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10TH ABEM 2026 CONFERENCE

on

*Unlocking emerging markets' potential through innovation,
technology and sustainability*

August 4-5, 2026

Faculty of Business and Technology
Caucasus International University, Tbilisi, Georgia
(73, Chargali Street, 0178, Tbilisi, Georgia)

Program Schedule

Conference Chair

Dr Satyendra Singh, University of Winnipeg, Canada

Conference Co-Chairs

Dr Tea Kasradze, Caucasus International University, Georgia
Dr Darina Saxunova, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

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Welcome!



It is my great pleasure, as the Rector of Caucasus International University, to welcome you to Tbilisi for the 10th International Scientific Conference ABEM 2026. Caucasus International University is proud and honored to host this milestone 10th edition of the Academy of Business and Emerging Markets conference, bringing together distinguished scholars, researchers, and practitioners from around the world under the theme *Unlocking Emerging Markets' Potential through Innovation, Technology and Sustainability*. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Professor Dr. Satyendra Singh and the entire ABEM team for their trust and dedication in bringing this conference to Georgia, and to our organizing committee for their tireless efforts. Above all, I thank you, our participants, whose research and ideas give this gathering its true meaning. Georgia, situated at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, has long been a bridge between cultures and ideas, making it a fitting setting for international knowledge exchange. I hope the days ahead bring inspiring debate, new collaborations, and lasting friendships, and that you find time to experience the warmth and hospitality of our country.

Welcome, and enjoy your stay in Tbilisi!

Dr. Kakhaber Kordzaia
Rector, Caucasus International University
Georgia



It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 10th International Scientific Conference ABEM 2026, dedicated to *Unlocking Emerging Markets' Potential through Innovation, Technology and Sustainability*. In a world reshaped by rapid technological change, emerging markets stand at a decisive crossroads, where innovation and sustainable practice can turn pressing challenges into opportunities for inclusive growth. Across our three tracks, Business, Government and Community, the conference brings together established and early-career researchers,

scholars and practitioners to share their work and spark fruitful debate. The diversity of our international participants allows us to discuss these themes from many perspectives, reaffirming the enduring value of academic exchange. It is a special honor for Caucasus International University to host this conference at the crossroads of Europe and Asia, where rich tradition meets a forward-looking spirit. We are grateful to everyone who has contributed to the success of this conference, and to every author for their valued contributions.

I hope you enjoy both the conference and your stay in Tbilisi.

Dr. Tea Kasradze, Conference Co-Chair
Professor, Caucasus International University
Georgia



A very warm welcome to you to the 10th ABEM 2026 conference. Organizing an international conference in an emerging market is a monumental task. It could not be achieved without your support, contribution and participation. We are immensely grateful to Rector Dr. Kakhaber Kordzaia and Professor Dr. Tea Kasradze, Caucasus International University for the sponsorship and support for hosting the conference. We are also very thankful to University of Winnipeg, Comenius University Bratislava, North-West University and the organizing committee, program and awards committee, keynote speakers, proceedings editors, regional chairs, session chairs, discussion chairs, reviewers, presenters, typesetters, and the professionals at the Caucasus International University who worked hard for the last few months to ensure a smooth, pleasant and successful conference. We have 28 authors from 10 countries. It is truly an international conference dedicated to issues relating to emerging markets.

We do hope that you will have long lasting memories and enriching experience at the Conference and in Tbilisi.

Welcome again!

Dr Satyendra Singh, Conference Chair
Professor, University of Winnipeg
Canada



Welcome to ABEM 2026!

Dear Colleagues, Researchers, Academics and Business Professionals,

It is our great pleasure and honor to welcome you to the 10th International Scientific Conference ABEM 2026, held in the beautiful city of Tbilisi, Georgia, a vibrant crossroads of Europe and Asia where history, culture, and innovation come together. Under the theme - *Unlocking Emerging Markets' Potential through Innovation, Technology and Sustainability* – the conference, through interdisciplinary dialogue and the presentation of cutting-edge research, seeks to foster discussions on solutions to the challenges and opportunities which emerging economies face in an increasingly dynamic global environment driven by technological race, ongoing innovation and sustainability. Exchanging research knowledge and ideas provides a better understanding of the complexities of today's global landscape and identifies innovative solutions for sustainable growth and inclusive development.

Today, nations and businesses alike are navigating a world characterized by economic uncertainty, technological disruption, geopolitical tensions, and rapidly evolving societal expectations. While many challenges cannot be entirely avoided, innovation, entrepreneurship, technological advancement, and sustainable development offer powerful pathways towards resilience, competitiveness, and long-term prosperity.

