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THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**SYDNEY**



**University of Nairobi**

# Australia - Africa Agricultural Research Symposium

20 - 21 March 2018, Nairobi  
Southern Sun, Mayfair Hotel Nairobi, Kenya



## Background to Speakers

**HE Alison Chartres** is a senior career officer with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Immediately prior to taking up her current role, Ms Chartres was Assistant Secretary of the Development Policy and Education Branch in the Department. She served as Counsellor (Development) in the Australian Mission to the United Nations in New York from 2011 to 2014. Ms Chartres was Deputy Development Coordinator with the Regional Assistance Mission (RAMSI) in Solomon Islands from 2004 to 2005, Adviser to the Solomon Islands Peace Monitoring Council in 2001 and Second Secretary with the Australian High Commission in Papua New Guinea from 1996 to 1999.

She has held a variety of roles in Canberra, including in the areas of peacebuilding, state-building and humanitarian response. Ms Chartres has served as Chief of Staff in the Australian Civil-Military Centre and Director of the Fragile States Unit in former AusAID. Ms Chartres holds a Bachelor of Science (Honours in Environmental Science) from Murdoch University in Western Australia.

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**Professor Peter Mulwa Felix Mbithi** is a Professor of Veterinary Surgery, University of Nairobi (UoN). Born in 1956, Prof Mbithi graduated with a Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine (BVM) in 1983 and an MSc. in Clinical Studies in 1985. In 1987, he graduated with a Master of Veterinary Science (M.V.Sc. Veterinary Anesthesiology Radiology and Surgery) from University of Saskatchewan, Canada. Between 1986 and 1987, he did a Surgical Residency – Advanced Surgical Specialty Program at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Canada.

In 1995, he completed his PhD at UoN. Between 1995 and 2003 he was Chairman, Department of Clinical Studies, in 2003 he was elected as the Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine until he was appointed as the Principal, College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences in 2004. In 2005 he was competitively appointed as Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration and Finance, a position he held until 2015. He was appointed the Vice Chancellor University of Nairobi January 6, 2015. He has supervised MSc students and PhD students and has published

extensively in peer-reviewed journals and is a member of several professional organizations.

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**Professor Robyn McConchie** is Theme Leader for Quality Food in the Sydney Institute of Agriculture at the University of Sydney. She has a BSc Plant Science from Wye College (University of London), MA (Education) (Macquarie University) and a PhD (Louisiana State University). She has been involved in fresh produce and food research and education for over 30 years, working on minimising pesticide use, post-harvest quality, increasing consumption of vegetables and more recently, food safety. She is also Director of the ARC Centre for Food Safety in the Fresh Produce Industry (2017-2020) and is co-leader of the Food Processing Theme in the Centre of Excellence in Food Enginomics (2018-2020). In 2014 she led the introduction of a new Bachelor of Food and Agribusiness course designed to equip students with the capacity for innovation in the development, supply and marketing of food products for the fast-growing national and international markets.

Robyn has led many international research and capacity building projects in post-farm gate areas such as post-harvest of grains and perishables, supply chain management and linking farmers to markets, across SE Asia, the Pacific and Africa. Robyn currently leads the Australia Awards Africa Short Course “Increasing Impact of Agricultural Research” from 2015-2018 and is also leader of Crops Research in the ACIAR funded Project “Strengthening food and nutrition security through family poultry and crop integration in Tanzania and Zambia.”

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**Professor John Hearn** is Co-Chair of the Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN), Board Executive Director of the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN), and Professor of Physiology (Medical School) at the University of Sydney. Awarded his PhD from the Australian National University (ANU), he served for six to seven years each in leading research, teaching and administrative positions at the Universities of Edinburgh, London UCL, Wisconsin, ANU and Sydney. Most recently he was Vice President (Research) at

ANU 2000-4, and Vice President (Academic and International) at Sydney 2004-13. He teaches first year and advanced students in science and medicine. He is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. He has published 220 research papers and edited six books in reproduction and fertility, stem cell biology and biotechnology.

As a committed international citizen, he has worked globally in research capacity development, especially in China, India, Thailand, Kenya and Brazil. He lived and worked in Kenya and Uganda for ten years. He is an adviser in Higher Education and Research to the Australian Government, British Council, Swedish STINT, World Health Organisation and OECD. Previously, he also served as a Board member of the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation, and Chairman of the Sydney Confucius Institute.

