



## A BRIEF STATUS REPORT ON THE STIAS-WALLENBERG ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS

The ideas behind the annual Roundtable forum at STIAS are that research of the highest level should be done not only for its own sake but also for the benefit of humanity, with due emphasis on the continental context where STIAS finds itself; and that all stakeholders in the conversation about the presumed benefits of research should be afforded equal status in presenting their views and in questioning the views of others - for more details, see here.<sup>1</sup>

The first annual STIAS-Wallenberg Roundtable took place on 7 to 8 March 2013 on the broad topic of Energy, with the theme: *Investment and technology choices in the SA power sector: Economic, social and environmental trade-offs*. It followed immediately after a three-day workshop of specialists in the energy field. The Roundtable was successfully concluded with a media briefing highlighting the choices which will shape local and regional energy futures for the next two to four decades. Amongst others the increasing feasibility of renewable energy options was emphasised and communicated to the highest levels of decision-making. A full report on this event is available here<sup>2</sup>.

The second annual STIAS Roundtable was held on 24 and 25 February 2014 with the theme *Mental Health Challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa: Moving to Implementation*. This theme was more closely integrated with a STIAS research theme on Health in Transition. A preparatory workshop was held in November of the preceding year. This Roundtable produced several notable outcomes, one of which was the “Declaration on Mental Health”, signed by a good number of participants in the Roundtable and which was published in a peer reviewed journal. Another noteworthy outcome was the formation of an African network of public mental health professionals, practitioners and researchers which linked up with the international Network of Innovation in Mental Health. This network received a strong impetus from a follow-up workshop organised by STIAS during November 2014. Reports on these activities can be found here.<sup>3</sup>

The third annual STIAS Roundtable focused on the theme of *Strategic Directions for Agricultural Transformation in Southern Africa* and was held from 23 to 24 February 2015. Instead of a single workshop to prepare and plan for this Roundtable, a group of four STIAS fellows, working on the STIAS theme of Sustainable Agro-Ecosystems, organised a series of small seminars and workshops with a succession of experts from the region to interrogate various aspects of the topic during the month of September 2014. This resulted in a Roundtable that was generally more interactive in its deliberations and debates than its predecessors. One of the outcomes of this Roundtable is a report that will form the nucleus

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<sup>1</sup> [http://stias.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/RT\\_STIAS-concept-of.pdf](http://stias.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/RT_STIAS-concept-of.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <http://stias.ac.za/news/2013/03/first-stias-roundtable-meeting-puts-energy-in-the-spotlight/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://stias.ac.za/news/2014/06/declaration-on-mental-health-in-africa-moving-to-implementation/>  
and <http://stias.ac.za/events/mental-health-agenda-to-be-taken-forward/>

of further work in the STIAS research theme. More details on this Roundtable can be found here.<sup>4</sup>

The topic for the fourth annual STIAS Roundtable, Innovation policy, was decided well in advance and preliminary planning commenced at the closure of the previous Roundtable in 2015. During the first half of 2015, a Core Group held several planning meetings in Stockholm. Some members of the Core Group came to STIAS as visiting scholars during the month of September 2015, and devoted most of their time to preparations for this Roundtable on the theme of *Innovation for prosperity*, to be held from 21 to 23 February 2016. A well-attended planning meeting took place on 29 September 2015 at STIAS where, among others, a draft programme, a general list of participants to be invited, a background paper to be drafted, a Delphi study in preparation of the Roundtable, and a timetable for these activities, were discussed. The announcement for this Roundtable can be read here.<sup>5</sup>

The minutes of the planning meeting on 29 September 2015 can be found in the Annexure to this document (see next page).

Johann Groenewald

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<sup>4</sup> <http://stias.ac.za/news/2015/03/feeding-the-region-towards-a-healthy-food-basket-for-southern-africa/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://stias.ac.za/events/stias-2016-roundtable-forum-to-focus-on-innovation-policy/>