

NEWS CLIP

January 2010

Bioforum January 2010

The first Bioforum of 2010 was held on 21 January 2010 at the Innovation Hub.

Prof Stefan Schuster from Penn State University in the U.S.A. presented "Genomics of Extinct and Endangered Animals". He gave insight into his renowned work on the sequencing of the extinct genomes of the woolly mammoth and Tasmanian Tiger. His work has received recognition in TIME Magazine as among the Top 10 Scientific discoveries, as well as Science Magazine as Top 10 in their Breakthrough of the Year 2008. The team used the hair of animals from museum collections, and they were able to extract and sequence DNA from the hair shaft. The term "Museomics" has been coined. They found this DNA better preserved than DNA found in bone samples and were able to sequence DNA from samples older than 50,000 years old. Prof Schuster highlighted through his current work how sequencing technology could provide insight into genetic diversity and population structures in endangered species such as the Tasmanian Devil, thereby giving direction and benefit to their conservation programs.

Dr Nhlanhla Msomi, current acting CEO of TIA (Technology Innovation Agency), presented background, current developments and future objectives of TIA. TIA was born out of a need for institutional rearrangement, for consolidation and integration of the activities of various innovation programmes and entities. TIA will provide appropriately structured financial and non-financial innovation support. Dr Msomi highlighted that South Africa's innovation should be more pronounced and visibly directed toward poverty alleviation and social impact. TIA will advocate an innovation culture. In discussions from the audience the point was also raised that that our innovation culture should be driven and guided by market needs. The production and manufacture of products is essential to the development of a competitive biotechnology industry.

Notices

- Upcoming Events

KM Conference: "Synergising indigenous knowledge systems into business innovation through knowledge management"

19 February 2010

National Botanical Gardens, Pretoria.



Prof Stefan Schuster



Dr Joe Malete, Prof Schuster



Dr Nhlanhla Msomi



Prof Derek Litthauer, Dr Geoff Candy, Dr Bangi Gumedede, Dr Cyril Danninger

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