



**ADDRESS BY THE MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE
AND INNOVATION, DR BLADE NZIMANDE ON THE OCCASION OF
THE CSIR TECHNOLOGY COMMERCIALISATION ENTERPRISE
LAUNCH HELD AT THE INANDA GOLD CLUB - SANDTON**

Wednesday, 25 October 2023

Programme Director; Ms Sokhu Sibiya

Acting Director-General at the Department of Science and Innovation, Dr
Muofhe;

Chairperson of the CSIR Board, Mr Vuyani Jarana;

Members of the CSIR Board present;

CSIR CEO, Dr Thulani Dlamini;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Distinguished guests from government, business, academia, industry,
science councils and universities;

The CSIR leadership;

Distinguished guests;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen

A very good morning to all of you.

Introduction

It is an honour to address you today at the launch of the CSIR's technology commercialisation enterprise.

I believe that this launch does not only presents an opportunity to see the technologies the CSIR has prepared for commercialisation, but also serves as an opportunity to engage in dialogues to see the road we traversed as a country in science, engineering and innovation as well as the commercialisation of our technologies, and our plans going forward.

I must say I am truly excited about what we are doing today. I had indeed raised with you that two things the CSIR, and perhaps our other entities is, firstly, how do we ensure that our research products translated into IP are safe in the hands of the state. Partnership with private sector yes, but also recoup some of our own products e.g. Insulin and a professor at the University of Toronto who was paid an equivalent of 2 US dollars in 1928, and how much money has been made out of this, and what benefit is University of Toronto making?

Secondly, I was concerned about possible leakage of research products from the CSIR with no effective mechanisms that these CSIR products are accredited and owned appropriately. For me today's launch is truly a real and significant milestone on our STI journey. It is an important aspect in taking forward the implementation of our Decadal Plan! It is also a key

platform in building the public/private partnership that is so central in driving our STI agenda!

I must indicate that technology commercialisation can contribute to economic transformation through the introduction of diverse new products and services in the market.

This can ultimately result in the creation of new products, as well as the establishment of new businesses and industries which can serve as a base for a full-scale localisation and industrialisation.

Having said that, I am also pleased with the diversity of stakeholders attending this launch today and the prospect of deepening formal collaborations.

DSI and CSIR mandates

Ladies and gentlemen

For us to fully comprehend the purpose of our event today, it is important that we remind ourselves of the mandate of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), which celebrates its 78 years of research, development and innovation in South Africa.

The CSIR is one of the agency of the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI).

It is a leading scientific and technology research organisation that research, develops, localises and diffuses technologies to accelerate socioeconomic prosperity in South Africa. The organisation's work contributes to industrial development and supports a capable state.

The organisation plays a key role in supporting public and private sectors through directed research that is aligned with the country's priorities, the organisation's mandate and its science, engineering and technology competences.

On the other hand, our Department of Science and Innovation has an important role to play in creating an environment that enables society to thrive through the science, technology and innovation (STI).

To us STI's are primary drivers of economic growth, job creation and social-economic reform in South Africa. In fact, the National Development Plan, which is South Africa's detailed blueprint on how South Africa can eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by the year 2030, places STI at the centre of its development agenda.

STI is seen as a key enabler of the needed economic transformation, especially in light of the emerging modern technologies, in which technologies and trends such as the Internet of Things (IoT), robotics, virtual reality and artificial intelligence (AI) are changing the way we live and work.

This is a model is also used by the Chinese as a means of production in supporting the development of major economic sectors of the economy using STI.

The role of the DSI is clearly articulated in our 2019 White Paper on STI which sets the long-term policy direction of our government to ensure a growing role for STI in a more prosperous and inclusive society.

Our White Paper seeks to take advantage of the opportunities brought about by global megatrends such as the fourth industrial revolution and additive manufacturing, among others.

It seeks to take advantage of emerging trends in technology innovation, expand on what has been working, and propose new approaches for what is not working. These will include strengthening and transforming institutions, increasing research funding and expanding human capabilities.

Our White Paper will be implemented through our Decadal Plan.

