Future Earth Regional Workshop for Africa

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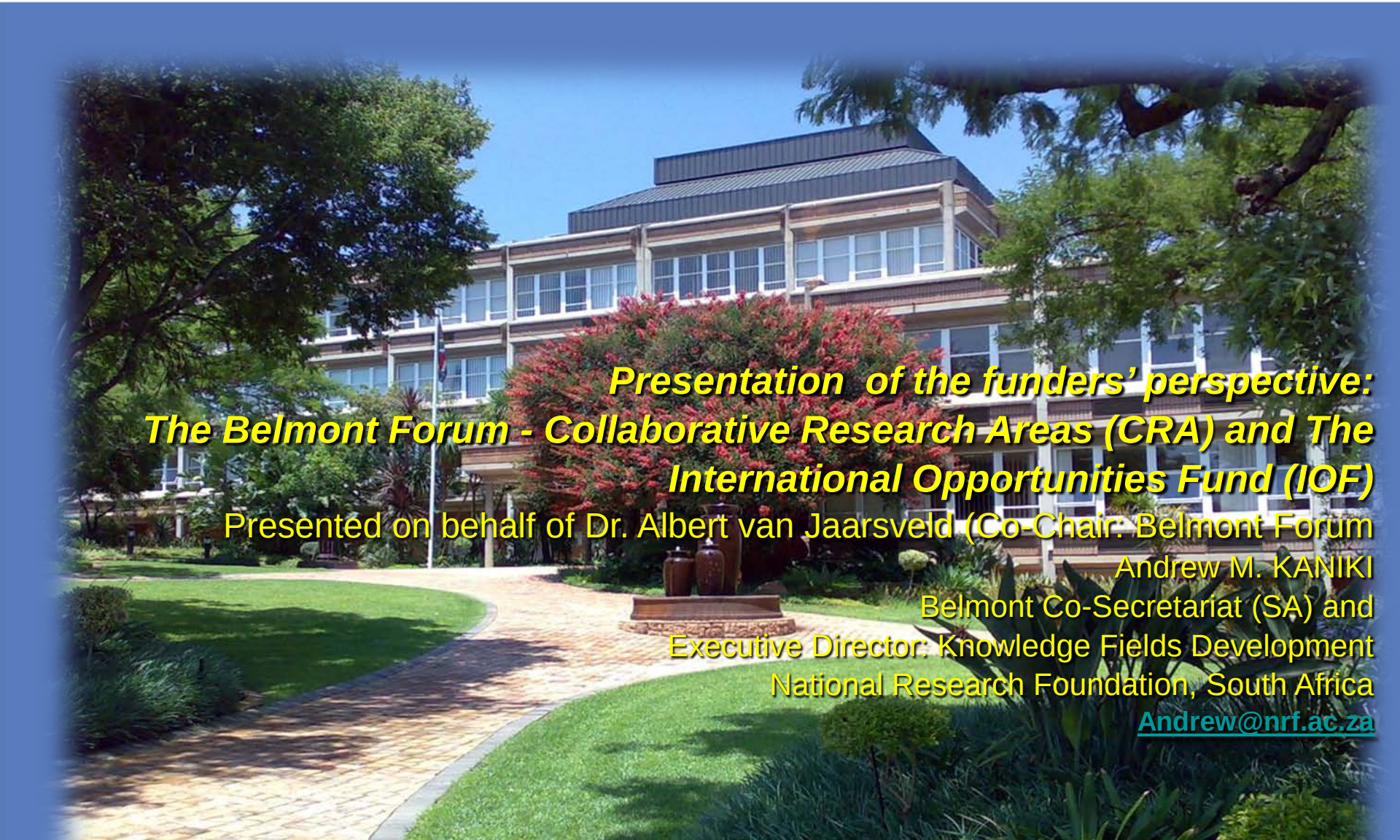

Presentation of the funders' perspective: The Belmont Forum - Collaborative Research Areas (CRA) and The International Opportunities Fund (IOF)

Presented on behalf of Dr. Albert van Jaarsveld (Co-Chair: Belmont Forum
Andrew M. KANIKI
Belmont Co-Secretariat (SA) and
Executive Director: Knowledge Fields Development
National Research Foundation, South Africa
Andrew@nrf.ac.za

Background: The Belmont Forum

http://www.igfagcr.org/index.php/belmont-forum

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Due to shifts in landscape and intensifying Global Change Research (GCR) i.e.

