

# Newsletter

DST-NRF Centre in Indigenous Knowledge Systems

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## DST HOSTS THE THIRD NATIONAL IKS INTERFACE "BUILDING EXCELLENCE IN IKS AS A SCIENCE"

South Africa's indigenous knowledge has massive potential for research, development, innovation and social cohesion. This is according to Minister Pandor, who told delegates at the 3rd Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Interface Conference that the Department annually invests R10 million in its IKS programme to promote and support research on understanding IKS and its role in science, innovation and community life. The programme is managed by the National Research Foundation (NRF). Themed "Building Excellence in IKS as a Science", the three-day conference, held from 27 February to 1 March, provided a platform for scientists from universities and science councils, IKS holders and students to share new and ongoing research outputs. Furthermore, it created a space for dialogue towards the generation of new knowledge, and the training of a new cohort of researchers able to understand the groundings of different knowledge systems.

Addressing delegates, Minister Pandor said that indigenous knowledge offered great opportunities, not only to those who used it in their daily lives, but also to researchers, government agencies and commercial firms, both foreign and domestic. The Minister added that the knowledge, preserved mostly in the memories of practitioners and holders, was passed down through the generations by word of mouth. The oral nature of indigenous knowledge had unfortunately resulted in widespread misuse, misappropriation and bio-piracy. "This has been seen recently in the Pelargonium, rooibos and honey bush cases," she said.

Speaking on the NRF's role in IKS, the Acting NRF CEO, Ms Beverly Damonse, said the highlighting of IKS in the entity's mandate was an acknowledgement of the possibilities that IKS held for the country. "We recognise that IKS has unique potential for development across the whole population," she said. Ms Damonse spoke of the NRF's commitment to excellence in knowledge production and human capital development (HCD) and of how, over the years that the NRF had managed basic knowledge production and HCD related to IKS, it had relied on an interactive and consultative process.

The 2004 IKS review emphasised the need to bring knowledge holders, who could make contributions as useful and important as those made by scientists, into the funding adjudication process. Among the strategies the DST was implementing to ensure the future protection, development and management of South Africa's IKS, Minister Pandor mentioned the documentation and recording of IKS. "The urgency of documenting South African indigenous knowledge – being done through our National Recordal System – is underscored by the fact that we often lose our respected elders before their indigenous knowledge has been recorded. It is often said that, when an old person dies in Africa, a whole library disappears," the Minister said.

Minister Pandor also announced that, on 18 February Cabinet had approved the Protection, Promotion, Development and Management of Indigenous Knowledge Systems Bill for public comment. She urged participants to engage with the Bill and submit their comments to the Department saying that this Bill was a significant step forward in efforts to protect South African indigenous knowledge. The legislation ensures that communities retain ownership of intellectual property rights for their documented and recorded knowledge.

The conference included presentations from higher education institutions, and on collaborative projects between indigenous knowledge holders, elders, healers and storytellers, among others. The conference was facilitated by distinguished fellows from many countries, including Uganda, India, Sweden and Norway, who are attached to the DST-NRF Research Chair in Development Education based at UNISA.

*Sourced: Zama Mthethwa, Assistant Director: Media Liaison and Communication, DST.*



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### CIKS Profile

#### Vision

- To be a world rallying Hub for IKS research, postgraduate training, knowledge brokerage and community engagement

#### Mission

- To Improve quality of life of the people through recognition, development, protection and affirmation of IKS in Africa

## Editors Message

In line with National government's commitment to excellence in Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) knowledge production and human capital development (HCD), the DST-NRF Centre in Indigenous Knowledge Systems (CIKS) has been active in a number of IKS knowledge exchange and HCD initiatives.

This edition is a brief overview of some of these initiatives the most notable of which include the: 3-day DST 3<sup>rd</sup> National IKS Interface Conference (UNISA), Traditional Knowledge stakeholder workshop (UKZN), the inaugural International Conference on IKS and Environmental Ethics: Implications on Peace-building and Sustainable Development, DST-NRF Internship Programme 2015/2016, Draft IKS Bill and the DST Women in Science Awards.

*'We have touched the kingdom because we are talking to the Amakhosi; and they will take this to the King'.*

## DOCUMENTING TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS: STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

The Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the Indigenous Knowledge Systems Documentation Centre (IKSDC), hosted a stakeholders workshop on the documentation of Indigenous Knowledge Systems at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN's) Howard College campus Traditional Medicine Boardroom. The workshop also looked to formalize agreements between the traditional leaders of eThekweni and UKZN. A Memorandum of Understanding is to be signed by the Amakhosi (Traditional Leaders) and the University.