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**Dr Bruce Pengelly** has 50 years' experience in international tropical agricultural research and its management. In his 44 years with CSIRO, Dr Pengelly conducted research on the use of tropical forages in northern Australian beef and grain industries, and in conservation and diversity of tropical forages internationally. He was curator and manager of the Australian Tropical Forages Genetic Resources Centre for almost 20 years. From 2003 Dr Pengelly moved to senior management in CSIRO and to leadership in CSIRO's international agricultural Research for Development portfolio. Since 2013 he has been a private consultant in international agricultural research, with most of his work being focused in African agricultural systems. He is a member of the selection committee for the Churchill Fellowships in Queensland, Australia, and until late 2017, was Queensland Coordinator of the Crawford Fund, a not-for-profit NGO that supports Australia's contribution to International agricultural research for development.

Dr Pengelly was recognised by the CSIRO Lifetime Achievements Award (2013), BecA (Bioscience for East and Central Africa) Partner of the year (2011) and Medal of "Officier de l'Ordre National du Burkina Faso" for his contribution to improving agricultural production and food security, and the 2014 CORAF-WECARD Award for "Contribution to Agriculture in West and Central Africa"

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**Dr Mulugetta Mekuria** an Ethiopian national has been the Regional Representative for the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) Southern Africa Region (2007-2017). Dr Mekuria is a Senior Scientist in Agricultural Economics. He has more than 25 years of academic, research and leadership experience in Ethiopia, the US, Southern and Eastern Africa region in general and in Zimbabwe in particular. He earned his PhD in Agricultural Economics from Michigan State University. Before joining CIMMYT, he was Professor and Head of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Deputy Dean of Faculty of Agriculture, University of the North (now University of Limpopo), South Africa.

Currently, he is Program Leader of the Sustainable Intensification of Maize-Legume Cropping Systems for Food Security in Eastern and Southern Africa (SIMLESA), being led by CIMMYT, funded by the Australian Center for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) and implemented in collaboration with National Agricultural Research System (NARS) of Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi and spillover countries of Rwanda, Uganda and Botswana, University of Queensland (Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation (QAAFI)) regional and international partners. Mulugetta Mekuria has been actively involved in co-ordinating and participating in a number of research projects in Integrated Soil Fertility Management and conservation agriculture. He has also published scientific papers in food security and technology adoption and conservation agriculture.

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**Associate Professor Brett Whelan** received his PhD in Precision Agriculture (PA) in 1998 from the University of Sydney and continues to research and teach in the PA and agronomy disciplines. His research focuses on improving the efficiency, profitability and sustainability of crop production on commercial broad-acre and horticultural farms. Much of the work has been in partnership with farmer and industry groups, ensuring the outputs have been commercially practical and relevant. Brett has also devoted a substantial amount of time to developing PA and agronomy educational resources for tertiary education and delivery to a broad range of users in the agricultural community.

He was involved in the establishment of the Australian Centre for Precision Agriculture (ACPA) in 1995. He also is the co-convenor of the annual Symposium on Precision Agriculture in

Australasia, first hosted by the ACPA in 1997 and which is now one of the longest running national forums in the world for PA. The ACPA has now evolved into the Precision Agriculture Laboratory, led by Brett, within the Centre for Carbon, Water and Food - a research Centre focusing on multi-disciplinary research to secure a sustainable agricultural future.

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**Professor Hettie Schönfeldt** is the director of the new African Research Universities Alliance (ARUA) Centre of Excellence for Food Security led by the University of Pretoria in collaboration with the University of Nairobi and the University of Ghana, Legon. She is a National Research Foundation (NRF) B3 rated scientist and a principal investigator in the Department of Science and Technology/National Research Foundation Centre of Excellence in Food Security. Her research focuses on linking nutrient quantity and quality of foods to sustainable food systems for attaining nutrition and food security for all. She continually publishes evidence on why country specific food composition data is essential to make it possible to interpret the dietary outcomes of countries from both an under- and over-nutrition perspective.

Prof Schönfeldt serves as scientific advisor to the SA National Department of Health. She also serves as scientific advisor to AFROFOODS, a network on the African continent, training 164 individual participants from 24 different African countries forming part of IUNS/UNU/FAO INFOODS Task Force. She was the reviewer of the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME)'s School Feeding Scheme and the DPME Implementation Evaluation of Nutrition Interventions for Children from Conception to Age 5. She has published extensively, with more than 120 articles in scientific journals, books, chapters and conference proceedings, and has authored more than 170 research reports. She has supervised/co-supervised more than 31 postgraduate MSc and PhD students.

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**Professor Mu Li** is a Professor of International Public Health and the Director of Master of International Public Health program at Sydney School of Public Health, University of Sydney. She is a nutritional epidemiologist and public health program evaluation specialist. Her major research and teaching interests are maternal and child nutrition, micronutrient deficiency disorders and public health program

evaluation. Professor Li is an internationally recognised researcher for the elimination of iodine deficiency disorders; she is a current Board Director of Iodine Global Network and a co-chair of the Science Council. She is a Technical Expert for maternal child health and nutrition named by Association Pacific Rim Universities Global Health Hub.

