



African Union



NEPAD Planning and
Coordinating Agency (NPCA)

NEPAD AGENCY/SOUTHERN AFRICA NETWORK FOR BIOSCIENCES (SANBio) REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON ACTIVATION OF IKS REGIONAL NETWORKS

Welcoming Speech by Prof. Luke Mumba, Regional Coordinator for NEPAD Agency Mission in
Southern Africa. Thursday, 20 May 2010

Venue: IKS Centre, North-West University (Mafikeng Campus), South Africa

- The Rector, University of North West, Prof. Dan Kgwadi,
- SANBio IKS Node Coordinator, Prof. Hassan Kaya
- SANBio IKS Node Coordinator. Prof. Simeon Materechera
- Workshop participants, Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, I would like to congratulate the IKS Centre of Excellence at the North-West University for having won the hosting of the IKS Node for the region. This was based on the track record the North-West University has demonstrated in coordinating IKS activities in the region. I hope the IKS Node, the hosting University in particular, in cooperation with the other regional partner institutions will continue with the excellent work of building IKS capacity for biosciences in Southern Africa. The overall objectives of the Regional IKS Node are:

- To promote IKS in the biosciences within the SANBio regional initiative through capacity building and networking and
- To unlock the full potential of IKS in biosciences for sustainable development in the region.

IKS is increasingly recognized as a crucial tool for sustainable development and community livelihoods in the region and the continent. IK gives developmental efforts sustainability because it is knowledge which is community-based, affordable and hence accessible to the majority of our people. The holistic nature of IKS and its interface with the other flagship focus research areas of SANBio were recognized as important strategies for tackling the challenges of development in Southern Africa. It is for this reason that IKS is a priority thematic area for the AU and the NPCA. For example, the role of IKS in health, agriculture, adaption and mitigation to climate change, environmental management in general cannot be underestimated. Actually the

Traditional Sector, if I may call it that way is “The Elephant in the room”, meaning that the sector is very important and is growing rapidly. IKS is a big contributor to Africa’s wealth and cannot be ignored in any development process. To this end, SANBio has mobilized seed funds to promote IKS activities at regional level. These activities are to be coordinated through the IKS Node here at NWU.

In 2007 SANBio commissioned UNW to conduct a study on indigenous legumes and vegetables in the region. Five countries in the region (Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa and Zambia) participated in the study and two wonderful publications were produced, as reference materials. We would like to see a follow up on this study- for example, promotional activities in cultivation, consumption and use of indigenous vegetables and legumes as a strategy for food security in the region. For the period 2009-2011 SANBio through support from the Governments of South Africa and Finland is funding the IKS Node to the tune of R1.7 million for the following activities:

- Activation of Pilot IKS Centres in the region
- Audits of Projects and Regional Capacity Building in IKS
- Awareness Campaigns and Communication
- Research, Development and Innovation in IKS
- Capacity Building: Short courses and Long term training:
 - Indigenous capacity for STI is a prerequisite for development. We therefore need to integrate IKS in our education systems in the region.
- Project Facilitation and Coordination

In order to effectively implement these activities in the region, the various IKS networks and capacity building initiatives which exist in the region at individual, institutional and national levels need to be coordinated to share experiences and scarce resources through training, networking and partnerships. The purpose of this workshop is to activate these networks and chart the way forward. Among the most important organizational aspects of building effective and accountable networks and partnerships is to establish consortium-based Memorandum of Understanding with partners. The MOU, among other aspects, will stipulate the sharing/distribution of responsibilities and resources.

I wish you all fruitful deliberations during the 2 days of the workshop. As NEPAD Agency we look forward to concrete outputs from this project (i.e., people, publications, patents and products).

“My interest is in the future, because I will spend the rest of my life there”

Thank you.