Our Decadal Plan builds on the existing foundations of the National System of Innovation (NSI) and pivots the system to address societal challenges and contribute towards accelerated knowledge, digital and innovation-driven inclusive sustainable socio-economic development.

This Plan emphasises four societal grand challenges:

- Climate change,
- Future-proofing education and skills;
- Re-industrialising the modern economy;
- The future of society and two STI priorities (health innovation and energy innovation).

To illustrate an example of one area that is a focus of our Decadal Plan, as a Department, we are highly involved in the area of Health Innovation, particularly in three critical areas of Medical Device and Diagnostic Innovation, Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API) Technology Innovation and Supporting health needs through vaccine research, development and manufacturing strategy.

As you know, South Africa faces massive economic and social reproduction challenges, which manifest in the persistent high levels of unemployment, poverty and inequality that imposes debilitating effects on the poor and working class.

Government sees the role of STI as critical in the fight against economic and social inequality, and the quest for a more inclusive, equal and socially-just society.

As a result, we have developed the DSI's Innovation Strategy in support of our country's Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP).

The strategy repositions our Department to promote new knowledge production and innovation directly supportive of the strategic aims of the ERRP.

Technology Acquisition and Deployment Fund

Ladies and gentlemen

As a Department of Science and Innovation, we are intentional in procuring locally developed technologies and in piloting new models for creating employment through innovation as demonstrated through the establishment of the Technology Acquisition and Deployment Fund (TADF).

The TADF is an instrument to drive innovation in the public sector and support locally developed technologies for deployment in government departments and communities.

During its pilot phase, the instrument has facilitated the deployment of four locally developed technology solutions to support municipalities, communities and other government departments as users and supported the creation of employment opportunities.

The TADF de-risks the procurement of locally developed technologies and facilitates market-entry of locally developed technology products.

To date, more than 89 locally developed technologies have been assessed, with a few promising technologies selected for acquisition and deployment in schools, waste management and pollution management, as well as to fight crime in society.

As a Department, we prioritise initiatives for inclusive development and intellectual property exploitation in ICT, renewable energy and the circular economy. We are pursuing the commercialisation of grassroots innovation and access to publicly available intellectual property to support entrepreneurs.

This is the reason why partnerships between government and the private sector should invariably create opportunities to provide scientific and technical support to enhance service delivery, create new industries, resuscitate declining ones and share complementary technologies.

To foster this partnership, as a department, we upscaled the implementation of the Innovation Fund, an investment to support the early development and expansion stages of technology-based South African firms.

We are envisaging to target a cumulative 100 innovative SMMEs for the current 2023/24 financial year.

We are implementing six sector innovation funds (SIFs) to support the development of human capacity and skills as well as knowledge and innovation outputs for socio-economic development.

I must say that today, the CSIR will be joining the likes of the Technology Innovation Agency, in ensuring that it commercialises technologies that are funded through its R&D processes.

Role of the CSIR

The CSIR is one of our important entities to help us to implement the Decadal Plan and the ERRP.

The launch of the technology commercialisation platform today is one of our important initiatives which demonstrates that socio-economic development also remains at the heart of our technological advancements.

This is why the CSIR's strategy, which is in its fifth year of implementation, and the launch of the CSIR's technology commercialisation enterprise, are so key and relevant to both the public and private sectors.

There is no industrial development without innovation. Science and technology must therefore ensure that the established parts of our economy continue to innovate in an increasingly competitive world so that we can derive the greatest benefits from our geographic advantages and resources.

Therefore, improved support for innovation is fundamental to sustainable economic growth, employment creation, improved service delivery and social development.

Conclusion

As I conclude, let me indicate that our Department of Science and Innovation has invested in various initiatives and programmes to promote and support the development and growth of industry in a variety of sectors. Some of these will be showcased today.

I should say that I am more than confident that the CSIR's strategy and the launch of the technology commercialisation enterprise will propel the organisation to greater heights while it continues to improve the quality of life for South Africans.

Lastly, I wish you a productive day, especially representing the private sector and those seeking to invest in new technologies. Keep your eyes and ears open for mutually beneficial collaboration opportunities with the CSIR.

I Thank you all.