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# news release

## **ArcelorMittal South Africa Science Centre hosts national SAASTEC Conference**

**Sebokeng, 28 November 2017:** The ArcelorMittal South Africa Science Centre in Sebokeng in the Vaal region is hosting the 19<sup>th</sup> Southern African Association of Science and Technology Centres (SAASTEC) conference from 27 - 30 November 2017.

Addressing the delegates at the opening, Freddie Swart, Group Manager Transformation at ArcelorMittal South Africa, said he was thrilled that the ArcelorMittal Science Centre had been chosen to host this prestigious and important conference. "We look forward to a week filled with spirited exchange and inspirational stories of the impact of science, mathematics and technology across the country," said Swart.

SAASTEC is an association of science centres in Southern Africa. The body is supported by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and works in partnership with the Department of Basic Education (DBE).

The four-day conference will focus on topics such as innovation in education, use of modern technology to enhance crop production, science tourism, robotics and Kasi science, to name a few.

SAASTEC Chair, Mondli Mnguni said the organisation was proud to play a part in reinvigorating the love of science, mathematics and technology among young people. He added that a marked improvement in the matric results in science, technology, English and mathematics (STEM subjects) was an indication of how SAASTEC

members - the science centres across the country - were having an impact by making the subjects accessible, understandable and fun.

The DST supports SAASTEC and its members by providing science kits and equipment, donating mobile science laboratories and providing funding for personnel at the centres to gain both local and international expertise. Just a few weeks ago, members of SAASTEC, including the team from the ArcelorMittal South Africa Sebokeng Science Centre, attended a week-long world summit in Tokyo, Japan, to learn more about international trends in science and technology.

Mnguni said we needed to encourage more young people to study mathematics, science and technology. "These subjects are critical in ensuring that we build a knowledgeable and competent workforce for the future," he said.

The primary aim of science centres, such as ArcelorMittal South Africa Sebokeng Science Centre, which was established more than a decade ago, is to provide additional tutoring to local learners in science, technology, English and mathematics, as well as life skills, so that they have a better chance of furthering their studies at a tertiary institution.

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**Contacts:**

**Rio Matlhaku**

**Aprio Strategic Communications**

**(on behalf of ArcelorMittal SA)**

**(011 880 0038 / 082 907 7943**

**Ginny Stone**

**SAASTEC communications**

**ginz.stone@gmail.com**

**082 564 9301**