Chief Director: Science Missions at DST, Professor Yonah Seleti, shared recent developments in IKS, including proposed legislation which will positively affect indigenous knowledge holders and practitioners. 'The purpose is to protect the knowledge. That gives you the knowledge holder rights,' said Seleti. The proposed law should appear in an upcoming Government Gazette and participants, including traditional healers and leaders, were encouraged to submit feedback 'so that their knowledge contributions are heard'.

UKZN's African Indigenous Knowledge Systems (AIKS) Research Leader, Professor Hassan Kaya, said the IKSDC hosted by UKZN would contribute greatly to the knowledge economy in KwaZulu-Natal. Professor Kaya echoed the sentiments of other participants who called for the sustainable harvesting of indigenous plants in rural areas, with a particular emphasis on Warwick Market.

In an endeavor to implement the National IKS Policy, the DST's National IKS Office (NIKSO), has embarked on the process of documenting IKS in local and rural communities in the country. KwaZulu-Natal is one of the pilot provinces for the initiative which is in line with National IKS Policy, i.e. to recognize, develop, promote, and protect Indigenous Knowledge Systems. In order to facilitate this process, NIKSO has established a National Recordal Systems and an IKSDC at UKZN, located within the University's Research Office.

DST's Ms. Carol van Wyk said the National Recordal System could serve as a 'national knowledge management tool for the province'. Van Wyk said seven IKSDCs had already been established throughout the country, with further centres due in Mpumalanga and Gauteng by 2017. She outlined developments around the country and said the IKS documentation hubs should benefit the community and knowledge holders through protecting, preserving, promoting and developing the knowledge. Van Wyk said more than 4 000 items

had already been recorded, and stressed the importance of updating communities on any developments. She emphasized aligning the legal framework so that the community members and IKS holders were protected.

Co-ordinator for the IKSDC, Ms Zodwa Masinga, gave the background of the project, which dates back to December 2012 at Warwick Market. She said in total, 260 knowledge holders had been reached in the past two years, with a strong focus on medicine and food. Masinga outlined the future plans for the Centre, such as expanding to other domains of IKS, including documenting information on the Amakhosi and maidens.

Mr Lindokuhle Sibiya of the Department of Development, Tourism, and Environmental Affairs presented a provincial perspective, examining the provincial activities relating to IKS and focusing on the Provincial IKS Strategy being developed in collaboration with UKZN and the Moses Kotane Institute.

Liaison for the Amakhosi and eThekweni's Manager Traditional Leadership Support, Mr Victor Mkhize, said: 'We have touched the kingdom because we are talking to the Amakhosi; and they will take this to the King.' Mr Sipho Ngwenya of the Isizinda sobukhosi affirmed the support of His Majesty the King and the Amakhosi for the IKS project and thanked the University for involving traditional healers and healers in the process.



Participants at the Indigenous Knowledge Systems stakeholder meeting on the Howard College campus

Professor Seleti chartered the way forward, saying agreements had been reached at a broader level and that the three levels of government - national, provincial and local - would be involved. He said eThekweni would be used as an example of best practice and stressed that ownership needed to be at a provincial and community level.

*Raylene Captain-Hasthibeer, UKZN Corporate*

## UKZN HOSTS THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

The DST-NRF Centre in Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) with its hub at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in partnership with the Africa Programme of the UN-University for Peace (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), the University of Rwanda (Rwanda), and Department of Science and Technology, hosted the first International Conference on Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Environmental Ethics, looking at the Implications for Peace-Building and Sustainable Development. The conference was held at the UKZN Westville Campus on 28-30 April 2015.

The contentious issue of discussion at the conference was interrogating the role of culture in environmental ethics. The conference was based on the argument that while recognizing the universality of the environmental crisis, there has been a critique levelled against contemporary approaches by international institutions, researchers, academics including the UN to universalize environmental ethics and values. There is need to break the western cultural hegemony on worldviews on environmental ethics, by making environmental ethics culturally specific and holistic in approach. Culture is an important element in inspiring and mobilizing people to participate in environmental conservation. The conference also recognized that in spite of Africa's minimal contribution to the environmental crisis, Africa and its rich IKS tend to be marginalized in the search for sustainable solutions to the crisis.

The conference organizers managed to mobilize stakeholders from diverse backgrounds within and outside Africa. Among the conference sub-themes discussed with implications on IKS and environmental ethics, included: environmental governance, peace-building, justice and human rights; climate change, food security systems and global health; rural development, sustainable livelihood and gender; education transformation, science and technological development and communication.

