



Statement

By

Dr. Eino Mvula

Chief Executive Officer

National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST)

At the Signing Ceremony of the Master Agreement between NCRST and
NUST

NUST Senate Room, Windhoek

31 May 2016

Director of Ceremonies,
Prof Tjama Tjivikua, Vice-Chancellor, NUST
The NUST and NCRST Team;
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen;

We are humbled to have you at the signing ceremony of the Master Framework Agreement between the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) and the Namibia University of Science and Technology.

This Master Framework Agreement that we are going to sign today is based on the recognition of the important and complimentary roles that our institutions can play in developing science, technology and innovation in Namibia. In every functional innovation system, there are different actors who play different but equally important roles of at (1) Policy Level for example setting the National Research Agenda, Monitory and Evaluating the implementation, (2) Institutional and Programme Innovation Support Level in the form Funding Agencies, Incubator Centers (3) Innovation Capacity Level- where actual R&D and innovation takes place i.e. R&D Centers and University.

In terms of our enabling legislation, the Research, Science and Technology Act (Act 23 of 2004), the NCRST has a wide and very important mandate of promotion, co-ordination and development, funding of research, science

and technology in Namibia. The NCRST serves as the vehicle through which the Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation realises one of its key mandates, namely championing innovation in Namibia. One could argue that we are at both policy level and intuitional and programme level as per the mandate in the Act.

The Research, Science and Technology Act (Act 23 of 2004), specifically established the National Research, Science & Technology Fund (RST Fund) which is capitalized by the Government of the Republic of Namibia, Development Corporation Partners, the Private Sector and Funds generated by the Commission from its own activities. Monies of the Fund are used to fund Research & Development activities as well as Innovation & Technology projects that are seen as cutting edge; have the ability to improve scientific knowledge, concepts and technical capacity; address national social and economic challenges, and provide benefits to Namibians; and adds value to research, science and technological innovation that can be translated into tangible outputs. These remain our key funding criteria.

The RST Fund was operationalized in 2013 when the NCRST started operations. The NCRST has developed a funding framework and its associated Fund Rules and procedure in which we have specific funding instruments. These instruments include:

- Research and Development Funding Programme
- Innovation and Technology Development Programme
- National Infrastructure and Flagship Programmes
- Capacity Building

Since then, each year the NCRST develops an annual Call Schedule, which serves as a guide for the types of programmes that will be funded during that year. The calls are aligned to the Research Priority Areas identified in the National Programme on Research, Science, Technology and Innovation (NPRSTI). It is important to underscore that research needs to be carried out within a framework that demonstrates accountability to the government and the community, is transparent, is performance-driven and is capable of highlighting the return (economic or otherwise) on investment in research, thus a set of transparent processes are required in the operation of the National Fund. For this reason, a robust review and an M&E framework has been developed.

In terms of the fund performance, since inception in 2013, the Research, Science and Technology (RST) Fund has received and assessed over 397 applications for funding. Applications were received based on advertised Calls inviting Research and Innovation proposals. To date, 147 applications worth a funding value of over N\$ 27 million has been assessed and were approved. We have a specific focus on Capacity Building and supporting young people, hence the Fund has invested in 30 PhD students; 58 Master's students and 32 Youth Innovators. The R&D Projects at NUST as percentage

of total projects funded by the Commission (excluding postgraduate student funding and youth innovators) currently stands at 32%

The number of projects and their value will certainly increase as the researchers and innovators make use of the various funding opportunities of the Commission. Over the next month or two we are expecting to finalize the awarding of the Innovation Call, which closed in March, and a call for Research Capacity Building at our University and at Institutions of Higher Learning. Therefore, we believe that the signing of this agreement comes at the right time as it will streamline and the process of disbursing funds to researchers and innovators based at NUST, it also gives us assurance that the grants will be managed in accordance with the existing Institutions' financial management policies, and also the timely reporting of the projects execution as part of the M&E process.

I would like to thank you, Prof Tjivikua and your team for the commitment you have shown which led to the finalization of the agreement, which is a testimony on the importance on the development R&D at NUST, thus transforming NUST from the current status of a predominantly teaching institution, to a research intensive University. These collaborative efforts and many others initiated by all stakeholders will undoubtedly contribute to making innovation a key driver for the achievements of the objectives and goals of the Harambee Prosperity Plan.

I thank you.