



## **ARC-SCW hosts a successful SASAS 2019 Conference**

The South African Society for Atmospheric Sciences (SASAS) was established in 1983 with the aim to stimulate and support all branches of the atmospheric sciences, both within South Africa and in the broader southern African context. Collaboration between organizations and institutions interested in the science of the atmosphere is promoted, and research and education are encouraged. Within the ARC, the Agrometeorology Programme at the Soil, Climate and Water campus (ARC-SCW) carries out the mandate of climate research and the researchers in this programme are active members of SASAS.

SASAS has collaborated with various institutions in hosting an annual conference for the past 34 years. These conferences include keynote speakers, oral and poster presentations, and exhibitions aimed at promoting and developing atmospheric sciences. This year the ARC-SCW was given the honour of hosting the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual SASAS Conference which was held at the Riverside Sun in Vanderbijlpark on 8-9 October 2019. The theme for this conference was “Climate meets Agriculture – The Interplay”. It was attended by approximately 100 delegates from various South African and international universities as well as organizations such as the South African Weather Service (SAWS), Water Research Commission (WRC) and ARC.

Two international speakers were invited to give the keynote address in the opening plenary session each day: Prof. Gerrit Hoogenboom from the University of Florida, USA, spoke on “Crop Modeling as a Tool for Research, Outreach and Policy Making for Food Security and Environmental Sustainability”, and Prof. Mitsuru Tsubo from Tottori University in Japan discussed the “Historical Relationship between Climate and Crop Yield: A Case of Maize”.

The programme was further enhanced with two invited talks, by Prof. Edward Nesamvuni (University of the Free State) presenting on “Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptive Response for Smallholder Livestock Sector to the Changing Climate”, while, Prof. Stanley Liphadzi (Water Research Commission) presented on “Utilizing Innovations to Build Farmers and Community Resilience towards Climate Change: A Water Security Perspective”. Their presentations were very well received by delegates at the conference.

On the first day, Dr Cecilia Njenga, Head of the UN Environment Office in South Africa, hosted a speed talk session whereby students from various institutions presented their posters in just 5 minutes. The programme further covered special invited talks by renowned climate scientists discussing topical issues, on the second day. In addition to the oral papers presented in two parallel sessions, a total of 37 posters were displayed.

Generous sponsorship from the SAWS, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), WRC and Campbell Scientific South Africa made the hosting of the SASAS 2019 Conference possible.

The organizing committee was co-chaired by Ms. Teboho Masupha and Ms. Phumzile Maluleke under the guidance of Dr. Mokhele Moeletsi, Research Team Manager: Agrometeorology. A dedicated and hardworking team ensured that the conference can be considered a great success and another feather in the cap of the ARC!