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RheManTec 2007 – Joint Swiss – South African Research Symposium down the Manganese Triad

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Abstract: RheManTec, the First Symposium on the Chemistry and Application of the Elements down the Manganese Triad was held near Bloemfontein in South Africa from November 19–24, 2007. The main objective was an open presentation of actual research achievements and interests from the field of metal-containing anti-cancer drugs and catalysis in order to elucidate future joint research opportunities in public health and biomedicine. The symposium emerged from the joint efforts of the Swiss National Science Foundation and the National Research Foundation of South Africa to strengthen bilateral co-operation.

Keywords: Biomedicine · Manganese triad · Public Health · RheManTec

The Swiss National Science Foundation and the South Africa National Research Foundation recently signed a bilateral agreement which is part of the Swiss Federal Council's new strategy to develop closer long-term bilateral ties with nations offering great scientific potential. Comparable agreements exist with China, India and Russia. Top research priorities in these bilateral cooperations shall be placed, amongst others, on public health and biomedicine.

To generate a concrete base for collaboration in the general field of medicinal inorganic chemistry with a focus on the elements manganese, technetium and rhenium a first symposium was organized near Bloemfontein in the Free State Province of South Africa. About 50 attendees from many Universities and Research Centres in South Africa and ten from Switzerland presented their latest research achievements from the fields of



Participants of the first RheManTec symposium held in Bloemfontein SA in November 2007

anti-cancer agents, radioimaging and -therapy compounds and from catalysis. Thematically a focus was put on the elements of the manganese triad but research with neighbouring elements such as rhodium, platinum and ruthenium was also included. According to the strongly interdisciplinary nature of the symposium, aspects from synthesis and reactivity of metal complexes, nuclear medicinal application, theory, spectroscopy and mechanistics together with *in vitro* and *in vivo* biological evaluation of promising compounds were covered, making the symposium a sound entity.

As a result of the symposium, it became obvious that the different excellent research

opportunities and facilities in South Africa and in Switzerland comprise a highly synergistic potential due to their complementary nature mainly in the field of anti-cancer drug finding and development.

Joint projects according to the focuses of the Swiss Federal Council should complement the existing mutual interactions in near future. Research groups in Switzerland are encouraged to contact one of us if interested in joining this network. Due to the scientific success and the open spirit of the Symposium among the young researchers in particular, it is planned to repeat RheManTec 2008 in Switzerland.

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