We sincerely thank all authors, reviewers, keynote speakers, session chairs, partners, and participants whose dedication and contributions have made the conference possible. Your engagement makes this conference a vibrant forum for academic dialogue, collaboration, and innovation. We hope ABEM 2026 inspires new partnerships, meaningful discussions, and future research endeavors.

May your time in Tbilisi be both professionally rewarding and personally memorable.

We wish you an inspiring conference and an enjoyable stay in Georgia.

*Dr Darina Saxunova, Conference Co-Chair
Professor, Comenius University Bratislava
Slovakia*

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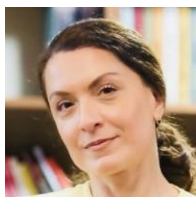
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Dr Ven Sriram, University of Baltimore, USA

South and Central America

Dr Velia Govaere, Universidad Estatal a Distancia (UNED), Costa Rica

Keynote Speaker



Dr Nino Zarnadze

Caucasus International University
Georgia

Dr Nino Zarnadze is a professor and policy expert in education economics, management, and innovation. She serves as an Expert in Accreditation and Authorization and as a Member of the Higher Education Sectoral Council at Georgia's National Center for Educational Quality Enhancement. She is the author of peer-reviewed research papers on poverty, sustainability, organizational success, and artificial intelligence from developing-country perspectives. She has represented Georgia's reform agenda at Harvard, Cambridge University, and International Conferences.

Toward a Theory of Convergent Leadership: Public-Private Value Alignment under Uncertainty

Contemporary organizations operate in conditions of increasing collective uncertainty, accompanied by a measurable decline in institutional trust. Recent evidence from the Edelman Trust Barometer reveals a growing crisis of alignment between stakeholder interests: 61% of respondents believe that government and business serve narrow interests rather than the public good; 60% report economic grievances and institutional distrust; and nearly 70% believe that societal leaders intentionally mislead the public. These findings suggest an increasing gap between the interests of governments, businesses, and society, highlighting the need for new leadership frameworks to synchronize competing stakeholder interests.

This talk analyses the inherent contradictions among market stakeholders arising from the very nature of their interests. Through conceptual synthesis of utilitarian philosophy, stakeholder theory, and moral philosophy, the paper introduces a new academic framework for organizational leadership- the Theory of Convergent Leadership. With its inherent nature, Convergent Leadership aims to align the opposing interests of stakeholders and provide the greatest benefit to the majority. It creates norms and rules for the public and private sectors and serves as mutual constraints in favor of society and its long-term future. The framework is particularly relevant for emerging economies, where institutional trust is rising, in contrast to declining trends in developed nations.

Keynote Speaker



Dr Mpumlelo Longweni

North-West University
South Africa

Dr Mpumlelo Longweni is a Senior Lecturer and Program Leader of Business Management in the School of Management Sciences at the Potchefstroom Campus of North-West University, South Africa. He specializes in managerial competencies, thinking skills for problem-solving, communication skills, and systematic literature reviews. Dr Longweni has published in accredited journals, contributed to international book chapters, and presented peer-reviewed work at many local and international conferences. His teaching portfolio includes managerial skills, strategic and operations management at undergraduate, postgraduate, and short learning programs, with a strong emphasis on blended and international collaborative learning.

The Cognitive Blind Spot in Management: Antecedents and Consequences of the Dunning-Kruger Effect in Agricultural Businesses

The Dunning-Kruger effect (DKE) is an infamous cognitive bias in which people who perform poorly in certain skills erroneously perceive their performance to be superior to others. Despite being a metacognition phenomenon with implications for businesses, it has yet to be directly investigated in relation to problem-solving and thinking skills of managers. This talk bridges the research gap and presents a conceptual framework that highlights the antecedents, consequences, exacerbators, and mitigators of DKE in businesses. The double burden and ego were found to be the most prominent antecedents of the DKE's overconfidence.

Conversely, the perception that being skilled is common and fear of failure were found to be the most frequently mentioned precursors of the underestimation facet of the DKE. Further, the lack of exposure, among other factors, exacerbated the manifestation and consequences of the phenomenon. Conversely, education and training are primary mitigators of cognitive bias. Although it is apparent that the DKE mostly exhibits unfounded confidence in skills, this phenomenon has another side also.

In some contexts, under-confidence in abilities is also a prevalent manifestation of the DKE.

