



FAO: NEWS EDITORS AND NEWS WIRES

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World Cultural Council acknowledges NRF physicist with the World Award of Education

The World Cultural Council (WCC) bestowed National Research Foundation (NRF)'s Professor Malik Mâaza with the JOSÉ VASCONCELOS World Award of Education for 2018 for his positive impact on the cultural legacy of mankind. The announcement of the award was made today, Monday 4 June 2018 at the City University of Hong Kong, while the award itself will be conferred to Professor Maaza at the 35th World Cultural Council Award Ceremony which will take place at the same venue on Thursday 8 November 2018.

Prof Mâaza is a Senior Research Scientist at iThemba LABS, a research facility managed by the (NRF) of South Africa; a Professor at the University of South Africa (UNISA), and holder of the UNESCO-UNISA Africa Chair in Nanosciences and Nanotechnology.

The Award acknowledges Prof Mâaza's vision of the importance of education for societal development and sustainability. It recognises his international and humanistic approach to science education as well as his commitment to training and mentoring young scientists on the African continent. To this end, he has worked tirelessly to raise funds worldwide to support foreign researchers from less affluent countries. He has assisted scientists from war zones in Africa and the Middle East to pursue their research goals and has also organised periodic exchanges by renowned scientists of Israeli and Arabic origin, seeking to build bridges through science. The Jury were additionally impressed by his promotion of Women in Science in conservative communities.

Prof Malik Mâaza is an African physicist and an accomplished researcher and educator, born in Algeria in 1963 and working in South Africa. His clear vision of how science can be used as a tool to empower individuals to address some of humanity's most pressing challenges has been demonstrated through his commitment to training and mentoring young scientists.

Prof Mâaza is greatly respected for his work as **a pioneer of nanoscience and nanotechnology on the African continent** and, most importantly, for his accomplishments as an outstanding educator and dedicated mentor. He has significantly contributed to the education of numerous PhD students and postdoctoral researchers.

Prof Mâaza's contributions in the **area of education** are not confined to the classroom. He has created platforms for the introduction of emerging areas of education like material science, space sciences and laser sciences. He has set up many new facilities that underpin a wide range of scientific programmes, established his own team and exploited his own expertise and ideas to build strong relations with both academia and industry at national and international level.

Prof Mâaza has also played a crucial part in **keeping South Africa at the leading edge of international research**. In this sense, he plays a key strategic and planning role in developing South African research programmes and research grant proposals. His work has earned him international recognition by UNESCO, which appointed him to the first South-South Chair in Nanosciences & Nanotechnology: the UNESCO UNISA Africa Chair in Nanosciences and Nanotechnology, also known as U2ACN2. Recognised by the global scientific community for the value of his published work through frequent invitations to speak at international events, he acts as an ambassador and voice of the African continent in the multidisciplinary field of nanotechnology.

Prof Malik Mâaza's dedication to **the cause of Women in Science** is also witnessed through his role as a member of the international as well as the Sub-Saharan juries of L'Oréal-UNESCO Award for Women in Science. He is a major player in promoting the role of women in science, especially those living in low and medium income countries, and is also a peace activist, using science as a powerful path for fostering human relations between young researchers.

For more than three decades, the World Cultural Council has been recognising individuals that have made exceptional achievements in science, education and the arts, with the final objective of promoting tolerance, peace and fraternity, seeking to encourage the use of science, art and education to further the well-being of humanity.

Commenting from his office at iThemba LABS on the news of his Jose Vasconcelos World Award, Professor Maaza remarked "I am really thankful to everyone for all the support. This recognition is not mine but belongs to the rest of the iThemba LABS staff as a whole. I would never have reached my current situation without a robust institutional support base created for

me by iThemba LABS and the NRF. I would also like to thank in particular the team of post-graduate students and post-doctoral fellows I work with. I am grateful to His Almighty the Grand Architect for making this recognition possible”.

The announcement can be viewed on: <http://www.consejoculturalmundial.org/news/prof-malik-maaza/>

More information on the WWC and related links please visit <http://www.consejoculturalmundial.org> and <http://www.cityu.edu.hk/2018-wcc/>

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About the WCC: The World Cultural Council is a non-profit international organization, based in Mexico, whose objectives are to promote culture, values and goodwill throughout the world. One of the means by which it strives to do so is by granting the Albert Einstein World Award of Science, the José Vasconcelos World Award of Education and the Leonardo da Vinci World Award of Arts to outstanding personalities whose work has had a significantly positive impact on the cultural legacy of mankind. The members of the Council include several Nobel laureates.

It was in 1981, on the inspiration of 124 distinguished scholars, university presidents and organization executives from the world over, that the WCC was founded and, in 1984, the first Award Ceremony took place.

The World Cultural Council is composed of a directing body headed by an Honorary President, Vice-president, Executive Director, Secretary-General and an Interdisciplinary Committee made up of outstanding scientific, artistic and educational personalities.

The Interdisciplinary Committee evaluates annually the candidates nominated to participate in the “[Albert Einstein](#)“, the “[José Vasconcelos](#)” and the “[Leonardo da Vinci](#)” Awards.

About NRF: The National Research Foundation (NRF) is an independent statutory body set up in accordance with the National Research Foundation Act. Its mandate is to support and promote research through funding, human resource development and the provision of the necessary research facilities in order to facilitate the creation of knowledge, innovation and development in all fields of science and technology, including indigenous knowledge, and thereby contribute to the improvement of the quality of life of all South Africans.

About iThemba LABS: iThemba Laboratory for Accelerator Based Sciences (iThemba LABS) is a multidisciplinary research facility that is based on the development, operation and use of particle accelerators and related research equipment. The largest of these, a k-200 separated sector cyclotron can accelerate protons to energies of 200MeV, and heavier particles to much higher energies. Smaller accelerators at the Western Cape site are two injector cyclotrons, one providing intense beams of light ions, and the other, beams of polarized light ions or heavy ions; a 3MV Tandatron used mainly for research utilising ion beam analysis techniques; and a k=11 cyclotron for the production of the radioisotope Fluorine-18 for supplying to local nuclear medicine facilities for imaging purposes. Accelerators at the Gauteng site include a 6MV tandem accelerator with a specialised high energy analysis system for Atomic Mass Spectrometry (AMS), and two low energy electrostatic accelerators for ion implantation and other surface science studies.

iThemba LABS brings together scientists working in the physical, medical and biological sciences. The facilities provide opportunities for research in subatomic physics, material research, radiobiology, and the research and development of unique radioisotopes for nuclear medicine and industrial applications. iThemba LABS have various collaboration agreements and joint training programmes with Higher Education Institutions and research laboratories around the world as a means to contribute to the human capital development mandate of the NRF.