

## NEWS RELEASE

### SOUTH AFRICAN WINNERS OF THE JAPAN-AFRICA SCIENCE COMPETITION ANNOUNCED

---

The winners of the South African leg of the Japan-Africa essay and speech competition have been announced.

Zia Maharaj (13 years) of Beaulieu College in Gauteng is the winner in the junior secondary school category and Maphoto Jerida (15 years) of Khaiso High in Seshego, Limpopo wins the senior secondary school category. Jasmeer Ramlal (26 years) of the University of Pretoria is the winner in the university category.

The three runners up are Ravishni Mahadeo (13 years) of Fields College in North West, Alexandra McIlraith (15 years) of Roedean School in Gauteng and Marika Wojcik (24 years) of the University of Pretoria.

The theme of the competition was 'Making science and technology a foundation for partnership between Africa and Japan' and learners from grade 8 to 12 and undergraduate and postgraduate students could enter.

Initiated by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) in partnership with its office at the South African Embassy in Japan and Canon Inc, the competition was open to learners and tertiary students from Japan, South Africa and Zambia.

The three winners will represent South Africa in Japan on 21 July for the final round where they have to present a 15-minute speech based on their essays. They are currently receiving speech training in Pretoria to prepare them for the final round.

Science and Technology Director-General Dr Phil Mjwara says the competition is part of government's international collaboration mandate.

"The objectives were to inspire a new generation of African and Japanese students to contribute to promoting partnerships between Africa and Japan for mutual benefit. It also aimed to encourage more students to pursue studies and careers in science and technology related fields. The response and quality of the entries clearly indicate that we are on track," says Mjwara.

Maharaj's essay spoke about mutual cooperation in the creation of a knowledge economy for South Africa, Maphoto wrote about making science and technology a foundation for partnership between Africa and Japan while Ramlal wrote about bringing light to Africa through the partnership between Japan and South Africa to develop solar energy technology.

Beverley Damonse, Executive Director of the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SASTA), an agency of DST, says the winners will be worthy ambassadors for South Africa.

“Their dedication should inspire a new generation of African and Japanese students to contribute to promoting partnerships between Africa and Japan for mutual benefit.”

The three overall winners will address a news conference in South Africa on Monday, 24 July 2006.

(Ends)

---

Issued by: Ben Rootman  
Junxion Communications  
Tel: +27 12 342 0456  
Cell: +27 82 551 4853

For: Ina Roos  
SASTA  
Tel: +27 12 392 9317  
Cell: +27 82 824 3864

Date: 5 July 2006

---