- Evidence of accelerating rates of global change beyond the predictions in the IPCC 4th Assessment Report;
- Changes in the funding landscape as a result of the economic downturn, with some communities facing public spending constraints and others receiving fiscal stimuli for science; and
- International organizations such as the International Council for Science (ICSU) and International Group of Funding Agencies for Global Change Research (IGFA) undertaking refocusing exercises.
- Further changes resulted from new political imperatives that emerged from the United Nations Framework Convention On Climate Change (UNFCC)

The National Science Foundation (NSF) - USA & Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) - UK Hosted a small conference of principal officials of key environment and geosciences funding agencies, at Belmont in the USA to identify GCR priorities that might benefit from better cooperation and how best to address these.

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- Participants in the Belmont Conference agreed on the need for an improved forum for
  1. Strengthening engagement between the research funding agencies and the academic research community as represented by ICSU; and
  2. Improving coordination of early phase engagement on GCR strategies and priorities in order to improve co-design, co-alignment, and co-funding of major research programs.

  Participants agreed that the Belmont Group, augmented by members from key emerging economies, would provide an ideal structure for this purpose, because its small and specific membership could promote frank discussion and rapid decision-making about the planning, support and implementation of GCR. To this end, the Group established the Belmont Forum and agreed that this Forum should meet at least annually and more frequently at the outset.

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- October of 2009: Belmont Forum became the Council of Principals for IGFA, succeeding the IGFA Steering Committee.
- BF co-Chaired by Dr. Albert van Jaarsveld, President and CEO National Research Foundation (NRF) - South Africa and Dr. Patrick Monfray, Deputy Head, Environment and Biological Resources department, The French National Research Agency (ANR) – France (Past Chairs: Tim Kileen (NSF) and Alan Thorpe/Steven Wilson (NERC)
- A new Working Group, composed of senior working level staff from Forum member countries has assumed the responsibilities of the IGFA Staff Group to support both the Council of Principals and the full IGFA.
- Intended that IGFA, led by the Belmont Forum/IGFA Council of Principals, and guided by the charge embodied in the Belmont Challenge will work proactively and on an action-oriented basis to enhance cooperation and coordination of global environmental change research.

The Belmont Forum
Collaborative Research Actions (CRA) & International Opportunity Fund (IOF)

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- The Belmont Challenge: *To deliver knowledge needed for action to avoid and adapt to detrimental environmental change including extreme hazardous events.* This requires:
  - *Assessments of risks, impacts and vulnerabilities, through regional and decadal-scale analysis and prediction;*
  - *Information on the state of the environment, through advanced observing systems ;*
  - *Interaction of natural and social sciences;*
  - *Enhanced environmental information service providers to users ;*
  - *Effective international coordination mechanisms*

The Belmont Forum: CRA

- BF Members and even non-members put forward research concept areas within the context of the *Belmont Challenge* (Dynamic Earth; Global Development; Transition to sustainability)
- Scoping Workshop
  - Scientists & Programme Officers)
    - 2013/14? Planning: *Food Security; e-Infrastructure; Arctic Research;*
- Development of Research Call – jointly with G8 Heads of Research Councils (G8HOCs)
  - 2012/13 Fresh Water Security; Coastal Vulnerability
  - Adjudication

The Belmont Forum: IOP

- What? - An opportunity for the international research community to rapidly propose ideas:
  - within the scope of the BF White Paper (*The Belmont Challenge)* priorities;
  - to support the international dimension of research that we are already funding;
  - to support natural & social science collaboration and user engagement

