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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

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### **Top Scholars in South Africa Honoured**

Twenty-nine of the country's leading scholars and scientists were inaugurated as Members of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) at the annual Awards Ceremony on 19 October 2022.

As the official Academy of South Africa, ASSAf has as core function to honour the country's most outstanding scholars by electing them to Membership of the Academy. ASSAf Members are drawn from the full spectrum of disciplines.

New Members are elected each year by the full existing Membership. Membership of the Academy is a great honour and is in recognition of scholarly achievement. Members are the core asset of the Academy and give of their time and expertise voluntarily in the service of society.

The 29 new ASSAf Members bring the total Membership of ASSAf to 659.

At the same time ten new members of the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) were inaugurated.

SAYAS was launched in October 2011 as a means to enable South Africa's young scientists to fully participate in local and internationally relevant research and development agendas.

It provides a national platform where leading young scientists from all disciplines in the country can interact, and also access international networking and career development opportunities.

SAYAS members are young scientists below the age of 40, have PhDs and are deemed excellent in their fields of expertise. SAYAS members come from all disciplines including pure and applied sciences, humanities, social sciences and the arts.

The new ASSAf Members are:

**Prof Olalekan Ayo-Yusuf** - Head of School and Professor at the School of Health Systems and Public Health at the University of Pretoria.

**Prof Karen Barnes** - Professor in Clinical Pharmacology, Health Sciences Faculty, University of Cape Town.

**Prof Deevia Bhana** - DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in Gender and Childhood Sexuality, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

**Prof Ronelle Carolissen** - clinical psychologist and professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychology at Stellenbosch University.

**Prof Stan du Plessis** - Professor of Economics, Stellenbosch University.

**Prof Karen Esler** - Distinguished Professor, Conservation Ecology & Entomology, Stellenbosch University.

**Prof Rituparno Goswami** - Professor and Academic Leader (Research), School of Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

**Prof Sarah Gravett** - Professor of Education: Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg (UJ).

**Prof Jacqueline Hoare** - Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Mental Health at the University of Cape Town.

**Prof Rodney Jones** - consulting chemical engineer, senior technical specialist, Pyrometallurgy Division: Mintek and Honorary Adjunct Professor in the School of Chemical and Metallurgical Engineering, University of the Witwatersrand.

**Prof Christine Lochner** - Professor and Co-Director of the SA Medical Research Council Unit on Risk and Resilience in Mental Disorders, Department of Psychiatry, Stellenbosch University.

**Prof Heila Lotz-Sisitka** - Distinguished Professor, Environmental Learning Research Centre (ELRC), Rhodes University and SARChI Chair: Global Change and Social Learning Systems.

**Prof Yin-Zhe Ma** - Professor at the Physics Cluster, University of Kwazulu-Natal and he is currently a core member of the Square Kilometer Array team.

**Prof Aubrey Mainza** - Professor and Head of the Department of Chemical Engineering, University of Cape Town and the Chair of the International Comminution Research Association (ICRA) world.

**Prof Andrew McKechnie** - Professor and South African Research Chair (Conservation Physiology), Department of Zoology and Entomology, University of Pretoria.

**Prof Thomas Meyer** - Professor in Computer Science at the University of Cape Town and Co-Director of the national Centre for Artificial Intelligence Research (CAIR).

**Prof Maggy Momba** - Research Professor and SARChI Chair Holder for Water Quality and Wastewater Management at the Tshwane University of Technology.

**Prof Pilate Moyo** - Head of the Department of Civil Engineering and Professor of Structural Engineering, University of Cape Town.

**Prof Jeff Murugan** - Professor of Mathematical Physics at the University of Cape Town.

**Prof Muchaparara Musemwa** - Professor and Head of the School of Social Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand.

**Prof Sarojini Nadar** - Desmond Tutu (SARChI) Research Chair in Religion and Social Justice at the University of the Western Cape.

**Prof Thajasvarie Naicker** - Professor in the College of Health Sciences, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

**Prof Kogieleum Naidoo** - Deputy Director: Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA) and Head: CAPRISA TB and HIV Treatment Research Programme and Honorary Associate Professor in the Department of Nursing and Public Health, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

**Prof Paul Oberholster** - Director: Centre for Environmental Management, University of the Free State.

**Prof Nasheeta Peer** - senior specialist scientist within the Non-communicable Diseases (NCDs) Research Unit at the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) and Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine, University of Cape Town.

**Prof Shazly Savahl** - registered research psychologist and Professor of Research and Social Psychology, based at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of Children, Families and Society, University of the Western Cape.

**Prof Hettie Schönfeldt** - SARChI Chair in the National Development Plan Priority Area of Nutrition and Food Security, University of Pretoria and is the Co-director: African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA): Centre of Excellence in Sustainable Food Systems.

**Prof Christian Wolkersdorfer** - SARChI Chair for Acid Mine Drainage Treatment, Tshwane University of Technology (Department of Environmental, Water and Earth Sciences).

**Prof Ingrid Woolard** - Dean of the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences and Professor of Economics at Stellenbosch University.

The ten new SAYAS members are:

**Prof Mahabubur Chowdhury** - associate professor in the Department of Chemical Engineering at Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT).

**Dr Savania Nagiah** - lecturer at the Nelson Mandela Medical School in Missionvale, Gqeberha.

**Dr Avela Majavu** - chemist R&D at Sibanye Stillwater Precious Metal Refinery (SSW PMR).

**Dr Bongumusa Makhoba** - lecturer at the University of Zululand, Department of Economics.

**Dr Dane Brown** - lecturer in Computer Science at Rhodes University.

**Dr Sooraj Baijnath** - lecturer in the School of Physiology and co-founder of the Integrated Molecular Physiology Research Initiative (IMPRI) at the University of the Witwatersrand.

**Dr Mubeen Goolam** - lecturer in Cell Biology in the Department of Human Biology at the University of Cape Town.

**Dr Samson Akpotu** - research fellow in analytical and materials chemistry at Vaal University of Technology.

**Dr Bronwyne Coetzee** - senior lecturer in Psychology at Stellenbosch University (SU).

**Prof Asanda Mditshwa** - associate professor of horticultural sciences at the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN).

**ENDS**

### **Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf)**

ASSAf was inaugurated in May 1996. It was formed in response to the need for an Academy of Science consonant with the dawn of democracy in South Africa: activist in its mission of using science and scholarship for the benefit of society, with a mandate encompassing all scholarly disciplines that use an open-minded and evidence-based approach to build knowledge.

ASSAf thus adopted in its name the term 'science' in the singular as reflecting a common way of enquiring rather than an aggregation of different disciplines. Its Members are elected on the basis of a combination of two principal criteria, academic excellence and significant contributions to society.

The Parliament of South Africa passed the Academy of Science of South Africa Act (Act 67 of 2001), which came into force on 15 May 2002. This made ASSAf the only academy of science in South Africa officially recognised by government and representing the country in the international community of science academies and elsewhere.

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