



National Science and  
Technology Forum

## Discussion Forum Invitation

*S.E.T. for socio-economic growth*

# Invitation to a NSTF Discussion Forum on the implications of the US President's actions and policies for science and scientists

**Emperors Palace – 8 March 2017**

You are hereby cordially invited to join a discussion forum of the [National Science and Technology Forum \(NSTF\)](#), activists for science, engineering and technology (SET) and innovation in South Africa, on the above topic and make your voice heard.

*A few drops of science will often disinfect an entire barrel full of ignorance and prejudice.*

— [Hendrik Willem van Loon](#)

In *The Story of America* (1921, 1934)

The NSTF noted with great concern the recent actions and implied policies of the new president of the United States of America (USA), Mr Donald Trump. Some of the implications will directly affect people from certain African countries, as policies in the Executive Order of the Trump administration includes the banning of people coming from selected countries. The Trump Administration has already taken some radical steps since his inauguration as President, consistent with Mr Trump's campaign promises. These are controversial actions, with indications that they are causing strongly divided opinions both within the US and internationally.

Some of the recent actions are already affecting scientists and related professionals originating from countries that are discriminated against by the Trump administration. The science community in South Africa should come out strongly in support of such scientists and related professionals and let the USA and the world know its disapproval of such policies and actions, based on the principles enshrined in the South African Constitution, International Agreements that are widely endorsed as well as by South Africa, and based on lessons from history.

There are various indications that Mr Trump's attitudes are in conflict with easily established facts, as well as with the ideals and established practices related to the research establishment, and therefore science. The new expression "post-truth" has been included in the recent revision of the Oxford dictionaries, and chosen as the 'Word of the year' for 2016. The [definition](#) is given as "relating to or denoting circumstances in which

objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief". The South African science community should come out strongly in its disapproval of the Executive Order discriminating against particular groups of people, the possibility of curtailing the scientific endeavour in the US and elsewhere, as well as suppressing well established factual information and the "post-truth" phenomenon.

This NSTF [discussion forum](#) provides a platform to unpack some of the effects and implications of actions and policies of Mr Trump's administration, particularly the negative impact on science and scientists. We hope to touch on: lessons from global history, the nature of authoritarianism and discrimination, the nature of science, and the characteristics of evidence-based government.

What should be done by the South African science community? We shall discuss the following:

- Whether to issue a statement on behalf of the SA science community, and what it should say
- Whether and how to monitor and distribute relevant information re the Trump administration's actions and policies
- Sourcing relevant publications on the issues raised in discussions, and distributing the sources or web links of these

### **NSTF Discussion Forum on the implications of the US President's actions and policies for science and scientists**

**Date:** 8 March 2017

**Time:** 8:30 for 9:00-16:00

**Venue:** Emperors Palace Convention Centre, 64 Jones Road, Kempton Park, Gauteng (next to OR Tambo International Airport)

**Registration:** [RSVP](#) your attendance online by no later than 3 March 2017

**\*Terms and conditions apply (Important: note**

**the registration information at the bottom of this invitation)**

**Programme:** [Click here...](#)

**Format:** Plenary sessions only. Q&A sessions included. Last hour or two for discussions and way forward

**Chairs:** Prof. Ali Dhansay (NSTF Chairman) and Ms Jansie Niehaus (NSTF Executive Director)

We invite you to join us for lunch and use the opportunity for further discussion and networking.

### **\* Registration information (\*Terms and Conditions)**

**Non-Member Organisations of the NSTF:** Attendance is open for anyone interested but

**non-members of the NSTF are charged a R2,000.00 (excluding VAT) registration fee.**

[Click here](#) to see a list of NSTF member organisations.

## About the NSTF

The National Science and Technology Forum (NSTF), established in 1995, is a broadly-representative stakeholder body for all SET and innovation organisations in South Africa, which seeks to influence policy formulation and delivery.

The NSTF Awards are unique in SA, recognising the outstanding contributions of individuals and groups to SET and innovation.

The science bursaries page <http://www.nstf.org.za/bursary/> provides information on bursaries and bursary providers for science, engineering and related studies.

## For more information

[www.nstf.org.za](http://www.nstf.org.za)  
E-mail: [enquiries@nstf.co.za](mailto:enquiries@nstf.co.za)  
Tel: 27 12 841 3987  
Fax: 27 12 841 3025

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