



Group Executive: Business Advancement
National Research Foundation
Meiring Naude Road
Pretoria
South Africa
Tel. +27 12 481 4144
E-mail: tmgwebi@nrf.ac.za

13 April 2025

Reference Letter for Itumeleng Zosela

I am writing this letter to highly recommend Itumeleng Zosela as a deserving candidate for the **Hong Kong Laureate Forum**. I have had the privilege of serving as Itumeleng's mentor since 2016, and throughout our professional relationship, I have witnessed her exceptional growth and dedication to scientific research and advancement.

As the mentor to Itumeleng, I have closely observed her academic journey, and I can confidently attest to her excellence in her current studies. Pursuing her PhD in Physiology (Nanomedicine) at Nelson Mandela University, Itumeleng has consistently displayed a deep understanding of her field and a strong commitment to advancing scientific knowledge. Her academic performance has been exemplary, consistently earning her recognition for her outstanding achievements, some of which may be accessed through the following links: [2023 achievement](#) , [2022 achievement](#) and [2021 MSc cum laude](#).

Itumeleng has made significant contributions to her field through her technical accomplishments and has established herself as a standout among her peers. Her research work on the green synthesis of gold nanoparticles for the treatment of colon cancer has garnered attention and commendation. She has effectively disseminated her findings through conference presentations, including notable events such as the NanoAfrica Conference and the Network for Sustainable Nanotechnology Global Summit; and publications (one co-authored article, one book chapter and one article in preparation). Her dedication to sharing knowledge and mentoring others is evident through her active participation in mentoring young researchers and presenting at various platforms.

The research being pursued by Itumeleng is highly relevant and has the potential to provide solutions to immediate problems. With the scarcity of researchers in her chosen field, Itumeleng's work stands out as particularly valuable. Her innovative approach to utilizing plant-based synthesis of gold nanoparticles for cancer treatment showcases her ability to think beyond conventional methodologies and embrace sustainable practices in science.

Beyond her research endeavors, Itumeleng has also shown great passion for encouraging and supporting young women in STEM fields. As a woman in science herself, she serves as an inspiring role model for aspiring female scientists. Itumeleng actively engages in initiatives and platforms that promote gender equality and diversity in scientific research, further highlighting her commitment to empowering and uplifting young women in the field.

Itumeleng's role as a mentor and advocate for young women in STEM fields demonstrates her dedication to achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls. Within the laboratory setting, she continually serves as a mentor to her peers, providing guidance, support, and inspiration to fellow researchers. Her leadership and encouragement foster an

inclusive and empowering environment, where other female scientists feel valued and motivated to pursue their passions.

Itumeleng's impact extends beyond the confines of the laboratory. Through her active involvement in outreach programs, serving as a judge for Eskom Expo she regularly engages with high school learners, sharing her scientific knowledge and experiences with aspiring young minds. Her unwavering commitment to being a role model and inspiring the next generation of female scientists is commendable. Additionally, her ability to effectively communicate science through radio interviews, particularly on uMhlobo wenene radio station, has provided her with a platform to reach millions of listeners. Itumeleng leverages this opportunity to break barriers, challenge stereotypes, and promote the importance of gender equality in the scientific community.

Apart from her exceptional academic and research achievements, Itumeleng possesses outstanding personal and professional qualities that make her a perfect candidate for the **Hong Kong Laureate Forum**. Her strong communication skills, adaptability, and ability to work both independently and collaboratively have been instrumental in her success. Furthermore, her enthusiasm, intellectual curiosity, and perseverance demonstrate her commitment to lifelong learning and advancement in the field of science. In conclusion, Itumeleng Zosela is an exceptional candidate, her impressive technical accomplishments, relevance of her research pursuits, dedication to supporting young women and youth, and outstanding personal qualities make her highly deserving of this prestigious forum.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at tmgwebi@nrf.ac.za if you require any further information or clarification. Thank you for considering Itumeleng Zosela for the Hong Kong Laureate Forum.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Thandi Mgwebi', with a small dot at the end.

Dr Thandi Mgwebi, PhD