According to Professor Hassan Kaya, the Director of the DST-NRF Centre in Indigenous Knowledge Systems, the objectives of the conference were to create an international platform and network for interrogating and sharing views on Africa's conceptualization of the environmental crisis, especially the role of IKS in the development of environmental ethics and their policy implications on peace-building and sustainable development; to come up with a consensus of strategies for ensuring that the outcomes of the conference find currency in the deliberations of the UN and AU on environmental ethics. It was highlighted that UKZN is the first University in South Africa and the continent to adopt an institutional IKS policy which has been endorsed by the University Council.

In his welcome address UKZN Vice-Chancellor, Dr Albert van Jaarsveld, said the International Conference was an important development for IKS as the University is looking forward to work with the Centre as a team so that it is soon realised as a Centre of Excellence. This will be achieved through breaking new grounds and doing things differently in knowledge production. This includes attracting the international community and for the local community to be intimately involved in IKS development.

The MEC for Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs, Honourable Mr. Michael Mabuayakhulu, who attended as both a panelist and on behalf the KZN Premier, said that the Conference is in line with the provincial government's initiative of Sukuma Sakhe. The latter is about mobilising communities and building partnerships for sustainable livelihood including environmental preservation and protection using their own ways of knowing, attitudes and value systems. It emphasizes the significance of community level engagement. This is central to democracy and development because without community engagement there is a distortion of the relevance of the developmental agenda and the meaning of democracy. It also challenges people to redefine the meaning of human rights within the context of African value system (Ubuntu). As an ethical value, the African indigenous understanding of the environment and hence human rights is the symbiotic relationship between the humans and other forms of life, i.e. the natural environment. He emphasized the recognition of the importance of the environment as a home and a place of work. The environment is where people must take charge of their own lives based on their own ways of knowing, knowledge production and value systems. The environment has therefore, to be protected and preserved because as a home it gives people a sense of location, a sense of belonging, creates a context for solidarity and identity. Other prominent speakers at the conference included former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Venda and Board member of the DST-NRF Centre in Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Professor Muxe Nkondo, who commended the University on the high level of understanding on the importance and role of IKS and culture in environmental ethics and peace-building in Africa.

Professor Palamagamba John Kabudi from the Law Faculty of the University of Dar es salaam, Tanzania, urged the conference participants to conduct more research on the role of hunter-gatherer communities, mainly focusing on their survival skills in the natural environment using their knowledge systems, and research on the positive impact of Nguni migration on environmental ethics in the Southern, East and Central African regions.



Dr. Albert van Jaarsveld, Vice Chancellor UKZN



Honourable MEC Michael Mabuayakhulu



Professor MG Nkondo



Professor D Macer



Professor PJ Kabudi



Dr. J Rai



Delegates and High School Learners at the Conference



Dignitaries meet at the International Conference



Delegates at the International Conference on Indigenous Knowledge Systems and Environmental Ethics

## THE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE BASED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES: EXPLORING THE TRIPLE HERITAGE IN ETHEKWINI

The eThekweni Municipality's Municipal Institute of Learning (MILE), in partnership with the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), Moses Kotane Institute (MKI), Department of Economic Development, Tourism and Environmental Affairs (EDTEA) as well as the Department of Science and Technology (DST) hosted a knowledge exchange seminar on "Indigenous Knowledge Systems Based Economic Activities" for eThekweni Councilors and officials.

The primary objective of the Knowledge Exchange seminar was to share ideas, experiences, lessons learned and good practice thereby giving guidance and support to the eThekweni Municipality on how to develop Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) policies and programmes that will help in addressing poverty and unemployment.

Delegates were officially welcomed by eThekweni Municipality Speaker, Cllr. Logie Naidoo who highlighted the importance of having seminars of this caliber.

"The Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) Seminar was made possible by MILE in partnership with other institutions. This unit has attracted many visitors through its work. MILE was formed to strengthen the existing learning techniques to improve service delivery, knowledge and partnerships to share experiences on how to explore economic activities to ensure sustainability. MILE is one of the key networks to share knowledge to ensure improved service delivery," emphasized Cllr. Naidoo.

