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Addressing Mozambique's research needs

2 July 2014 – Maputo: In an interview, Mozambique's Minister of Education, Augusto Jone Luís, says he firmly believes that his country needs better higher education to address its development needs. He also plans to build research capacity in order to address not only traditional areas, such as health, agriculture and the environment, but also emerging needs, such as those required for better exploitation of Mozambique's vast oil, gas and minerals resources.

See interview: www.scidev.net/global/education/feature/mozambique-education-minister-phds.html

SARIMA conference & Horizon 2020 workshop

6-10 July 2014 – Gaborone: For the first time since its establishment in 2002, the Southern African Research and Innovation Management Association (SARIMA) held its annual conference outside South Africa. For the 2nd year, the SARIMA conference included a comprehensive workshop on Horizon 2020.

For details: www.sarimaconference.co.za/index.php/presentations-2014

European Research Council announces €1.7 billion for next calls for proposals

22 July 2014 – Brussels: The European Research Council (ERC), part of the EU's Horizon 2020 programme, published its 2015 work programme which provides details of the next calls for proposals. These calls are expected to enable funding of over one thousand research grants with a total budget of €1.665 billion. Applicants from all over the world, including Africa, are encouraged to apply, bearing in mind that these grants imply that a majority of the research activities must be conducted in Europe, ie "the host institution must be established in an EU Member State or Associated Country. In certain conditions team members may be based outside of the EU or an Associated Country."

See full details of conditions and procedures provided in the ERC Work Programme 2015:
http://erc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/file/ERC_Work_Programme_2015.pdf

"Africa needs Science not aid"

31 July 2014 – New York: on the occasion of the US-Africa summit on 4-6 August in Washington, two experts on education in Africa published an article on how the US could foster African development. They claim that the most effective way would be to support education, in particular science and technology, through exchange and cooperation and to allocate resources to this. Funds, they say, are already available from a number of development aid programmes that would need to be redirected from supporting donor-initiated projects to improving African research capacities and funding joint research activities that will enable African researchers to "take ownership of solving their own problems."

Full article: www.nytimes.com/2014/08/01/opinion/africa-needs-science-not-aid.html

New EU support programme for Africa includes research and innovation

6 August 2014 – Brussels: The first phase of the Pan-African programme, which foresees €415 million over the period 2014-2017, will support a wide range of activities including a new phase of the African Union Research Grants (AURG). The AURG programme is intended to foster collaborative research within Africa and with Europe, continue to build the AU's capacity to manage the funding of international research and to provide the seed funding for a scaled-up, continent-wide research programme for and by Africa, with additional funding from other partners and from Africa. The Pan-African programme comes in addition to the budgetary support provided by the EU to a large number of African countries.

See: www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/c_2014_5375_1_annex_en_v1_p1_771842.pdf

South Africa to join CERN's European particle collider computer network

In December 2014, South Africa is expected to join the Worldwide LHC Computing Grid (WLCG) that includes almost 160 sites in 35 countries and whose function is to process and store the colossal amounts of data produced by the Large Hadron Collider (LHC), one of the instruments at CERN. This is the most recent development in a 25-year collaboration and, although South Africa is not a member of CERN, this could be on the horizon.

See: www.engineeringnews.co.za/page/science-technology

Showcasing EU-funded research on Ebola and other epidemics

ANTIGONE – ANTicipating the Global Onset of Novel Epidemics.

Aim: to identify the key factors that render zoonotic pathogens prone to cross the species barrier and gain efficient transmissibility among humans, using a two-pronged approach: to improve understanding of how zoonotic pathogens can gain pandemic potential by studying selected viruses and bacteria, including **Ebola**, and examine infectivity, pathogenicity, and transmissibility of zoonotic pathogens and determine general criteria to assess the risk of these pathogens to gain human pandemic potential. Ultimately the project is intended to improve the ability to model and predict potential human pandemics of zoonotic origin and to develop effective and timely preventive measures.

The project runs from November 2011 to October 2016, with an EU contribution of €12 million, and is led by Erasmus University Medical Centre of Rotterdam (NL) with 13 other European partners. [project web site: <http://antigonefp7.eu>]

VIRAL HOST FACTORS – Identification of Host Determinants for Virus Entry

Aim: to identify and characterise host factors that play a role in Filovirus infection and to gain insights in the entry, tropism and the fusion process of **Ebola virus** and to develop refinements in screening. Ultimately the project will generate an overview of host factors used by a large range of viruses.

The project is being carried out by the Dutch Cancer Institute with an FP7 ERC grant of €1.5 million, running from January 2013 to December 2017. [http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/105593_en.html]

Upcoming events:

- 16-18 September – Cape Town: **South African Innovation Summit** (www.innovationsummit.co.za)
- 17 September 2014 – Pretoria: **ERAfrica conference**.
- 7 October – Addis Ababa – Meeting of **EU-Africa expert working group** on food security research
- 14-17 October – Rabat, Morocco: 2nd Ministerial Meeting on STI organised by the African Development Bank and the Government of Finland. (www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/article/rabat-to-host-2nd-ministerial-forum-on-science-technology-and-innovation-in-africa-13358)
- 16-17 October (NEW DATES - TBC) – Luanda, Angola: **Horizon 2020 information workshop**
- 29 October 2014 – Brussels: "**e-Infrastructures for Africa: Gateways to the Future**" conference organised by EU projects **eI4Africa & iMentors** (<http://ei4africa.eu/events/ei4africa-imentors-conference/>)
- 11-12 November – Lusaka, Zambia: **UbuntuNet-Connect 2014** (www.ubuntunet.net/uc2014_cfp)
- 24-25 November – Entebbe, Uganda: **First CAAST-Net Plus Stakeholder Forum** (www.caast-net-plus.org/object/event/951)
- 1-3 December – Cape Town: **Launch of EDCTP2** (www.edctp.org)
- 3-6 December – Addis Ababa: 1st IGAD International Scientific Conference on Health (<http://igad.int>)

Website of EU Delegation to the African Union (AU): http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/african_union

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