



SAASTA
South African Agency for Science
and Technology Advancement

PO Box 1758
Pretoria 0001
South Africa
Tel: (012) 392 9300
Fax: (012) 320 7803
Int. Code: +27 12
info@saasta.ac.za

www.saasta.ac.za

Media Release

21 March 2021

For immediate release:

NRF- SAASTA celebrates World Poetry Day publishing of a collection of poems by young scientists

The South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA), in celebration of World Poetry Day and honouring South Africa's Human Rights Day on 21 March 2021, has published a collection of poems written by young scientists from South African research institutions. The collection of poems highlights the value of poetry in connecting people and ideas, and, thereby, creating a way for people engage with science.

Through poetry, young South African scientists are finding innovative and creative ways to express themselves and share the importance of their work in solving some of the challenges we face as society. "We can address issues we face in life through poetry. Word play can evoke more emotion in people and get them more involved and willing to address problems," says Pamela Akuku, one of the poets contributing to the collection. Poetry can also help us connect with people we might not normally engage with. Julia Davies, another contributing author, says, "It is essential to find creative ways to share important information so that it is meaningful and memorable to people who might not typically read or engage with science."

World Poetry Day celebrates poetry as a form cultural and linguistic expression and identity, and its role as a catalyst for dialogue and peace. Communicating science and engaging society in research is essential in South Africa's democracy. Scientists need to find meaningful ways to connect with people and involve society in science. Although science and poetry are very different disciplines, both aim to make sense of the world in different ways and, together, they can create impactful messages and connect science and society. "Our hope is that by bringing science and poetry together, we will stimulate conversations that bring life, emotion and colour to our scientific understanding of the world around us", says Michael Ellis, the science communication manager at SAASTA.

The collection of 17 poems were entries to various rounds of SAASTA's Young Science Communicator's competition. The competition aims to encourage young scientists under the age of 35 to communicate their science and research in creative ways, awarding various modes of the

communication in the competition. “The Young Science Communicators competition is one of various programmes run by SAASTA’s Science Communication Division that aims to encourage young scientists to explore their creativity in communicating science and develop science communication skills,” says Michael Ellis.

The poetry can be viewed online at: <http://www.saasta.ac.za/young-science-communicators-competition/celebrating-poetry-in-science-communication/>. To request a printed copy of the booklet or for any further information about the competition, please contact Joanne Riley, Science Editor at SAASTA, at joanne@saasta.ac.za.



Ends

Issued by:

Mr Zamuxolo Matiwana

Media Coordinator at SAASTA

Email: zamuxolo@saasta.ac.za

Telephone number: 012 392 9319

For interviews contact

Mr **Michael Ellis**

Manager: Science Communication

Mobile: +27 72 287 7496

Email: michael.ellis@saasta.ac.za

About the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA)

SAASTA is a business unit of the National Research Foundation (NRF) with the mandate to advance public awareness, appreciation and engagement of science, engineering and technology in South Africa.

SAASTA's contribution to the NRF's vision is to grow the pool of quality learners today who will become the scientists and innovators of tomorrow.

It aims to be the leading science advancement agency in the country by promoting and communicating the value and impact of science, technology and innovation in a dynamic knowledge economy. It also intends to contribute significantly towards building a science, engineering and technology (SET) human resource base. For more information on the operations and programs within the NRF please visit www.saasta.ac.za

About the National Research Foundation (NRF):

The National Research Foundation (NRF) was established on 1 April 1999 as an independent statutory body in accordance with the National Research Foundation Act. The NRF is a key public entity responsible for supporting the development of human resources for research and innovation in all fields of science and technology.

The organisation is one of the major players in educating and training a new generation of scientists able to deal with South African and African needs. The organisation encourages public awareness and appreciation of science, engineering and technology, and facilitates dialogue between science and society. Its vision is to contribute to a prosperous South Africa based on a knowledge economy. For more information on the operations and programs within the NRF please visit www.nrf.ac.za