Belmont Forum: IOF

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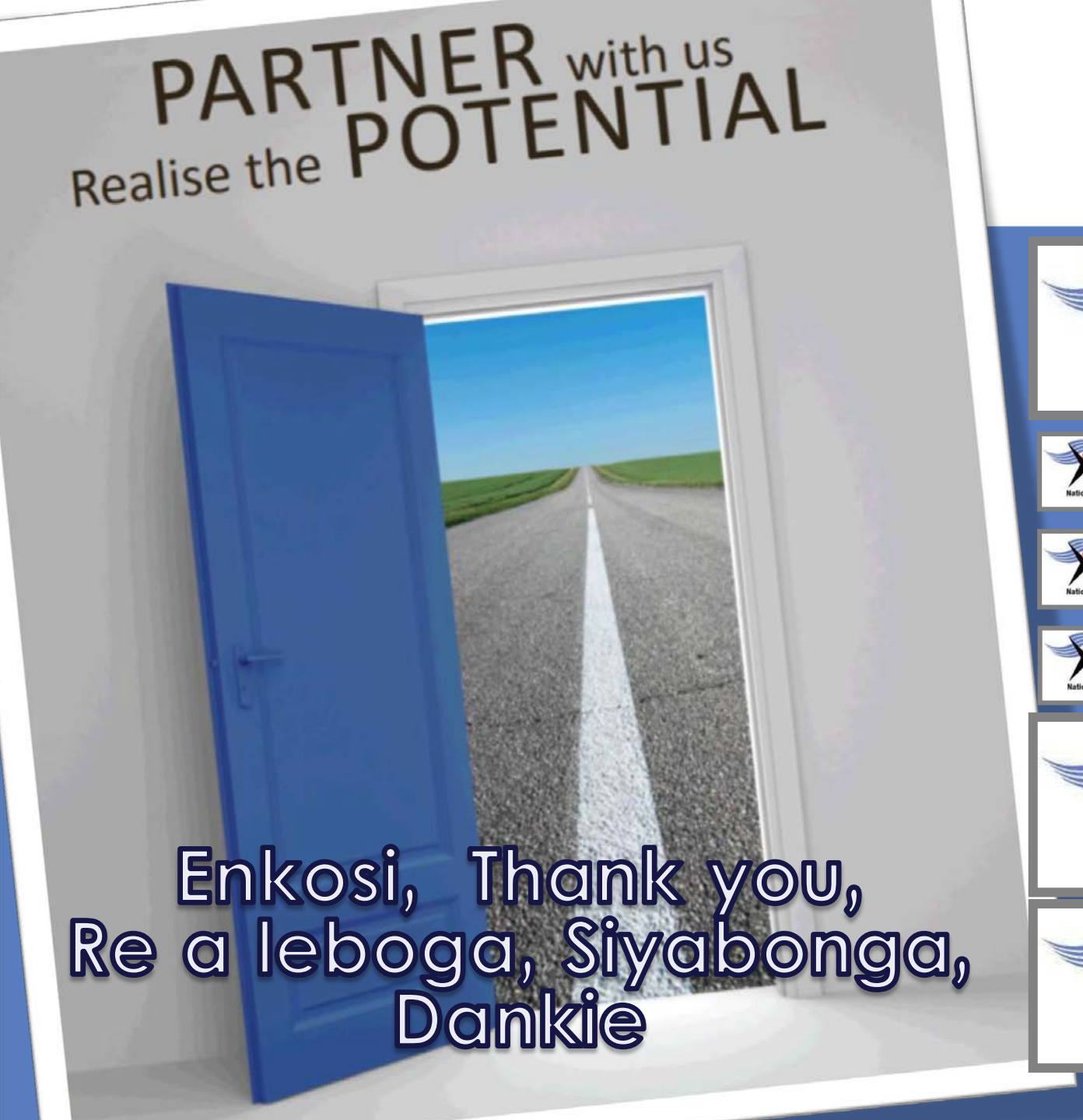
- Why?
  - to kick start interest in the BF White Paper
  - to engage rapidly with a broad international community
  - to provide a ‘bottom-up’ mechanism which can support the best ideas with new innovative partnerships
  - to lever research investments already being made and planned

Belmont Forum: IOF

- How?
  - by releasing the call for the international community at the Planet Under Pressure meeting, in addition to thematic CRAs
  - operating through a joint-call mechanism, with each participant funding their eligible researchers. No cross-border funding
  - As simple procedures as possible
  - based on contributions of 0.5 – 2 M€ per participating BF member
  - elaborated by a working group of BF members keen to participate

Total of 20 million Euros



Enkosi, Thank you,
Re a leboga, Siyabonga,
Dankie

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