



**SAASTA**

South African Agency for Science  
and Technology Advancement

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## **Media Release**

**23 September 2019**

**For immediate release:**

### **SAASTA to celebrate excellence in science**

The 55<sup>th</sup> National Science Olympiad awards ceremony will take place on Thursday, 26 September 2019 at the CSIR International Convention Centre, Pretoria in Gauteng.

The awards ceremony will honour South Africa's top young science learners in various categories such as Winners for Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Top Learners from Previously Disadvantaged schools. This year the National Olympiad is celebrating a ten-year relationship with Harmony Gold Mine Company Limited and the National Research Foundation's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our ten-year partnership with Harmony Gold Mining Company Limited enables SAASTA to empower young learners across the country.

The main aim of the competition is to identify talent, to encourage excellence in science education and to stimulate interest in the sciences. It seeks to inspire young people to consider careers in science and technology.

The awards ceremony is a special day for the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA) and the learners across the country. It is a day where SAASTA celebrates excellence amongst young people and future scientists.

The National Science Olympiad is one of the flagship projects of the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement. Since 2005, the 55-year-old project has offered learners in grades 10 to 12 an exciting opportunity to compete in science with fellow learners from Southern African Development Community (SADC) country such as Zimbabwe.

Learners from all nine provinces and one SADC country participated, including learners from Harmony Gold Mining areas in Gauteng, North West and Free State provinces. The Olympiad contributes toward excellence in science and has great potential to improve participation levels of previously excluded groups and make science and maths an attractive career choice for learners.

The annual competition comprises an examination, and top learners and schools stand a chance to win exciting prizes. The Olympiad comprises two streams: Physical Science (Physics and Chemistry) and Life Science. Learners can choose to write either the Physical Science or the Life Science papers.

Top schools in AstroQuiz and National Schools Debates will also be honoured on the day. Top schools from all the nine provinces will be competing for top prizes on the 24 of September and the winners will be announced during the awards ceremony.

AstroQuiz is a competition aimed at grade 7 learners based on themes around astronomy. The competition aims to improve teaching and learning of basic astronomy in primary schools. The main objectives include contributing to the improvement of awareness, interest, understanding and insight into basic astronomy and to build appreciation of and pride in South Africa's history of astronomical activity and achievements, and current projects.

The SAASTA National Schools Debates Competition provides learners with an opportunity to develop their research, critical thinking, and information literacy skills, as well as their ability to work as a team to present logical arguments.

Amongst the objectives of the competition is to build science communication ambassadors out of learners through researching and debating of high-level scientific topics. The competition, established in 2008 in three provinces, has since expanded to include all nine provinces.

**Ends**

Date: Thursday, 26 September 2019

Time: 18:00 for 18:30

Venue: International Convention Centre, Meiring Naude Road, Brummeria, Pretoria

Dress: Traditional / Semi-Formal / Formal

RSVP: No later than Wednesday 25 September 2019 (16:00) – email

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**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 programmes within the NRF please visit [www.saasta.ac.za](http://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](http://www.nrf.ac.za)

## **ABOUT HARMONY GOLD MINE COMPANY LIMITED:**

Harmony, a gold mining and exploration company, conducts its activities in South Africa, one of the world's best-known gold mining regions, and in Papua New Guinea, one of the world's premier new gold-copper regions. With 68 years of experience, Harmony is South Africa's second largest gold producer. Headquartered in Randfontein, South Africa, Harmony is listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange and on the New York Stock Exchange. In South Africa, our nine underground operations are located within the world-renowned Witwatersrand Basin – one in the Klerksdorp goldfield, two in the West Rand and six in the Free State, in the southern portion of the Basin.

In addition, Harmony has an open-pit mine on the Kraaipan Greenstone Belt as well as several surface treatment operations. In Papua New Guinea, Hidden Valley is an open-pit gold and silver mine. Our significant gold-copper portfolio includes a 50% stake in the Wafi-Golpu project in the Morobe Province, through a 50:50 joint venture with Newcrest Mining Limited (Newcrest). [www.harmony.co.za](http://www.harmony.co.za)