Currently, Professor Li leads the human nutrition component of nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions trial for improved maternal and child food and nutrition security in Tanzania and Zambia.

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**Dr Christy Van Beek** is the Chief Agronomist of SoilCares and director of SoilCares Foundation. Christy holds a PhD in nutrient management and soil fertility from Wageningen University. Her expertise is in the field of nutrient management and (restoring) soil fertility in depleted and/or degraded soils in order to enhance the productive capacity of soils and increase food production. Christy has published over 15 scientific papers and has a special interest for adoption and scaling of fertilizer recommendation by smallholder farmers in developing countries. Christy was the founder of the CASCAPE project in Ethiopia and the Fertile Grounds Initiative to bring actors in soil nutrient management together.

Christy has ample overseas experience and likes to contribute to the public debate on environmental sustainability, through public events and debates. Christy has an extensive network covering government, research, NGOs, private partners and farmer organizations and was nominated for VIVA influential woman award, 2012.

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**Professor Catherine Muthuri** is a Senior Scientist at the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) where she is involved in global research, resource mobilization, and project management. She is the project manager of the AUD 10.5M ACIAR-funded Trees4FoodSecurity projects 1&2. Catherine holds a PhD in plant ecophysiology from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) / Nottingham University UK, an MSc in plant physiology and bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) from Kenyatta University. She is the chair of ICRAF Staff Association (ISA) and was a member of the organizing committee of the international forest and water dialogue, side event at the Forestry Congress (Durban 2015).

Before joining ICRAF Catherine was an associate professor of plant physiology at JKUAT and served as chairperson, Botany Department (2005-2009). She has served as a board member of Kenya National Trading Cooperation and St Francis girls high school. Catherine is also a presidential award holder, the *Elder of the Order of the Burning spear (EBS)*. She is a coach and mentor to young scientists. Catherine has attended numerous conferences, supervised over 20 postgraduate students, examined thesis in and outside Kenya and published widely

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**Dr Sylvester O. Oikeh** has more than 30 years of interdisciplinary experience in research-for-development projects covering project formulation, project and partnership management, natural resources management, crop improvement and management, and plant nutrition. He joined the African Agricultural Technology Foundation (AATF) in 2009 as a Project Manager for the Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) Project and coordinates the operational management and monitors the implementation of activities across nine public and private sector organizations in six African countries. He worked in Africa Rice Centre for five years as a Principal Scientist/Soil-Fertility Agronomist and Project Leader. He developed four integrated soil fertility management packages and two farmer handbooks to support the deployment of the New Rice for Africa (NERICA). He also held various positions at the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA) for over ten years.

He was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, where he established for the first time, the link between enhanced iron and zinc in corn kernels with improvement in human nutrition using an *in vitro* technique (*model gut-system*). Dr Oikeh has over 70 publications in major scientific journals, proceedings, book chapters, books and monographs.

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**Dr Paul Greener** joined Africa Enterprise Challenge Fund (AECF) as its CEO in August 2015. AECF is an Africa-based development institution that supports innovative commercial businesses in the agribusiness and renewable energy sectors with the aim of reducing rural poverty, promoting resilient rural communities and creating jobs through private sector development. AECF has since grown to a US\$310 million fund

supporting 257 businesses in 24 countries across sub-Saharan Africa.

With more than 30 years of work experience in donor, private foundation, civil society and private consulting contexts, Dr Greener is committed to designing, managing, implementing and evaluating programs that improve the lives of rural communities in Africa. Over the last two decades, he has worked in specialist roles related to agricultural productivity, rural livelihoods and access to financial services – in 30 developing countries spread through Africa, Asia and the Pacific. Dr Greener holds a PhD from the University of Queensland, with a thesis that explored decision making and innovation adoption by smallholder farmers in Sri Lanka, and a Master of Science in International Agricultural Development from the University of California, Davis.

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**Mr Colin Forbes** was born in Canada, grew up in various parts of Africa including Tanzania, Nigeria and Kenya, and is now a Kenyan citizen. He holds a BSc in Geography from University of Calgary in Canada and has worked in stakeholder engagement, resettlement and community development since 1999. This includes projects in Kenya, Sierra Leone and Democratic Republic of Congo. As General Manager – Environment & Community Affairs at Base Titanium Ltd operating a Heavy Mineral Sands mine in Kwale, his remit is to deliver community development projects to achieve mutual benefits with communities in the vicinity of Base's mining operations. Agriculture is the main economic activity in the region and is an exciting opportunity for Base to work with smallholder farmers to achieve improved livelihoods.

