverse topics ranging from his first long-term project on Cissie Gool House, a housing occupation in an abandoned state-owned hospital, to seal deaths on South Africa's West Coast, and what it takes to build a field hospital during the first wave of Covid-19. His work has appeared in a variety of South African and international publications including: Daily Maverick, Ground Up, The Mail & Guardian, Nature, The Guardian, National Geographic, Global Citizen, Aljazeera, Rest of World, and others.



Prof. Lolie Makhubu-Badenhorst

Director of Multilingualism Education Project, University of Cape Town

Lolie Makhubu-Badenhorst is employed at the University of Cape Town as the Director of the Multilingualism Education Project (MEP) located in the Centre for Higher Education Development (CHED). She is currently the Chairperson of the Pan South African Language Board (PanSALB) and the Deputy Chairperson of CoPAL. In addition, she is currently a commissioner for the isiZulu Commission of the ACALAN in the African Union (AU). Prior to joining UCT, she was the Director of the University Language Planning and Development Office (ULPDO) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). She also served as the Head and Cluster Leader of African Languages, Linguistics & Development Modules. She worked and held various positions at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) where she pioneered the teaching of isiZulu to the staff members and pioneered the provision of interpreting services during the DUT graduation ceremonies including South African Sign Language (SASL). Her research and publications focus on language (including SASL); interpreting; translation; morpho-syntax; terminology development; lexicography and language policy.



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Ms. Katherine Wilson

Communication & Marketing Manager, Faculty of Science at UCT

Katherine Wilson has an Honor's degree in Psychology and has worked in Communication and Marketing for the last 25 years, 16 of which have been in the Faculty of Science at UCT. She is passionate about communicating Science and believe that Scientists have a responsibility to communicate their research to the public and need to be encouraged to share their research findings. At any one time, there is so much interesting discovery happening at academic institutions and the researchers themselves don't always recognise how much the rest of the academic community and the public hungers for knowledge of developments and discoveries in Science. She has made it her mission to be the interface of translating technical science into interesting, readable and easily understandable Science for consumption by all.



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FINAL REMARKS & CLOSURE



Prof. Daya Reddy

Interim Vice-Chancellor of the University of Cape Town

Daya Reddy is a South African mathematician and engineer who has made significant contributions to science and education. He is a Professor Emeritus at the University of Cape Town, where he served as head of the Department of Applied Mathematics and as dean of the Faculty of Science. He is also a founding member of the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS). His research interests lie in the broad area of solid and computational mechanics, straddling applied mathematics and engineering sciences. He has published over 200 papers in peer-reviewed journals and is the author of two research monographs and two texts. Reddy is a Fellow of the International Association for Computational Mechanics and the South African Association for Computational and Applied Mechanics. He has received numerous awards for his research, including the National Order of Mapungubwe (Bronze) from the President of the Republic of South Africa and the Georg Forster Research Award from the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Germany. In addition to his research and teaching, Reddy has also played a leading role in science policy and administration. He served as President of the International Science Council (ISC) from 2018 to 2021 and as co-chair of the policy arm of the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP). He currently serves on the steering committee of the Office for Astronomy Development. Reddy is a strong advocate for science education and public engagement. He has spoken at numerous international meetings on these topics and is a member of the International Advisory Board of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation of Germany. Reddy's contributions to science and education are significant and far-reaching. He is a role model for young scientists and engineers, and his work has helped to advance the field of computational mechanics and to promote science education and public engagement.



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ORGANISATION COMMITTEE



Dr. Álvaro de la Cruz Dombriz

Co-Chair of the Research Forum 2023

Senior Lecturer at University of Cape Town & President of the Society of Spanish Researchers in Southern Africa (ACE Sur de África)