The keynote speakers were UKZN Professor Muxe Nkondo and Prof Yonah Seleti from the Department of Science and Technology. In his presentation Prof Nkondo mentioned the need to develop transparency within the eThekweni Knowledge Management and Public Resources Systems. "We need to look at the differences in a more creative way to see the extent in which these systems can assist each other in ensuring development looking at cost effect models and rational platforms. The rationale that will reduce inequality in eThekweni is the one that will help improve service delivery, where



Members of DST; KZN EDTEA; eThekweni Municipality; CIKS and MKI at Seminar

information technology will be used as a cooperative instrument to address these issues," said Nkondo. Prof Yonah Seleti spoke about the launch of the IKS Bill which seeks to promote the sharing of knowledge and knowledge holders. "In the knowledge economy, it is important to secure knowledge leadership. Today the country has to be based on the development of knowledge, as a competitive advantage. The promotion of IKS is an advancement of the cognitive democracy of knowledge around the world. The knowledge holders are being mobilized, there are massive achievements between the government departments in working together. MOUs are being developed, monitoring and evaluation shows that these items are winning," said Prof Seleti.

The seminar provided the ideal platform for presenters and officials to engage around a thought provoking discussion session from the informative presentations and plenary session. The Honourable Deputy Mayor of eThekweni Municipality, Nomvuzo Shabalala closed proceedings by summarizing the key points pertinent to the functioning of eThekweni Municipality and asserted the need to develop a local municipality IKS strategy within six months.

*Janice Lee Moodley: MILE*

## DST-NRF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME 2015/2016

The DST-NRF Centre in Indigenous Knowledge Systems (CIKS) Hub is host to 4 postgraduate interns as part of the National Research Foundation (NRF) Internship Programme 2015/2016. The Department of Science and Technology (DST) in partnership with the National Research Foundation (NRF), runs the internship programme for unemployed graduates in Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) to expose them to real-world experiences through mentoring and directed training workshops. The internship programme is linked to the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), which was established to radically transform education and training in South Africa by improving both the quality and quantity of training of students. The CIKS Hub as part of the DST-NRF Internship Programme aims to attract and retain skilled human capital within the National System of Innovation through mentoring to develop IKS skills and competencies among the next generation of academics and researchers in South Africa.

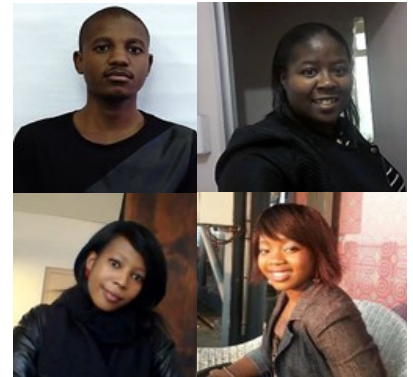
The benefits of the internship programme at DST-NRF CIKS include:

- Providing interns with a competitive edge by enhancing their CVs with IKS-related research experience.

- Networking with international, regional and national stakeholders within higher education, governmental and non-governmental institutions; and communities active in IKS-related activities to build professional contacts.
- Enhancing interns' knowledge base in the field of IKS-related research.
- Community-based experience where you can apply academic learning and IKS principles and theories.
- Becoming more knowledgeable about research administration, management and support within the CIKS hub.
- Learning about and understanding organizational culture within the CIKS hub and among partner institutions.
- Learning IKS-related skills in communication and report-writing.
- Learning about IKS research and development strategies, policies and legislation at international, regional, national, provincial and local level.

Lungelo Msomi: CIKS

### DST-NRF Interns at CIKS Hub



From Top Left:  
Mr. Lungelo Msomi; and Ms. Zamakhuzeni Zikalala

From Bottom Left: Ms. Sithokoza Mbokazi  
and Ms. Ayanda Nzuza

DST-NRF Interns based at the CIKS Hub, UKZN. They are all graduates of UKZN from the different campuses and are currently pursuing their postgraduate degrees in various disciplines.

*The internship programme is linked to the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS), which was established to radically transform education and training in South Africa*

## PROTECTION, PROMOTION, DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS BILL, 2014 PUBLISHED FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The current regulatory mechanisms for the protection of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in South Africa are weak. In 2013, the President passed the Intellectual Property (IP) Laws Amendment Act, 28 of 2013 dealing with the protection of indigenous knowledge using the orthodox intellectual property regime. A Private Member's Bill, which also deals with the commercial protection of traditional knowledge, was subsequently tabled in Parliament during January 2013. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Act and the Private Member's Bill emphasise market-oriented protection mechanisms, which limits their scope to commercial aspects only. The proposed draft Department of Science and Technology Bill, extends beyond the economic protection of IK and focuses more on the protection, promotion, development and management of IK, which makes it an all-inclusive legal mechanism.

