

6 March 2015

### **Maritime sector skills development workshop at NMMU**

Skills development in the maritime sector, to support growth in South Africa's "blue economy", will be the focus when the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) convenes a panel of experts to advise it on education, skills development, research and innovation in these fields at a workshop on Friday, 6 March 2015 at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

The South African Government has identified the development of the ocean economy as a key priority for South Africa's economic growth and job creation. The Operation Phakisa Oceans Economy Labs last year developed detailed plans and targets in the focus areas of marine transport and manufacturing, offshore oil and gas exploration, aquaculture, and ocean governance and marine protection services.

Development of the skills required to implement these plans is key to the success of realising the potential of the oceans economy. South Africa is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest maritime trading nation in the world, and is bordered to the east, west and south by some 3 000km of coastline, but is mostly a recipient rather than a participant in the global maritime economy.

South Africa has not fully realised the economic potential of the oceans in terms of transport, manufacturing (eg ship building and repairs), tourism, fishing, aquaculture, energy generation, oil and gas exploration, amongst others.

In 2010, the "ocean economy" contributed approximately R54-billion to South Africa's GDP and accounted for approximately 316 000 jobs. A study by the Department of Environmental Affairs estimated that – if this potential is "unlocked" – the ocean economy could contribute R177-billion to GDP and create up to a million jobs by 2033. Therefore the purpose of Operation Phakisa in terms of the Ocean Economy is to develop detailed plans to unlock this potential.

The workshop will bring together representatives from universities, universities of technology, and technical vocational education and training institutions (TVET colleges) that have an interest in maritime and marine sciences education, training and research. It will also bring together the role-players in Government departments that play a pivotal role in implementing the plans developed in Operation Phakisa.

They will discuss the report and recommendations of the Maritime Sector Skills Technical Task Team (MSSTTT) convened by the Human Resource Development Council of South Africa (HRDCSA) and assist the DHET in developing an inclusive and realistic work programme. The report identifies the critical skills shortages, the current state of marine and maritime education and training, and the supply- and demand-side impediments to developing the skills needed to grow the maritime economy.

These initiatives will be aligned to the skills planning initiatives that take place through Operation Phakisa.

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