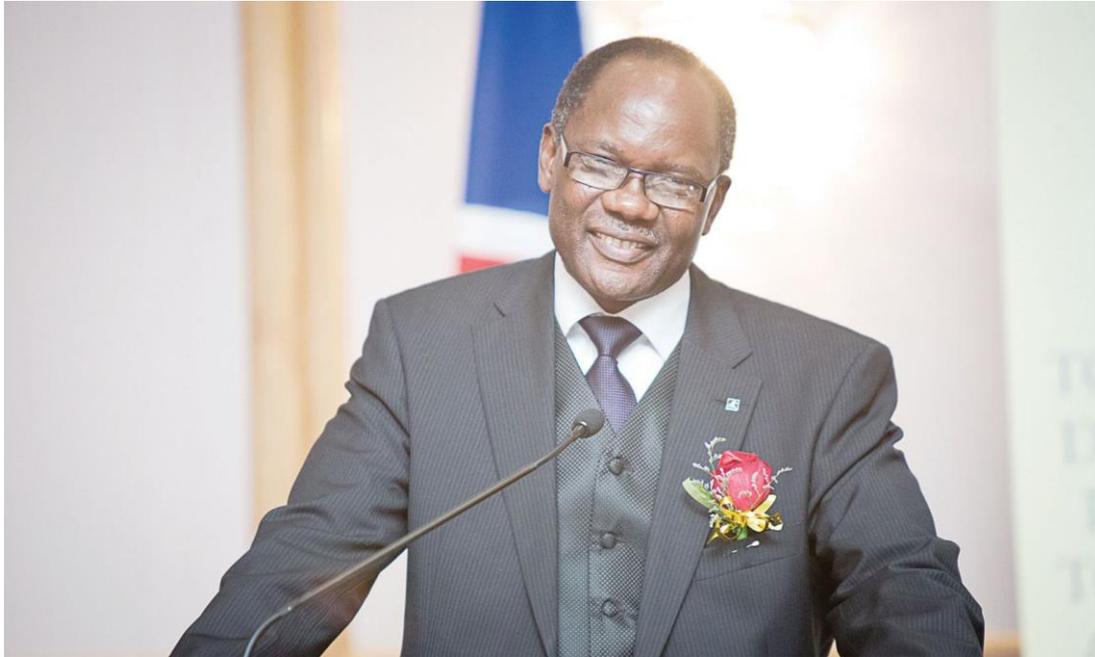


NCRST officially launched

by Timoteus Shihepo

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Minister of Education, David Namwandi, last week launched the National Commission for Research, Science and Technology (NCRST).

Namwandi said the NCRST is an important organisation, which will go a long way in contributing towards Namibia's competitiveness.

"My ministry is committed to be part of this process and will work with all stakeholders to ensure the establishment of a fully functional system of innovation, which will make meaningful contribution to socio-economic development of our country," he said.

Recognising the importance of research, science, technology and innovation as an engine for economic growth and development, Namibia adopted the national policy on research, science and technology as far back as 1999 and enacted the Research Science and Technology Act, 2004 (Act No. 23 of 2004).

Although initially, the implementation of these policies and legislative instruments were somehow slow, the minister said this is changing, especially with the emphasis placed on investing in research and development, as set out in Vision 2030 and the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP4). The commission also launched its five-year Strategic Plan, which is grounded in the objectives of the Research, Science and Technology Act, 2006 (Act No. 23 of 2004) and resonates with Vision 2030, the long-term development framework of the country and speaks to other relevant national development documents, such as NDP4.

“It is crucial for an organisation to have a strategy in place, as it gives it a defined approach towards achieving its objectives. In the broader context, an organisational strategy is a comprehensive guiding delineation of how it will go about achieving success in the context of its mandate,” said Namwandi.

The strategy also recognises the need to make research, science, technology and innovation an integral part of the socio-economic development processes and an enabler for the creation and adoption of technologies and enhanced capacities in support of national development priorities. The NCRST Strategic Plan focuses on strategic themes over the next five years: Further public understanding and interest in research, science, technology and innovation (RSTI) in Namibia, deepen stakeholder co-operation and strategic alignment around RSTI and integrate a supporting regulatory environment for RSTI in Namibia.

Also speaking at the launch was Professor Andre du Pisani, chairperson of the commission who said, “As a commission, we are guided by the principles of openness and transparency in all our work. We strive to further value-based behaviour, engaging and relating, decision-making and action and have thus adopted values of integrity, pro-activeness and passion for excellence”.