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NON-SPECIALIST LECTURE: South Africa and the International Measurement System: Billion or Trillion?

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Abstract content (Max 300 words)
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The International System of Units (SI), a globally agreed set of units, established a system of quantities and chosen definitions for a set of units that are used worldwide as the preferred language of science and technology. First adopted in 1948 and updated periodically, the SI is to undergo a major change in 2018 when four of the base units, the kilogram, ampere, kelvin and mole will be re-defined. The effect of the re-definition on the local scientific community is explored, as well as a fundamental decision to be taken to use either the Long or the Short scale to express multiples. So how much is a billion, is it one thousand times a million or one million times a million?

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Primary author: Dr WYNAND, Louw (NMISA)

Presenter: Dr WYNAND, Louw (NMISA)

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