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Attention: The News Editor

MEDIA RELEASE

First Namibian JEDI Astronomy and Space Science Workshop

The National Commission for Research, Science and Technology (NCRST), has sponsored N\$50 000 to the University of Namibia to host Namibia's first ever *Astronomy and Space Science Workshop* in Windhoek in June 2014, under the Joint Exchange Development Initiative (JEDI). This workshop will be for Namibian and South African students aspiring to become future astronomers and space scientists.

The JEDI model has proven to be effective in Human Capacity Development across Africa and is motivated by the fact that Namibia is home to the world's largest ground-based gamma-ray telescope, the High Energy Stereoscopic System (H.E.S.S.) and also forms part of the host countries for the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) telescope which aims to study the nature of the Universe to unprecedented accuracy. This means that in a period of five to ten years, Namibia will also be home to a number of radio telescope stations that will form an integral part of the big SKA telescope. Namibia is presently in the running to hosting an order of magnitude larger gamma-ray observatory, the Cherenkov Telescope Array (CTA), which aims to study the nature of dark matter in the Universe.

"We believe that this workshop is key in ensuring active participation and growth for Namibia's future scientists. The importance of investing in research programmes of this nature has to be emphasised, as it has the potential to broaden our country's existing scientific and technological expertise, and will lead to further industry spin-off benefits", said Dr Eino Mvula, Chief Executive Officer at the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology.

Selected students from Namibia and South Africa, who have a solid foundation in the fields of Mathematics, Physics, Computer Science or Engineering will be given the opportunity to interact with facilitators with expert knowledge in their fields. Workshop topics and coursework has been carefully selected to ensure that students obtain a broad overview of the various areas of research in the field of Astronomy and Space Science relevant to both Namibia and South Africa.

“At the end of the school, students will leave with a wealth of information regarding the field of Astronomy and Space Science and its various areas of research. This information becomes very useful and can act as a guide and motivation to students that wish to pursue postgraduate studies in the field of Astronomy and Space Science”, said Dr Michael Backes, Lecturer for Physics at the University of Namibia.

Ends:

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