



# THE AFRICAN LIGHT SOURCE CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP

16 - 20 NOVEMBER 2015, ESRF GRENOBLE FRANCE



Tuesday, 9 November 2015

## PRESS RELEASE

### THE FIRST AFRICAN LIGHT SOURCE CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP 16-20 NOVEMBER - ESRF- FRANCE, GRENOBLE

**In the context of the 2015 UNESCO International Year of Light, scientists from across the world and government officials will convene at the European Synchrotron Radiation Facility (ESRF) to discuss the development of a roadmap towards the increased use of light sources in scientific and industrial research leading possibly to the first African light source facility.**

Synchrotron radiation facilities (or light sources) represent premier tools to push back the boundaries of scientific investigation on new materials and in living matter. As centres of excellence for fundamental research, these light sources play also an essential role in stimulating innovation and enhancing competitiveness for industry.

There are 48 such facilities in the world, but none yet on the African continent. Developing a roadmap towards the first African synchrotron light source and electing a steering committee, which will then drive the roadmap, are the main challenges of this conference organised at the ESRF in Grenoble, in November 2015.

**As explained by Simon Connell, chair of the organising committee** *“The work that we will do in the next week will lay the formal foundations for the first Light Source in Africa. The proposed African Light Source is expected to contribute significantly to the African Science Renaissance, the return of the African Science Diaspora, the development of highly skilled human capital and the training of a new generation of young scientists, the growth of competitive African industries and the advancement of research that is relevant to Africa. The first pan-African research facility is the SKA, a facility expected to attract the world’s best astronomers. The time is therefore right for Africa to begin planning for the development of an African Light Source, which will broaden yet further its full participation in the global science endeavour.”*

**As added by Sekazi K. Mtingwa, member of the Interim Steering Committee for an African Light Source** *“One of the most important issues to be discussed is the feasibility of constructing an African Light Source (AfLS) somewhere on the African continent as a collaborative project akin to the Synchrotron-light for Experimental Science and Applications in the Middle East (SESAME) project in the Middle East. Africa is the only habitable continent without a light source. In order to be competitive socially, politically and economically in the years to come, access to a nearby light source will be an absolute necessity.”*

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**For Francesco Sette, General Director of the ESRF, the European Synchrotron founded in 1988 and now supported by 21 partner countries,** *“The ESRF is proud to welcome the first African light source conference and workshop. Observing matter and decoding its secrets are at the heart of humanity’s quest to improve the understanding of the world around us.*

*In 1988, recognising synchrotron radiation as an essential tool for science, technology and for industrial applications, and desiring to intensify scientific co-operation across disciplinary and national boundaries, eleven countries joined forces to launch the construction of the ESRF. Over the years, a further ten countries, among which South Africa, have joined this ambitious project. Today, more than ever, scientists studying materials and living matter are called to work together and share tools in order to provide answers to the major challenges which need to be addressed for a sustainable world and peaceful economic growth. I am convinced that this Conference will mark an important and historical step in African synchrotron X-ray science and the beginning of an exceptional adventure.”*

## **Programme – ESRF, Grenoble, France:**

- **16-17 November: Conference Part**

Showcase the role of Light Sources for Science and also African research using Light Sources.

- **18-19-20 November : Workshop Part**

Establish the Steering Committee and the Draft Roadmap for the African Light Source

For more details on the programme:

<http://events.saip.org.za/conferenceTimeTable.py?confId=61#20151116>

## **To attend this event or for more information, contact the ESRF:**

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