

Joint media statement
29 July 2014

SA and Japan celebrate 10 years of successful cooperation in science and technology

This year South Africa and Japan are celebrating 10 years of successful science and technology cooperation. The decade-long relationship has seen over R85 million invested in about 50 joint research and development projects in the areas of life sciences, climate change, astronomy and space science, and human capital development, among others.

The two countries have enjoyed cordial relations since signing a bilateral science and technology cooperation agreement in 2003.

Speaking at a ceremony in Pretoria to celebrate this milestone, the Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, Zanele kaMagwaza-Msibi, said: "South Africa and Japan have made significant strides in intensifying support for basic fundamental and applied research, development and innovation over the past decade."

The Deputy Minister expressed her gratitude to all the researchers and officials who had served their countries and the partnership with pride.

The National Research Foundation is the agency responsible for promoting this collaboration on behalf of South Africa's Department of Science and Technology (DST), while the Japan Science and Technology Agency and the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science manage the partnership on behalf of Japan.

Among the highlights of this partnership is the DST-Hitachi Scholarship Programme, which has benefited more than 10 South African engineers since 2009. The engineers spend three months at a time visiting Hitachi (the Japanese multinational corporation specialising in high-technology equipment including power) learning gas and steam-turbine engineering.

Last year, Tshwane University of Technology and Nagaoka University of Technology signed a memorandum of understanding promoting student exchanges to contribute to the development of higher education and research in South Africa. It is expected that research collaboration will be enhanced through such cooperation.

"It is our wish that the momentum, energy and drive of these researchers and the responsibilities borne by the officials be a motivation for enthusiastic and continued advancement of our partnership and good working relationship with your office and in Japan," said the Deputy Minister to the Ambassador of Japan, Yutaka Yoshizawa.

The Ambassador Yoshizawa welcomed the guests to the celebration event and expressed his gratitude for the successful bilateral cooperation in science and technology between the two countries.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency has been in close cooperation with many researchers and stakeholders to implement science and technology-related projects under the Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development.

"Given the high-level activities in the science and technology field in both countries, there will be a number of areas for further cooperation between the two countries," said Ambassador Yoshizawa, expressing his wish that the cooperation between South Africa and Japan would grow from strength to strength.

Issued by the Department of Science and Technology

For more information contact Veronica Mohapelo at 082 882 3818 or Veronica.Mohapelo@dst.gov.za.