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AFRICAN UTILITY WEEK TO FOCUS ON WATER SOLUTIONS

“Nature or Water, exploring how we can use nature to overcome the water challenges of the 21st century” was the theme of this year’s World Water Day on 22 March.

Claire Janisch will be speaking on ‘Biomimicry: Learn from and emulate nature’s genius to create more sustainable designs’ at African Utility Week, from 15 to 17 May in Cape Town.

She explained, “When you realise that the simple act of learning from and emulating nature’s time tested genius is so profoundly impactful, it’s one of the most inspiring approaches to Africa’s big challenges. I will share case studies and core principles to illustrate this.

“Our vision is that the designers of our world – and particularly the designers of our infrastructure – look to natural systems as model, measure and mentor to design abundant and resilient cities that function like natural ecosystems.”

African Utility Week will focus strongly on water challenges on the continent, including investment needed in water solutions by the public and private sectors to enable universal access, water security and resilient societies. The water conference will furthermore showcase how partnerships, financial models and latest technological advances can make the greatest impact in meeting Africa’s water demand.

“What is happening in Cape Town could happen anywhere,” said water expert Paul Yillia about the current water shortage. A guest research scholar at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria and formerly part of the Global Facilitation Team at Sustainable Energy for ALL focusing on the Water-Energy-Food Nexus, Yillia returns as chairman of the water conference track at African Utility Week.

He added, “As populations in cities grow and economic activities increase, the demand for water will continue to increase. If we now factor in climate change and extreme weather events such as prolonged heat waves and droughts, all of this will put additional pressure on water availability both on the supply and demand side. Utilities should take climate change threats more seriously.”