

Launch of the National Science Week (NSW), Mokopane Education Centre, Limpopo

5 May 2005.

The 2005 National Science Week (NSW) was today launched by the Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Mosibudi Mangena, at the Mokopane Education Centre in Limpopo, under the theme “Tomorrow’s Science and Technology is in our youth’s hands”.

The NSW is an annual week-long event aimed at highlighting the important role that science plays in everyday life and encouraging more youth to participate in science, mathematics, engineering and technology related studies and careers.

Reinforcing the focus on youth in 2005, Minister Mangena in his opening address emphasised that increasing “knowledge and understanding of science and technological change strengthens confidence and self-reliance among our young people”.

The launch of the theme “tomorrow’s science and technology is in our youth’s hands” also marks the beginning of the NSW five-year plan, which emphasises South Africa’s indigenous knowledge by showcasing provinces in terms of unique geographic and knowledge advantages.

Progress in one such area of advantage is evidenced by the ongoing collaboration between the CSIR and traditional healers in the development of a novel, natural method for repelling mosquitoes, including malaria-carrying species. In Africa, where malaria is deemed one of the continents most life-threatening diseases, such developments serve as excellent examples of how science is relevant to solving socially important problems faced by millions of people as part of their everyday lives.

Further evidence of the unique scientific and geographic strengths of the country is captured in South Africa’s bid to host the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) – a global project which would enable the investigation of the formation of stars and galaxies in the very early universe.

This year the NSW will be from 7 until 14 May 2005 and offers exciting opportunities for participation by all learners, students, teachers, academics, parents and the public at large. To ensure that more people have access, the 2005 NSW will see events taking place in all nine provinces where multiple edutainment activities have been planned, including: learner outreach programmes, science competitions, public talks, fun runs, careers exhibitions, seminars, learner and teacher workshops, as well as science shows.

With over forty sites throughout the country offering NSW activities this year “all South African’s are urged to find a way to participate ... and are encouraged to make NSW a practical reality for yourselves and for the young people of our country,” said Minister Mosibudi Mangena.

For more information on NSW events and activities, contact the South African Agency for Science and Technology (SAASTA) on (012) 392 9300 or the website (<http://www.saasta.ac.za>).

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