



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**Key note address**

by

Hon Dr. David Namwandi, MP

Minister of Education

At the Namibia/South Africa Joint Bilateral Committee Meeting

12 August 2014

Hilton Hotel

**Director of Ceremonies: Mr Alfred Ilukena,**  
**Hon. Minister of Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa:**  
**Mrs Naledi Pandor,**  
**Hon. Ministers and Deputy Ministers present,**  
**Hon. Dr. Moses Amweelo, Chairperson of Parliamentary Standing**  
**Committee on ICT and other Members of Parliament Present,**  
**Your Excellences Members of the Diplomatic Corps,**  
**Chairperson of the National Commission on Research Science and**  
**Technology: Prof Andre Du Pisani,**  
**Chief Executive Officer of the National Commission on Research Science**  
**and Technology: Dr Eino Mvula,**  
**Distinguished invited guests,**  
**Members of the Media,**  
**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is with distinct pleasure and great honour that I stand here today and deliver a keynote address at the Namibia/South Africa Joint Bilateral Committee Meeting. Before deliver my speech may I take this opportunity to welcome my sister Hon Naledi Pandor Minister of Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa and her delegation.

Furthermore, I have been informed that our joint technical experts met yesterday to discuss matters of mutual benefit to both countries focusing on the role science technology and innovation in developing a knowledge based society. One such area discussed yesterday is the existing collaboration in Astronomy where the two countries are championing mega projects namely the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) and the Cherenkov Telescope Array (CTA) and the benefits that could be accrued to society.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

Namibia is committed to the advancement of Science and Technology as driver of national development. As we march towards becoming a knowledge-based, industrialized nation we recognize the need to invest in Science and Research infrastructure to support innovation and technology development. For this reason the Namibian government has established the National Commission on Research Science and Technology (NCRST) as the apex body to promote and coordinate Research Science and Innovation in Namibia. The NCRST which has been established through the Research, Science and Technology Act (Act no 23 of 2004) in order to provide a funding mechanism for technology development, is playing a pivotal role as the lead institution in the development of the CTA project.

**Director of Ceremonies**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

The CTA is a mega astronomical project that stands to benefit the Namibian nation significantly in form creating of critical mass of skilled manpower in Space Science. This project consists of a consortium of 16 countries namely: Argentina, Austria, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Namibia, Poland, Spain, South Africa, Switzerland, Chile, USA, the United Kingdom, India, and The Netherlands.

Namibia's large open landscape and clear skies offers an excellent environment for astronomy and other space related research. Our chosen site, for the construction of the CTA is near Aus in the Southern part of Namibia. It has excellent environmental conditions for Astronomy and

Astrophysics research which makes it ideal for hosting the CTA. Once completed, the CTA project will serve as a tremendous resource for a wide regional and international astrophysics community. This telescope will allow scientists locally, regionally and internationally, to develop a deep understanding of the universe and how the laws of nature behave under extreme circumstances. Additionally, the CTA shall provide a great resource potential for new discoveries in astronomy, astrophysics and fundamental physics research.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am proud to announce that the Namibian Government through its executive arm Cabinet has endorsed Namibia to host the CTA project as this seen to have a positive impact in the lives of our people particularly in SADC region and Africa in general in terms of human capacity development, improve socioeconomic wellbeing of our society. The CTA will enhance Namibia's contribution to research in Astronomy and Astrophysics and enhance its involvement of new discoveries in the field. This will lead to an enhanced collaboration among scientists, researchers and institutions in astronomy and astrophysics research.

Namibian scientists and science students will have the opportunity to be trained, work, and conduct research on a truly world-class "Big Science" experiment that is closer and freely accessible by the local scientific community. This endeavour shall strengthen institutions involved, due to the knowledge and technology transfer that will take place.

Furthermore, construction of the CTA telescopes and facilities will involve the participation of many Namibian industries such as the Engineering, IT and Construction companies. Therefore, a significant percentage of CTA South's capital budget will be spent in Namibia on Namibian companies that shall be contracted to do the construction.

At this juncture, Director of Ceremonies, permit me to thank the Minister of Science and Technology of the Republic of South Africa, Hon. Naledi Pandor for the overwhelming support that her government has given Namibia during the CTA bid process. It is because of your support, Hon. Minister, that our two nations have the existing Bilateral Cooperation on Science and Technology established the Namibia/ South Africa CTA Task Force to coordinate activities related to Astronomy and Astrophysics research. This task force is made of expert scientists and researchers from our respective Government Departments/Agencies, institutions of higher learning whose scope is to come up with modalities for identifying collateral benefits that can be accrued from the project in form of human capital development.

In conclusion, allow to thank you Hon Minister and your delegation for taking time from your busy schedule to accept my invitation to address the Namibian nation on the collateral benefits that could be accrued from the CTA as well as sharing your experiences from the SKA. To my fellow members of parliament especially the Parliamentary Standing Committee of ICT headed by Hon Dr Moses Amweelo, I thank you for your presence and commitment towards the development of Science and Technology

Finally, Prof. Andre du Pisani as chair of NCRST am delighted with the progress the Commission is making in execution its mandate. Members of media you are acknowledged and we value your contribution towards informing the public on the value of science, technology and innovation. I am confident that we will continue to work together to advance Science and Technology for the benefit of our nations, the Region and the African continent at large.

I thank you.