Since August 2015, Álvaro de la Cruz Dombriz has been a Permanent Faculty Lecturer in the Department of Mathematics and Applied Mathematics at the University of Cape Town (UCT). Previously, awarded a PhD at the Complutense University of Madrid (2010, Summa cum Laude) on theoretical and observational constraints in extended theories of gravity. Álvaro's publications include more than 60 peer-reviewed articles with seminal contributions in the areas of cosmological large-scale structures, foundations of theories beyond Einsteinian gravity and indirect methods of dark matter detections. Álvaro is also a scientific referee for twenty-two journals and several international scientific agencies and has been responsible for enabling several MSc and PhD students to graduate. To date, Álvaro has been a member of the scientific teams for seventeen research funded projects. Since 2016 he has been the Principal Investigator (PI) for eight funded research projects in both Europe and South Africa and the Erasmus+ Alliance4Universities Consortium Facilitator in Southern Africa. In 2017 he was appointed as an Associate in the SKA Cosmology collaboration and took the Chair of the departmental Internationalisation Committee (Mathematics, UCT). Then he was honoured with the Young Researcher Award, (UCT College of Fellows, 2017) and the Claude Leon Foundation Merit Award for Early-career Researchers (2018). Since 2019, he is the President of the Society of Spanish Researchers in Southern Africa (ACE Sur de Africa). Since 2021 Alvaro has also been a "Beatriz Galindo" Senior Distinguished Researcher at the University of Salamanca, Spain.



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Dr. Fabiola Quesada

Co-Chair of the Research Forum 2023 & Deputy President of the Society of Spanish Researchers in Southern Africa (ACE Sur de África) & Wild Spirit Fund

Fabiola Quesada is a veterinarian, scientist, entrepreneur and founder. Her specialty is the health and protection of wildlife in the natural ecosystem where it lives. After a decade as CEO of WildSpirit, an international wildlife veterinary medicine training program in South Africa, Dr. Quesada decided to go a step further in favor of conservation and founded the Wild Spirit Fund. Both institutions are based in Spain and South Africa, have projects in other African countries and have extensive outreach work on a global level. In 2012, Fabiola completed her studies at the University of Córdoba, obtaining a degree in veterinary medicine and a master's degree in medicine, health and animal improvement. In 2022 she began her doctorate in biomedicine and health sciences with the European University of Madrid. Fabiola resides permanently in South Africa.



Dr. Antonio Blanco Montero

Senior Lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University & Executive Committee Member of the Society of Spanish Researchers in Southern Africa (ACE Sur de África)

Antonio Blanco Montero is a Researcher and Professional Architect registered in the United Kingdom, Spain and South Africa. He holds a Ph.D in Civil Engineering from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa). He studied Urban Planning at Università di Roma La Sapienza (Italy) in 1999 and graduated with a Master's Degree in Architecture from the Universidad de Sevilla (Spain) in 2001. Antonio has been the lead Architect of over 130 architectural and infrastructural projects. In 2014, he moved to South Africa and started his journey as a researcher, exploring the topic of the sustainable city in Southern Africa, focused on urban resilience and sustainability through smart initiatives. Since 2018, he combines research, professional practice and lecturing. He has been coordinator of Green Infrastructures for the 'Umngeni Resilience Project', first United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Adaptation Fund financed project in South Africa, related to building resilience-strengthening against Climate Change for vulnerable communities in rural KwaZulu-Natal. Recently, he joined the Anglia Ruskin University as Senior Lecturer in Environmental Design and Sustainability.



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3rd Southern Africa – Spain Research Forum *Science for the Global Good: A North-South Dialogue*



Dr. Alba Gómez Arias

Researcher at University of the Free State & General Secretary of the Society of Spanish Researchers in Southern Africa (ACE Sur de África)

Alba Gómez-Arias studied geology at the University of Huelva (UHU). She has a master's degree in Geology and environmental management of mineral resources awarded by the UHU and a doctorate in science awarded by the University of the Free State (UFS, South Africa) in the area of hydrogeology in co-tutelage with the UHU in the area of Industrial and Environmental Science and Technology. She works as a researcher at the UFS since 2014. During this time, she has collaborated in numerous national projects on environmental characterization of industrial waste, remediation of contaminated soils and water, hydrogeological studies and valorization of mining waste in collaboration with the departments of Biotechnology, Geology, Chemistry and Environment of the UFS. Highlighted international projects include ERA-MIN of HORIZON2020 (ERA-MIN_AMDREY_PCIN-2015-242) and Unesco (UNESCO-IGCP682). In addition, she has developed a new acid and alkaline water treatment system called BDAS whose patent (PCT / IB2015 / 056760) has been successfully implemented in seven mines located in South Africa, Spain and the United Kingdom. In 2022, Alba received the Early-Career Alkebulan award recognizing her trajectory as a Spanish researcher in Southern Africa.



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