NCRST
National Commission On Research Science & Technology

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NCRST PARTICIPATE IN THE 4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION CONFERENCE AND EXPO

The National Commission on Research, Science and Technology recently participated in the just ended 4th Industrial Revolution Conference and Expo at Safari Hotel, in Windhoek under the theme "***4IR as an enabler of green and inclusive industrialization***".

During the presentation delivered at the conference, NCRST shared findings of Research, Science, Technology, and Innovation Infrastructure Survey that was conducted by NCRST which highlighted gaps in the National System of Innovation. These findings/gaps include limited national RSTI facilities in Namibia, limited access to existing RSTI Valley, limited technical skills to operate the specialized research equipment and maintenance thereof, lack of collaboration and sharing of research equipment.

Namibia has been hosting the High Energy Stereoscopic System programme, an international collaborative research programme for more than twenty (20) years. This programme focuses on analysis of cosmic rays, and it is situated in the Gamsberg mountain. To date over 100 articles were published in scientific journals.

This programme has seen an improved scientific collaboration with over one hundred and seventy (170) scientists from thirty-two (32) institutions in twelve 9(2) countries collaborated on HESS. Over one hundred (100) students globally received degrees through HESS and Namibia have seen an increased tourism due to scientific visitors travelling to the HESS site in Namibia.

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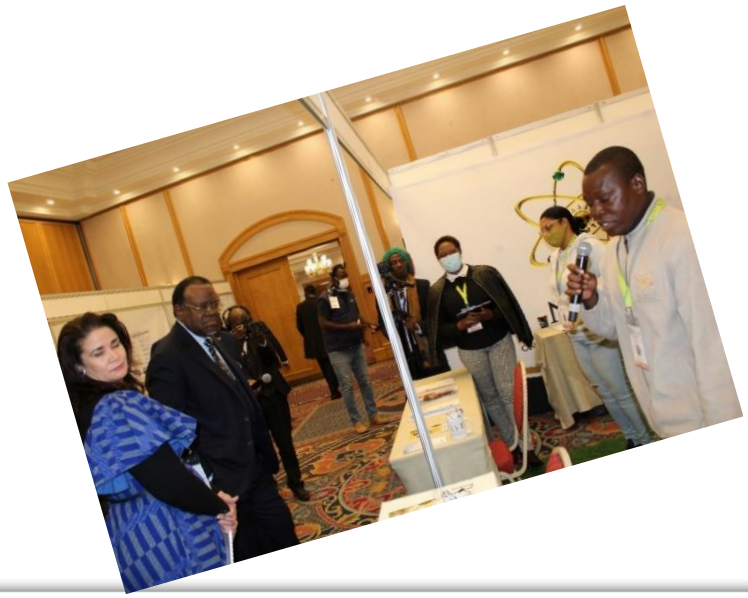
High Speed Computing for Big Data Africa Initiative was identified as contributing factor towards 4IR. Namibia received a total of 4 racks from CHPC – South Africa in 2016 and 2019 consecutively and they are used for data storage and processing. These racks are hosted at the University of Namibia and at the Namibia University of Science and Technology and they are used for capacity building.

NCRST intends to review the current draft Indigenous Knowledge System Policy to cater for the 4IR. The policy is aimed at mainstreaming IKS within a national, science, technology, and innovation system for socio-economic development of communities.

To harness the 4IR, there is a need for the development of a national Bioeconomy Strategy. The NCRST has drafted the Bioeconomy Strategy (2023 to 2027) which sets the scene for implementing programmes and initiatives that will help Namibia take advantage of innovation in the Biotechnology and other related sectors. Bioeconomy will promote the sustainable use of biological resources and address critical gapes in industries towards socio-economic advancement.

Another project presented was the Technology Transfer or Tech Stations in preparations for 4IR, which is aimed at stimulating and accelerating the mutual beneficial interaction between Universities, Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) or Rural Development Centre and all Namibians. Tech Stations will provide a synergistic environment where innovators and academia can share learning, create working partnerships, and do business together. Tech stations will provide transformation of production systems at grassroot levels by availing valuable time, services, and expertise to assist the small and medium enterprises, be it individual or group of inventors or innovators to transform informal businesses to formal businesses.



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FINAL VALIDATION WORKSHOP FOR THE DRAFT NATIONAL BIOECONOMY STRATEGY 2023-2028, JUNE 22, 2022, OTJIWARONGO

The National Commission on Research, Science and Technology (NCRST) in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, drafted the National Bioeconomy Strategy that aims at implementing national programs and initiatives that will facilitate and support innovation in bioeconomy sectors. "Bioeconomy means using our biological resources in a sustainable manner, which brings about economic transformation."

Significant progress towards the development of the strategy has been attained and a stock taking and analysis report with a summary of bioeconomy landscape data was compiled and finalized by the FAO consultants. Namibia's biodiversity has the potential to be used for sustainable production, resulting in products, processes, and services that can generate meaningful employment and reduce hunger. Building a healthy bioeconomy sector can help the country to handle several social, environmental, and economic issues.

The NCRST, in collaboration with FAO and MHETI, hosted a final stakeholders' validation workshop for the National Bioeconomy Strategy, on Wednesday, June 22, 2022, at the C'est Si Bon Hotel & Conference Centre, in Otjiwarongo. A final validation workshop was necessary to ensure that the drafted strategy incorporated all contributions and comments received though several consultations before it is submitted for vetting by the Minister of Higher Education, Technology, and Innovation (MHETI), prior to Cabinet submission and approval. This strategy is intended to drive innovation, conservation, and sustainable utilization of biological resources in Namibia.

STAFF CORNER

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE COLLEAGUES BORN IN JUNE