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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****The African Astronomical Society: A new dawn for astronomy in Africa**

*A progressive and inclusive professional society under the African skies*

Pretoria, South Africa – (May 20, 2019) The African Astronomical Society (AfAS), is excited to share the progress and ambitions of the newly elected Executive Committee (EC). The EC was elected at the “Astronomy in Africa” meeting, which was hosted at the South African Astronomical Observatory (SAAO) in Cape Town on 25-26 March 2019. The meeting was attended by some 80 delegates from 20 countries including professional astronomers, policy makers, young researchers and other key stakeholders. The members of the AfAS EC are committed people of diverse capabilities in academia, teaching and outreach. The EC comprises of:

**President:** [Jamal Mimouni](#) (Algeria)

**Vice-President:** [Lerothodi Leeuw](#) (South Africa)

**General Secretary:** [Sarah Abotsi-Masters](#) (Ghana)

**Assistant General Secretary:** [Charles Takalana](#) (South Africa)

**Public Relations and Education Officer:** [Olayinka Fagbemi](#) (Nigeria)

**Early Career Representative:** [Zara Randriamanakoto](#) (Madagascar)

**Additional Member #1:** [Palesa Nombula](#) (South Africa)

**Additional Member #2:** [Etsegenet Getachew](#) (Ethiopia).

The AfAS EC is committed to full transparency and good practice in its work and aims to provide honest interaction with its members. The first meeting of the EC was held on April 10, 2019 and there has been a total of four meetings since, the EC will continue to meet regularly to ensure that the expectations of the broader African astronomy community are met in line with the constitution adopted at the “Astronomy in Africa” meeting.

An overwhelmingly positive response was received from the African astronomy community following the “Astronomy in Africa” meeting. The AfAS EC is also appreciative of the South African governments generous offer to host a staffed secretariat for the first three years through its national Department Science and Technology (DST). [Mr. Takalani Nemaungani](#) serves as a representative of the DST on the AfAS EC. While waiting for the process of the establishment of the office of the secretariat to unfold the DST has assigned an interim administrative officer (Mr. Charles Takalana) who forms part of the interim secretariat team, which is supported by Misters Kevin Govender and Yunus Manjoo. Once established the office of the secretariat will be hosted at the SAAO, which is a hub for astronomical sciences in Africa.

The AfAS EC has agreed on the establishment of action and project planning committees, which will be a key driver of the society in the short, medium and long term. These committees will organise and administer significant activities that particularly aim at advancing astronomy on the African continent. Members of the EC have begun looking into committees for academic affairs, outreach, associations and support at grassroot levels, and fundraising. AfAS is a diverse and inclusive society focused on professional astronomers and supportive of outreach and amateur astronomers. With this in mind EC has decided to extend the opportunity to the African astronomy community to submit proposals for action and project planning committees for AfAS. More information on this call is available on the AfAS [website](#).

AfAS is in search of a new logo to give the society a new identity and physical presence, which will strengthen the AfAS brand. The competition is open to any African designer and aims to demonstrate their skills and talent. The logo design must capture the essence of innovation in Astronomy, in the context of Africa. Entries will be judged for the style, creativity and impact of a design that can be used easily on related materials. The winning design will be used as the official logo of the African Astronomical Society. The winner will receive a prize and a certificate of recognition signed by the President of AfAS. More information on this call is also available on the AfAS [website](#). The deadline for all design submissions is 31 July 2019.

AfAS wants to hear from you. If you have any comments, ideas or suggestions on topics you wish to see covered in future communication, please let us know.

For more information, visit <http://africanastronomicalsociety.org>

**The AfAS Executive Committee**