

1 Observatory Road
Observatory
Cape Town
2193



MEETING NUMBER: AfAS 2025 Executive Committee Meeting 02 Minutes

VENUE: Zoom

DATE: 22 May 2025

TIME : 14h00 – 16h00

CHAIRPERSON: Amare Abebe

SCRIBE: Moloko Makwetja

ATTENDANCE RECORDS

Amare Abebe Gidelew (AAG)	amare.abebe@afasociety.org	President
Benedicta Woode (BW)	benedicta.woode@afasociety.org	Executive Committee Member
Charles Takalana (CT)	Charles.takalana@afasociety.org	Advisor (Ex-Officio)
Joyful Elma Mdhluli (JEM)	joyful.mdhluli@afasociety.org	Executive Committee Member
Kenda Knowles (KK)	kenda.knowles@afasociety.org	Executive Committee Member
Kevin Govender (KG)	kg@astro4dev.org	Advisor (Ex-Officio)
Moloko Makwetja (MM)	moloko.makwetja@afasociety.org	Membership and Outreach Officer
Nombali Qodi (NQ)	nombali.qodi@afasociety.org	Acting Executive Officer (Ex-Officio)
Patricia Ann Whitelock (PAW)	p.whitelock@afasociety.org	Executive Committee Member
Sally MacFarlane (SMF)	sally.macfarlane@afasociety.org	Ex Officio Member (Chair of APA)

Yin-Zhe Ma (YZM)	yin-zhe.ma@afasociety.org	Vice President
Youssef Moulane (YM)	youssef.moulane@afasociety.org	Executive Committee Member
Yunus Manjoo (YEM)	yunus.manjoo@afasociety.org	Project Manager (Ex-Officio)
Thebe Rodney Medupe (TRM)	rodney.medupe@nwu.ac.za	Immediate Past President (Ex-Officio)
Moleboge Lekoloane (ML)	moleboge.lekoloane@afasociety.org	General Officer
Edward Jurua (EJ)	ejurua@must.ac.ug	Co-Opted Executive Member

APOLOGIES

Zodwa Tiki (ZT)	zodwa.tiki@afasociety.org	Media and Outreach Coordinator
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ABSENT

Yasser Abdel-Hadi (YAH)	yasser.hadi@nriag.sci.eg	Co-Opted Executive Member
Maram Kaire (MK)	maramkaire@gmail.com	Co-Opted Executive Member

DESCRIPTION	ACTION	DATE
1. Introduction 1.1 Prof. Edward Jurua, Associate Professor at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (Uganda), was introduced as a new co-opted member.		
2. Adoption of previous minutes 2.1 The committee members reviewed the minutes of the previous meeting, and the minutes were accepted. 2.2 Updates on action items not on the agenda were provided as appropriate.		
3. Meeting Schedule for the Year 3.1 The proposed meetings schedule was confirmed as follows: a) Main meetings: 23 July 2025, 22 October 2025, 21 January 2026 (Commencing at 14h00) b) Optional meetings (if needed and to be confirmed at the meetings above): 3 September 2025, 3 December 2025, 4 March 2026 c) Meeting invites to be issued by the Secretariat for all the above meetings.	NQ	
4. Feedback from Meeting with Chairs of Committees 4.1 James Chubueze (Science Committee) and S'thabile Kholwa (Early Career Sub-committee) have indicated that they wish to step down as Chairs of their respective Committees. However, JC indicated that he is willing to continue as an advisor if required. 4.2 Youssef Moulane (Membership) offered to step down as chair due to potential conflict as an EXCO member but will stay on as the EXCO representative on the Committee and as Chair until a new Chair is appointed. 4.3 KK emphasized the need for continuity and suggested appointing co-chairs from within the committee members. 4.4 YEM mentioned that committee members select their own chairs, as per the Terms of Reference but EXCO members are encouraged to propose new members to join the Committees and who are willing to assume the role of the Chair.		
	EXCO	

<p>10. Appointment of Advisors</p> <p>10.1 KG and CT were officially confirmed as Advisors to the Executive Committee.</p> <p>10.2 Their institutional knowledge was acknowledged as valuable to AfAS continuity and strategic planning.</p> <p>11. Membership / Registration Fees</p> <p>11.1 The Membership Committee is to submit a proposal to EXCO on the membership fees structure as well as an implementation plan, including the administration of fees.</p> <p>11.2 Registration fees for the annual conference will be proposed by the LOC of the conference based on the budget. Such fees will be approved by EXCO prior to the formal opening of registration and abstract submission.</p>	<p>YM</p> <p>EXCO</p>	
<p>12. African Science Journal Update</p> <p>12.1 PAW reported that no progress has been made on arranging a meeting with South African astronomers due to her recent international travel.</p> <p>12.2 YZM is awaiting suggestions from CT on resource allocation to assist with the drafting of the questionnaire to be issued to AfAS members.</p> <p>12.3 The questionnaire is to be finalized and issued prior to the next meeting of the Executive Committee.</p>	<p>PAW</p> <p>CT/YZM</p> <p>YZM</p>	
<p>13. Annual Operating Plan 2025/26</p> <p>13.1 The AOP for 2025/26 was formally approved by the Executive Committee.</p> <p>13.2 YEM stated that the AOP priorities and funding allocations can be reviewed and amended by the Executive Committee during the year should this be required.</p>		

