



**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**

**Opening address**

by

Hon Dr. Becky Ndjoze-Ojo, MP

Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Training and Innovation

At the Global Research Council African Meeting

16 November 2015

Strand Hotel, Swakopmund

Director of Ceremonies,  
Prof Andre du Pisani, Chairperson of the National Commission on Research,  
Science and Technology,  
Dr. Eino Mvula, CEO of the National Commission on Research, Science and  
Technology,  
Dr Beverley Damonse, Acting CEO of the National Research Foundation, South  
Africa  
Dr Jorg Schneider, German Research Foundation (DFG)  
Dr Wanjiru Kamau Rutenberg, Executive Director, African Women in  
Agricultural Research and Development  
Dr Graham Harrison, Executive Secretary to the Governing Board, GRC  
Prof Rick Rylance, Executive Group Chair, Research Councils-UK  
Dr Philippe Mawoko, Executive Secretary, African Observatory for Science,  
Technology and Innovation, Africa Union  
Heads and Representatives of Research Granting Councils,  
Representatives from Government Ministries, SOEs, the Private Sector and  
Non-Governmental Organisations,  
Researchers and Innovators,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Members of the Media,  
Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure to participate at the opening of the Global Research  
Council African Meeting for 2015 which is organized by the National  
Commission on Research, Science and Technology, National Research  
Foundation of South Africa and the German Research Foundation (DFG).

Allow me first and foremost to applaud these organizations for their excellent efforts in bringing all of us here today.

Recognising the importance of Research, Science, Technology and Innovation as an engine for economic growth and development, African countries have adopted national policies on Research, Science, Technology and Innovation, which serve as strategic planning frameworks for the development of Research, Science, Technology, and Innovation in their respective countries. In Namibia, for instance, 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 somewhat slow, this is changing, especially with the emphasis placed on investing in Research and Development in Namibia as set out in Vision 2030 and the Fourth National Development Plan (NDP4).

**Director of Ceremonies,**

As you are aware, Africa has adopted the Science Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA-2024) as a strategic intervention of Africa's STI sector in support of the AU Agenda 2063. With this strategy, Africa is striving to encourage increasing networking and collaboration between education and research, private and public sector stakeholders (at both national and regional level) to facilitate co-creation, adaptation and commercialisation of research and innovation outputs while ensuring research and innovation programmes are regularly valorised for impact and alignment with national and regional policy objectives. I have been appraised about the aim of this Africa regional meeting, which is to construct a strategic and value-added programme through representation of all science granting councils in Sub-Saharan Africa, including

dedicated and focused discussions, and an academic symposium to encourage scholarly debate and strengthen partnership between African and international experts. These objectives are very critical as they respond to opportunities and address issues of common concern in the support of research, and indeed resonates with the African STI Strategy.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

I am pleased to note the involvement of National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) in the Global Research Council network. This is commendable as the GRC is an organization dedicated to promoting the sharing of data and best practices for high-quality collaboration amongst funding agencies worldwide. The participation of all African Science Granting Councils in the activities of the Global Research Council is of utmost importance to drive Research, Science and Technology agendas in our respective countries and on the African Continent as a whole. In their effort to strengthen collaboration the National Commission on Research, Science and Technology of Namibia and the National Research Foundation of South Africa have entered into a Memorandum of Understanding in September this year. It's my sincere wish to see more of such Memoranda of Understanding concluded between African Science Granting Councils as this can significantly improve the quality of science, avoid unnecessary duplication, strengthens national innovation systems, and address our common issues that can only be solved by working together.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

The topics for discussion at this meeting namely, *Interdisciplinary and Equality and Status of Women in Research* are befitting as they touch on current issues that

are at the centre of the Africa's development. For example the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa, 2024 (STISA 2024), has adopted a cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach which intends to strengthen the use of STI in addressing socio economic challenges. Further STISA 2024 also calls for Africa to harvest its population demographic dividend, especially the women and youth, whose energy, creativity and courage must drive its development agenda. As a country, Namibia is also making deliberate efforts to ensure equal participation by women not only in politics leadership, but also in the economy and society at large, as expressed in NDP4 and Vision 2030. I look forward to the outcome of the deliberation which must propose measures that we need to put in place in promoting gender equality in research, gender perspectives in research and fundamental knowledge about gender.

The GRC Africa Regional Meeting runs a parallel academic session, which deals with pertinent topics on *energy and manufacturing technologies* that are essential for development, particularly as our continent strives to develop its manufacturing base towards industrialization. I am informed that the purpose of the academic session is to bring together researchers, students and other stakeholders from Africa and Germany to discuss recent research in energy and manufacturing technologies. The sessions will also serve as a platform to discuss current and future sustainable solutions to Africa's energy and manufacturing challenges. I would like to encourage participants in this session to make use of this unique opportunity to engage in this interesting session and network in order to identify opportunities for collaboration thereby harnessing the impact of international collaboration.

**Director of Ceremonies,**

The Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation is committed to support the enhancement of science in Namibia and establishment of a fully functional system of innovation which will make meaningfully contribution to socio-economic development of our country and African continent as a whole.

With these words, I wish all participants a fruitful and enjoyable meeting that provides a platform for exchanging of scientific ideas, inspiring new research, establishing of new contacts for future collaboration. I also wish you a pleasant and interesting stay in Namibia.

I thank you.