This draft Bill takes into account the key legal provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation, ratified by South Africa in November 1995 and February 2013, respectively. It also takes into consideration the guiding principles and substantive provisions for the protection of traditional cultural expressions and traditional knowledge agreed to by the World Intellectual Property

Organisation (WIPO). These international treaties also propose the enactment of *sui generis* legislation for the protection of IK. An important objective of the *sui generis* legislation is to recognise that IK, and related innovations and practices are the collective heritage of indigenous and local communities, and that its use is subject to their prior informed consent. IK includes knowledge which is already available to third parties or the public, a characteristic that renders it vulnerable to protection through the conventional IP system.

The primary objective of the draft Bill is to facilitate the protection of IK and the restoration and recognition of IK relating to and owned by indigenous and local communities of South Africa. The secondary objective is to facilitate redress of rights and benefits that indigenous and local communities were deprived of without recognition or commercial benefit. The draft Bill also clearly defines the functions and role of the National Indigenous Knowledge Systems Office (NIKSO).

The draft Bill delineates the subject matter for protection into three distinct areas, namely (i) indigenous knowledge, (ii) traditional cultural expressions, and (iii) natural resources associated with IK. It outlines aspects of IK eligible for protection, namely IK that is (a) passed on from generation to generation and between generations in indigenous and local communities, (b) that is associated with the cultural and social identity of an indigenous community, and (c) that is maintained and used or developed as part of the cultural or social identity of a community.

Regarding beneficiaries, the draft Bill provides that benefits of protection should accrue to indigenous and local communities rather than individuals, while recognising that individual rights of

innovators or creators of original works will be recognised through other systems. Regarding the duration of protection, the draft Bill provides for IK rights to continue as long as the subject matter for protection exists. The draft Bill also considers how rights will be managed, and it provides for an identifiable point (authority) for prospective users and providers of IK to engage with in order to promote legal certainty.

An important point of departure, compared to other pieces of legislation, is the provision of "trans-boundary" protection of IK. This allows the protection, use and commercial utilisation of the IK resources emanating from foreign jurisdictions to enjoy the same benefits established by the Bill, provided they are the result of reciprocal international agreements with such foreign jurisdictions.

Finally, the draft Bill sets out stringent administrative measures and provides for both civil and criminal sanctions when the rights of indigenous and local communities are breached. It also deals with dispute resolution, enforcement, and other general operational matters and transitional measures.

[http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/38574\\_gen243.pdf](http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/38574_gen243.pdf)

Information provided by: *Ms Shumi Pango;*

*Deputy Director: Advocacy & Policy Development  
Department of Science and Technology*

### **Awards will be made under these categories:**

#### **1. Awards for Distinguished Women Researchers (MDGs)**

- Life Sciences
- Humanities and Social Sciences

#### **2. Awards for Distinguished Young Women Researchers (MDGs)**

- Life Sciences
- Humanities Social Sciences

#### **3. Fellowships**

- Master's students: three in any discipline, and two in Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)
- Doctoral students: three in any discipline, and two in IKS

## **DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (DST) WOMEN IN SCIENCE IKS POSTGRADUTE AWARDS (WISA) 2015**

The Department of Science and Technology recognises and awards excellence by women researchers. The South African Women in Science Awards encourage and reward women scientists, and researchers, and also profile them as role models for younger women. The awards are made to women who are South African citizens or permanent residents.

The theme for the 2015 South African Women in Science Awards is "Science for a sustainable future" which is in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) concluding at the end of 2015. The theme recognises the contribution that has been made by women researchers towards the achievement of some of the MDGs under two categories (Distinguished Women Researchers and Distinguished Young Women Researchers).

The South African Women in Science Awards for postgraduate fellowships and scholarships are however open to all categories and acknowledges the field of Indigenous Knowledge Systems as a knowledge system on its own merit. The 2015 Women in Science Awards will be presented on 13 August 2015, as part of the Department's celebration of National Women's Month.

### Contact Address

Research Office (African Indigenous Knowledge Systems Portfolio)  
University of KwaZulu-Natal (Westville Campus, Library)  
Private Bag X 54001, Durban 3630, SOUTH AFRICA  
Tel: +27(0) -31-260-7237/8588/1794  
Fax: +27(0) -31-260-8925  
[chinsamym@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:chinsamym@ukzn.ac.za) or [kaya@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:kaya@ukzn.ac.za)

### Physical Address

DST-NRF Centre in Indigenous Knowledge Systems  
B-Block Library, Level 1  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Westville Campus  
University Road  
Westville  
Durban 3630