<p>14. UN COPUOS Meetings Participation</p> <p>14.1 AA to schedule a further meeting to discuss engagement with DSTI and Department of International Relations to discuss how best AfAS can participate at COPUOS meetings.</p>	<p>AA</p>	
<p>15. Update on Executive Officer & Accountant Recruitment</p> <p>15.1 Meryem Guennoun (Executive Officer) was invited but unable to attend due to teaching duties.</p> <p>15.2 SAQA has accredited MG's Masters qualification, and the PhD accreditation is in progress. The work visa application will be submitted by MG to the South African Embassy in Morocco immediately after SAQA accreditation is received in full.</p> <p>15.3 The target date for commencing at AfAS of 1st July will be delayed due to SAQA's lengthy processes.</p> <p>15.4 Interviews for the Junior Accountant will be set for the 6 short-listed candidates once the availability of MG is confirmed. Interviews are targeted for June. It is difficult for MG to participate in AfAS activities due to her current work schedule.</p>	<p>YEM</p> <p>YEM</p>	
<p>16. Participation at EAS Meeting / Future Conferences</p> <p>16.1 JEM and Duduzile Khubeka will represent AfAS at the EAS Annual Conference in July. They were briefed by AA/YEM on expected outcomes from arising from their attendance as well as a presentation to EXCO.</p> <p>16.2 AA to schedule engagement meetings with EAS, AAS, and SKAO leadership. KG/CT to provide contact details.</p>	<p>JEM/DK</p> <p>AA/KG/CT</p>	
<p>17. Proposal to Partner with PACS e-LAB</p> <p>17.1 It was agreed that consideration be given to including PACS as a Committee of AfAS. Further discussions to be led by TN/KG and the Secretariat.</p>	<p>TN</p>	

<p>18. Astrolab Project</p> <p>18.1 TN mentioned that the DSTI is supporting this workshop at SPU.</p> <p>18.2 AfAS is willing to support some international students to a maximum of R50K. AA to formally respond to the request for support.</p>	<p>AA</p>	
<p>19. Secretariat Report-Back</p> <p>19.1 AfAS Financial Summary</p> <p>a) YEM provided a brief summary of the funding, April expenditure was focused on payments relating to the annual conference. The DSTI has paid the 2025/26 annual grant and both the ASSAP and AERAP grants were subsequently paid to these organizations by AfAS.</p> <p>b) The Bank account signatory change is in progress. CT to contact the FNB Business Advisor directly as the Help Desk has not been responsive.</p> <p>19.2 Annual External Audit</p> <p>a) YEM has submitted all requested documents to the Auditors, and the year-end audit is now progressing.</p>	<p>CT/NQ</p> <p>YEM</p>	
<p>NEXT MEETING</p>	<p>23rd July</p>	

SUMMARY OF ACTION ITEMS

ACTION ITEMS	DATE	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
Issue EXCO Meeting Invites	6 June	NQ
Submit final feedback on ToR	30 May	All EXCO members
Finalize EXCO ToR feedback and circulate the final draft	6 June	YEM
Confirm additional members for the Constitution Working Group	End June	PW
Ensure access to the shared drive for all EXCO members	29 May	NQ
Organize first committee meetings to elect/confirm chairs and agree on Call for new members	15 June	Secretariat & Committee Chairs
Agree role of Vice President	End June	AA/YZM
Membership Fees Proposal	End June	YM
African Science Journal Questionnaire	End June	YZM
Meeting with South African Astronomers		PW
Issue Annual Operating Plan to Committee Chairs	6 June	YEM / Secretariat
Arrange meetings on COPOUS	End June	AA/ML/Secretariat
Schedule EAS, AAS, and SKAO meetings	Before the July meeting	AA
Arrange follow-up meeting with PACS e-LAB	Before next EXCO meeting	TN
Executive Officer Visa Application Junior Accountant Interviews	30 June	YEM
Share the final audited 2025 report with EXCO	July Meeting	Secretariat
Contact the web developer for the website upgrade	Mid-June	NQ/CT
Change of Bank Account Signatory	Mid-June	CT/ZT