

**Title:** GEO-FUTURE – Symposium der  
Geowissenschaften/Erdsystemforschung  
*GEO-FUTURE – A Symposium on Earth System Science:  
Inkaba yeAfrica and Beyond*

**German partner:** Dr Robert Trumbull  
German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ)

**South African  
partner:** Prof. Maarten deWit  
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Institute

**Event:** Symposium, Potsdam, Germany,  
25-30 November 2012

**Brief description:**

Global challenges such as climate change and sustainable safeguarding of resources require an understanding of the Earth as a system. The Inkaba yeAfrica ([www.inkaba.org](http://www.inkaba.org)) project has been following precisely this goal since 2003: it currently unites around 20 education and research institutes in South Africa and Germany and deals with basic research into the Earth as a system in relation to global challenges such as climate change and sustainable safeguarding of resources. To date, Inkaba has given 140 young South African and 20 young German scientists access to top-level research and comprehensive educational offerings. The programme is a flagship of the German-South African cooperation for research and education in the field of geosciences. The research output includes 70 publications in leading specialist journals, including two special editions of the South African Journal of Geology. Over 50 percent of the works in the most recent edition were written by students. Further offshoots from Inkaba yeAfrica include projects within the framework of the SAMPLE (South Atlantic Margin Processes and Links with onshore Evolution) priority programme from the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the SPACES (Science Partnerships for the Assessment of Complex Earth System Processes) initiative from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

The second and – for the time being – last phase of Inkaba yeAfrica ended during the German-South African Year of Science. The international GEOFUTURE symposium in Potsdam and Berlin not only set the course for future collaborations, but also presented the results of the programme: students and young researchers from both countries presented their work and took part in special crash courses, laboratory visits and excursions.

In terms of content, the symposium was divided into four scientific subject areas: geodynamics and Earth observation, energy resources, mineral raw materials and geo-ecodynamics (landscape development, land usage, ecosystems and climate

change). The symposium's agenda was complemented by guest lectures on the subject of climate change in the Arctic (Alfred Wegener Institute, Potsdam) and on biodiversity in developing landscapes (Bavarian State Collection of Zoology, Munich). One of the main events at the symposium was the public lecture held by Prof. Maarten de Wit, Science Director of the AEON Institute (Africa Earth Observatory Network) on the subject of "Earth Stewardship Science with Everyone a Stakeholder" at Urania Berlin. A total of 140 students and scientists from South Africa and 40 from Germany took part in the workshops.

The event was hosted by the Helmholtz Centre Potsdam - GFZ German Research Centre for Geosciences. Some of the events were directed at the general public to raise awareness of the importance of research into the Earth as a system in international collaborations and the significance of the German-South African Year of Science.