Program Schedule

August 4, 2026

<i>Conference Room</i>	<i>Room 305</i>
9:00 – 9:30	Registration
9:30 – 9:35	Opening and welcome - Rector Dr. Kakhaber Kordzaia, Caucasus International University, Georgia
9:35– 9:40	Welcome – Dr Satyendra Singh, University of Winnipeg, Canada
9:40 – 9:45	Welcome - Dr Tea Kasradze, Caucasus International University, Georgia
9:45 – 9:50	Welcome – Dr Darina Saxunova, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia
9:50 – 10:50	Introduction by Dr Satyendra Singh, Canada <u>Session 1</u> (Keynote): Dr Nino Zarnadze, Caucasus International University, Georgia
10:50 – 11:00	<u>Group Picture</u>
11:00 – 11:30	<i>Coffee: Room 304</i>
11:30 – 13:00	<u>Session 2</u> : Paper Presentations
13:00 – 14:00	<i>Lunch: Room 304</i>
14:00 – 15:30	<u>Session 3</u> : Paper Presentations
15:30 – 16:00	<i>Coffee: Room 304</i>
16:00 – 17:30	<u>Session 4</u> : Paper Presentations

August 5, 2026

9:00 – 10:30	Introduction by Dr Darina Saxunová, Slovakia <u>Session 5</u> (Keynote): Dr Mpumelelo Longweni North-West University, South Africa
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Coffee: Room 304</i>
11:00 – 12:30	<u>Session 6</u> : Paper Presentations
12:30 – 14:00	<i>Lunch: Room 304</i>
14:00 – 15:30	<u>Session 7</u> : Networking and Collaboration
15:30 – 16:00	<i>Coffee: Room 304</i>
16:00 – 16:30	<u>Session 8</u> : Award and Closing Remarks

Tuesday, August 4, 2026

9:00 – 9:30 Registration

Conference Room 305

Session 1

9:30 – 9:35 Opening remarks by Dr. Kakhaber Kordzaia
Rector, Caucasus International University, Georgia

9:35 – 9:40 Dr Satyendra Singh, Conference Chair
Professor, University of Winnipeg, Canada

9:40 – 9:45 Dr Tea Kasradze, Conference Co-Chair
Professor, Caucasus International University, Georgia

9:45 – 9:50 Dr Darina Saxunova, Conference Co-Chair
Professor, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

9:50 – 10:50 Plenary Keynote: Toward a theory of convergent
leadership: public-private value alignment under
uncertainty
Dr Nino Zarnadze, Caucasus Intl University, Georgia

Introduction Dr Satyendra Singh, University of Winnipeg, Canada

10:50 – 11:00 Group Picture

11:00 – 11:30 Coffee: Room 304

11:30 – 13:00

Session 2 *Technology and Innovation*

Session Chair Krishanu Rakshit, ICN Business School, France

Quantum technology transformation and business preparedness

Chaminda Senaratne, Northumbria University, UK

Meera Sarma, Cystel Cybersecurity, UK

*When human-like chatbots backfire: analysis of anthropomorphism's dual
effects on human escalation in Indian banking services*

Aakash Kamble, FLAME University, India

*How ubuntu, vasudhaiva kutumbakam and six degrees of separation lead to
effective business management in the age of AI*

Mpumelelo Longweni, North-West University, South Africa

Hackers at the quantum frontier: geopolitics, the quantum arms race, and the stakes for developing economies

Meera Sarma, Cystel Cybersecurity, UK

Discussion Chair: Darina Saxunova, Comenius U Bratislava, Slovakia

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch: Room 304

14:00 – 15:30

Session 3 *Environment and Sustainability*

Session Chair Tea Kasradze, Caucasus International University, Georgia

Microplastic pollution and our planet: assessing the progress toward real solutions

Geoffrey D. Abbott, Newcastle University, UK

Purity, pollution, and position: spatializing ethical buycotts and boycotts in Indian fashion

Bhupesh Manoharan, Masters' Union Business School, India

Vipin Sreekumar, Masters' Union Business School, India

Akshay Narayanan, University of Wales Trinity Saint David, UK

Krishanu Rakshit, ICN Business School, France

Attitudes towards fashion brands and sustainable consumption in Georgia

Zaza Gigauri, Caucasus International University, Georgia

Economic opportunities and environmental challenges of apitourism in Canadian landscapes

Roselyne N. Okech, Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada

Discussion Chair: Aakash Kamble, FLAME University, India

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee: Room 304

16:00 – 17:30

Session 4 *Efficiency and Productivity*

Session Chair Geoffrey D. Abbott, Newcastle University, UK

Medium-term effects of quantitative and qualitative shocks in trademark activity on firm value: an empirical analysis using local projections