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**Dr Michèle Mbo'o-Tchouawou** is the Deputy Director-Programs at African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) where she leads the development, management and quality of all AWARD programs. A development economist working in the multidisciplinary framework of capabilities and human development, Dr. Mbo'o-Tchouawou has extensively worked with national partners under the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) framework to ensure systematic gender mainstreaming and inclusiveness in agricultural investment plans, programs, and interventions. Prior to joining AWARD, she worked at the International

Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) where she contributed to its broader agenda on gender equality for livestock and agricultural development.

Dr. Mbo’o-Tchouawou holds a PhD in Economics and a Master degree in Networks Economics and Information Management from the University of Paris-Sud 11, France. She also received a Masters’ degree in Management and International trade from the University of Clermont-Ferrand II, France and a BSc. in Business Administration from HEC (Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales), Rabat, Morocco.

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**Dr Rahma Adam** is a currently a Gender and Development Specialist at International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT). Adam holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Biology and minor in Anthropology from Macalester College, USA, a Master of Public Policy (MPP) degree from the Harvard Kennedy School (HKS), Harvard University, USA and a PhD degree in Rural Sociology with a focus on Agriculture, Gender and International Development from Pennsylvania State University, USA. Adam has previously worked as a Post-Doctoral Fellow in Globalized Trade and Investments at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR), World Bank Group Fellow in the Education unit in Africa Region, Consultant with the Gender Innovation Lab team at the World Bank Group in Washington, DC, a Researcher for the Mo Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) at Harvard University and a Researcher for the Massachusetts General Hospital, Partners AIDS Center, USA.

Adam was born and raised in Tanzania and has lived in Kenya, Norway and the U.S.A. Adam has conducted research in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and USA.

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**Mrs Violet Gathaara** is a Senior Research Officer with the Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation (KALRO). She holds an MSc in Rural Development and HIV and AIDS from Van Hall Larenstein University, Wageningen, The Netherland; BSc in Agriculture and Human Ecology Extension and a Diploma in Agriculture and Home-Economics from Egerton University. Violet has 33 years’ experience in agricultural research and six years in extension. Since 1998, Violet has actively been involved in mainstreaming gender in agricultural research and extension through use of various participatory approaches such as farmer

field schools and farmer research groups. She has undertaken several socio-economic studies in agricultural related fields and ensured gender and other vulnerable group issues are captured.

Violet is well versed with multi-stakeholder processes in knowledge-based rural innovation. She has written scientific papers highlighting gender issues. She also contributed to a book chapter on “Influencing Change: Mainstreaming Gender Perspectives in Agricultural Research and Development in Eastern and Central Africa”.

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**Dr Jemimah Njuki** is a Senior Program Specialist at Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) where she oversees a portfolio of agriculture and food security projects. These projects are focused on reducing post-harvest losses, improving nutrition and engaging women and youth in agribusiness, as well as overseeing gender integration and women’s empowerment in agriculture projects in IDRC’s Agriculture and Food Security Program. For the last 15 years she has carried out gender research and managed women’s economic empowerment programs in Africa and Asia. She has published widely on gender and women’s economic empowerment specifically in the areas of gender and technology, women and markets, and women and livestock. She recently co-edited two books; one on ‘Women and livestock in Eastern and Southern Africa’, and the other on ‘Transforming Gender and Food Systems in the Global South’. She is the founder and editor in chief of the Journal of Gender, Agriculture and Food Security.

Prior to joining IDRC, she started and led the Women in Agriculture Program (Pathways to empowerment) at CARE USA, working in six countries in Africa and Asia and headed the Gender and Impact Program at the International Livestock Research Institute. She is an Aspen New Voices 2017 Fellow and currently chairs the advisory committee of the African Women in Agriculture Research and Development (AWARD) and in the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Collaborative Research on Sustainable Intensification.

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**Associate Professor Grace Liu PhD** is the Research Development Manager of the Worldwide Universities Network (WUN) Global China Group, WUN Africa Group, and the Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN) research

program. She works with the Executive Director and Secretariat team in developing high-level relationships with key partners and stakeholders from universities, government, business and agencies. Grace Liu was awarded her Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees in Chinese Language and Literature from Shandong University, and her PhD in Chinese Ancient Literature and Bibliography from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing (CASS). She was a researcher and teacher in Chinese Universities for undergraduate and master's students in Chinese traditional literature and bibliography. Among her publications, several articles on literature and history are in eminent Chinese academic

journals. She received academic awards from the Shandong government and Education Department for her research achievements.

Since moving to Australia in 2012, in addition to her work with WUN/AAUN, Grace has an appointment with the University of New South Wales, doing research and teaching in Chinese ancient literature, culture and language. She is currently completing her book on the influence of leading aristocratic families (the Han and Wei Dynasties) on the style of Chinese Medieval Literature.

