

Opening Plenary Part-2



## Naledi Pandor

Minister of International Relations and Cooperation,  
South African Government,  
South Africa

## Closing Keynote Address

I would like in closing to really stress our congratulations to the Government of Switzerland and its partners on this I think very strategic initiative, in that bringing the worlds of science and diplomacy together is pioneering work which we believe leverages Geneva's attributes as one of the seats of our multilateral organization the United Nations. There are many urgent issues to which science and international collaborators, diplomats, need to develop responses to, among them the COVID-19 pandemic and future pandemics, as well as developing international cooperation and responses to climate change. The relationship between science and diplomacy needs to be highlighted as an important one, and I think the GESDA initiative is more than timely.

We are very fortunate as South Africa to enjoy a science and innovation partnership with Switzerland. We contribute to various science programmes in major multilateral organizations located in Geneva. For example, we are proud to be the host of the World Health Organization's first technology transfer hub for mRNA vaccine technology and we support the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, in building capacity for agriculture and energy technology assessment in Africa. We also benefit from the work of the World Intellectual Property Organization in the area of indigenous knowledge science and innovation, and in our work as Co-Chair of the Group on Earth Observations hosted at the World Meteorological Organization.

Through this experience of international partnerships, we are eager and ready to contribute to the work of the Anticipator and I truly appreciate that senior South African scientific and academic leaders such as Prof Mamokgheti Phakeng are already strong participants. I wish to congratulate GESDA on the launch of its Science Breakthrough Radar® as its first flagship product. By anticipating breakthrough technology developments in science and technology, and through delivering authoritative advice for policy- and decision-makers, this will be a valuable tool to enhance the international governance of breakthrough science and thus make this instrument a global good.

I fully endorse the GESDA 2021 vision of "Using the future to build the present", I wish however to conclude by stressing that it is vital that we also not forget the past. As South Africa we are progressing from a young to a maturing democracy. We constantly have to remind ourselves, that in order to deliver a better future for all, we have to be mindful of the past painful legacy and the lessons we derived from it. Similarly, as we celebrate and anticipate the continued rapid progress of science and technology, we should never forget that, shamefully, many of the citizens of our world still live in extreme poverty and that ours

remains a world of huge and unacceptable inequalities that we must find international solutions to.

We have thus chosen "Science for Social Justice" as the theme for the UNESCO World Science Forum that South Africa will host in 2022, an event to which I hope many of you will attend and participate in.

So, dear colleagues, let us use the future to build the present, and learning from the past, let us ensure that it is a future, which as stated in the transformative vision of the Sustainable Development Goals, is one that leaves no one behind. I wish the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator all success in its important mission. You will all be required to respond with agility, it will be imperative that you act with purpose and always use your collaboration to reinforce international solidarity. In this work and in this endeavour, I wish to assure you that you can count on South Africa's diplomatic participation in all your efforts.

I thank you very much for listening to me and for having invited me to be part of this most exciting endeavour.

**More information**

[Session recording on YouTube](#)