

**What?** 1<sup>st</sup> Pan-African Science, Society & Policy Indaba, 35 thought-leaders, 15 countries  
**Why?** Preparation for the Cape Town Declaration 2021  
**When?** 09h00 – 16h45, Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> June, National Library of South Africa, Cape Town  
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*Cape Town is the chosen venue for the launch of an annual consultative process looking at the true robustness of science and society-led policy-making inside the Africa 54. The common goal is to arrive at a **Cape Town Declaration on Ethics & Principles of Science & Society Policy-Making for Africa** in time for the **World Science Forum 2021**. This indaba is Co-Chaired by Prof. Roseanne Diab, Executive Officer of the Academy of Science of SA (ASSAf) and Prof. Julian Kinderlerer, Emeritus Professor Cape Town University and Member, European Group on Ethics.*

Convened by SciCom – Making Sense of Science, this independent, non-governmental gathering takes as its starting point the **Brussels Declaration** which proposes a **twenty-point blueprint** for a set of ethics and principles to inform work at the boundary between science, society and policy. This group-think brings together the findings from a series of five consultation events and twenty-five symposia held at global conferences from 2012 – 2016. More than 300 individuals from 35 countries, often holding opposing views, examined how science speaks to power because it has evidence. Taking feedback from hundreds more stakeholders in open debates, they set out to explain why evidence plus dialogue rarely equals (as one might expect) good decisions and laws.

Announced in the journal *Nature* in January, launched at the *American Association for the Advancement of Science's* Annual Meeting in Boston, in February, and made available across all *Elsevier* publications worldwide thereafter, the *Brussels Declaration* has had over 50 million views and tens of thousands of downloads: <https://www.sci-com.eu>

**African links** to this global initiative are strong. All five high-level consultations held in Brussels and Manchester 2012 – 2016 involved notable African scientists. The final text was debated by an eminent panel at **Science Forum South Africa** in December 2016. Minister Naledi Pandor spoke at its AAAS launch in February and will be guest of honour at the Indaba pre-dinner on June 6<sup>th</sup>.

On June 7<sup>th</sup> in Cape Town, delegates from Angola, Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa and Uganda are joined by thought-leaders from Austria, Germany, India, Ireland and Japan to put an **African-specific process** on the rails. The features that set this initiative apart are its purposeful five-year duration, its multidisciplinary and bottom-up approach, its openness to all stakeholders, the numbers and range of groups involved, and the anticipated quality of the dialogue, inputs and outcomes to be achieved.

Taking **harm reduction science** in drugs, alcohol and tobacco as a powerful first case-study informed by the HIV/Aids experience, delegates will examine **five pivotal questions**:

- What is the relationship between science, society & policy inside Africa?
- What should we expect from African scientists?
- What should we expect from African policy-makers?
- What should we expect from the public, industry, media and interest groups?
- How can top-down scientific advice and bottom-up expertise be integrated more effectively?

The added-value is our focus on the view from the **grass-roots level**, working with carefully selected influencers – politicians, science advisers, chief scientific officers from industry, civil society leaders, medical doctors, professors, science editors etc. By merging traditional scientific and political 'elites' with 'scientific citizenship' and robust third-party science, our group effort will identify promising alternatives based not on more top-down authority or even certainty, but on greater methodological trust by African citizens.