Shingo Ide, NLI Research Institute, Japan

Tadaaki Komatsubara, Ibbotson Associates, Japan

Hitoshi Takehara, Waseda University, Japan

Pricing authenticity and sustainability: marketing strategies of urban and rural wineries in emerging wine regions

Darina Saxunova, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

Peter Starchon, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

Manuel Santos, Caves Sao Joao Ltd. Portugal

Qian Jia, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

Rita Szalai, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

Emotional intelligence: a catalyst to support work productivity

Paula Smith, Arizona State University, USA

Discussion Chair: Roselyne N. Okech

Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada

Dinner on your own

Wednesday, August 5, 2026

Conference Room 305

9:00 – 10:30

Session 5

Plenary Keynote: *The cognitive blind spot in management: antecedents and consequences of the Dunning-Kruger effect in agricultural businesses*

Dr Mpumelelo Longweni, North-West U, South Africa

Introduction

Dr Darina Saxunová, Comenius University, Slovakia

10:30 – 11:00

Coffee: Room 304

11:00 – 12:30

Session 6

Governance and Management

Session Chair

Hitoshi Takehara, Waseda University, Japan

Integration of ESG principles into Slovak local governance: challenges and opportunities in the digital era

Martina Chrancokova, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

Beata Juskova, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

Michael Max Konrad, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

Boshra Khalifa Ahmed, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

A study of consumers' attitudes toward innovative agricultural products: evidence from Georgia

Nugzar Todua, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Tatia Bregvadze, Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia

Caucasus International University, Georgia

The impact of financial literacy and financial inclusion on mortgage market accessibility and borrower credit performance in Georgia

Tea Kasradze, Caucasus International University, Georgia

Discussion Chair: Paula Smith, Arizona State University, USA.

12:30 – 14:00 Lunch: Room 304

14:00 – 15:30

Session 7

Free time - Networking and Collaborations

Moderators

Tea Kasradze, Caucasus International University, Georgia

Darina Saxunova, Comenius University Bratislava, Slovakia

Mpumelelo Longweni, North-West U, South Africa

15:30 – 16:00 Coffee: Room 304

16:00 – 16:30

Session 8

Award and Closing

Ceremony Chairs

Darina Saxunova, Comenius U Bratislava, Slovakia

Tea Kasradze, Caucasus International University, Georgia

Closing remarks

Next year's venue

...

Index — Authors

Author, Session # (Role: K=Keynote Speaker, S=Session Chair, D=Discussion Chair, I=Introducer, M=Moderator)

Abbott, Geoffrey D. [3](#) [4S](#)
Ahmed, Boshra Khalifa [6](#)
Bregvadze, Tatia [6](#)
Chrancokova, Martina [6](#)
Gigauri, Zaza [3](#)
Ide, Shingo [4](#)
Jia, Qian [4](#)
Juskova, Beata [6](#)
Kamble, Aakash [2](#) [3D](#)
Kasradze, Tea [3S](#) [6](#) [7](#) [8](#)
Komatsubara, Tadaaki [4](#)
Konrad, Michael Max [6](#)
Longweni, Mpumelelo [2](#) [5K](#)
Manoharan, Bhupesh [3](#)
Narayanan, Akshay [3](#)
Okech, Roselyne N. [3](#) [4D](#)
Rakshit, Krishanu [2S](#) [3](#)
Santos, Manuel [4](#)
Sarma, Meera [2](#)
Saxunova, Darina [2D](#) [4](#) [5S](#) [7](#) [8](#)
Senaratne, Chaminda [2](#)
Singh, Satyendra, [1S](#)
Smith, Paula [4](#) [6D](#)
Sreekumar, Vipin [3](#)
Starchon, Peter [4](#)
Szalai Rita [4](#)
Takehara, Hitoshi [4](#) [6S](#)
Todua, Nugzar [6](#)
Zarnadze, Nino [1K](#)

Notes

Contacts

Dr Satyendra Singh, *Conference Chair*
University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, CANADA
T: +1.204.786.9424 E: s.singh@uwinnipeg.ca

Dr Tea Kasradze, *Conference Co-Chair*
Caucasus International University, GEORGIA
T: +995 599.532.332 E: tea.kasradze@ciu.edu.ge

Dr Darina Saxunova, *Conference Co-Chair*
Comenius University Bratislava, SLOVAKIA
T: +421.2.9021.2094 E: darina.saxunova@fm.uniba.sk



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