

## MUT scientist flies the MUT flag in BBC discussion on COVID-19

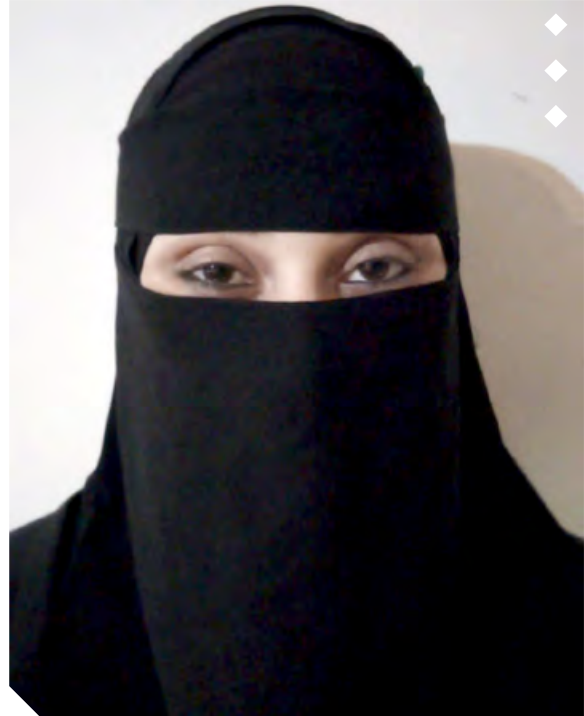
June 23, 2020 was the day that one of the University staff members made history! Dr Maryam Jordaan, NRF Administrator at the MUT's Research Directorate, joined scientists from around the world in a BBC discussion to explore and inspire worldwide innovation to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

"During the meeting we had the opportunity to make comments and ask questions directly with an expert panel of four world-class engineers involved in the COVID-19 response. BBC presenter Kevin Fong hosted this exciting global conversation to explore and inspire innovation worldwide," said Dr Jordaan. Dr Jordaan was part of an audience representing six continents.

Dr Jordaan believes a world effort is required to deal with COVID-19. "In order to combat the coronavirus, a combined global effort is needed; the BBC World Service and the Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 created a special online forum which took place on 23 June 2020," said Dr Jordaan.

Dr Jordaan and her colleagues at the University, Dr Oluwakemi Ebenezer, Dr Nkululeko Damoyi and Dr Michael Shapi, have already written a paper on COVID-19. The paper, titled "Virtual screening, physicochemical properties and molecular docking study of FDA approved compounds similar to ARV efavirenz, targeting COVID-19" was accepted by Heliyon, an open access journal. The team has also submitted another paper for review. The preprint for this paper is available at <https://www.researchsquare.com/home>.

Dr Jordaan is one of the University's annual Research Award winners. She has also been acknowledged by the Technology Innovation Agency (TIA) for her innovative ideas. She won the TIA's Global Cleantech Innovation Programme Award (GCIP-TIA) for the best



*Dr Maryam Amra Jordaan*

women-led team, and was the TIA female investees winner for the best social impact innovation in 2019. "TIA has further invested in my business development skills through the Leaders in Innovation Fellowships (LIF) programme facilitated by the Royal Academy of Engineering, from which I won first place at the pitching event in London in January 2020," said Dr Jordaan.

The participation of Dr Jordaan in the BBC discussion was highly applauded by the Research Directorate, under which Dr Jordaan works. "Everybody in the Research Office is filled with excitement. We cannot be more proud of Dr Jordaan," said Dr Anette Mienie, Director, Research.