

MEDIA STATEMENT - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

29 April 2015

Title: CAPRISA named DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in HIV Prevention

Minister of Science and Technology, Naledi Pandor, has declared the Centre for the AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa (CAPRISA), a DST-NRF Centre of Excellence (CoE). As a CoE it will undertake world-class innovative research to develop solutions to slow the spread of HIV in South Africa. The astounding announcement was made at the CAPRISA Scientific Advisory Board meeting on 14th April 2015, held at Fairmont Zimbali in Durban.

In making the award, Minister Pandor congratulated Professor Salim Abdool-Karim who will head up and provide leadership to the Centre of Excellence. "We're very excited that such a centre of excellence is being established for the first time in South Africa," she added.

It is very fitting that the first DST-NRF Centre of Excellence awarded to the University of KwaZulu-Natal should be awarded in the area of biomedical sciences. This is an area where the university has grown its investment over the last decade and has attracted significant external support, particularly in the area of HIV-AIDS research.

Dr Albert van Jaarsveld, the Vice-Chancellor and Principal of UKZN said, "We are immensely proud of the reputation that CAPRISA has developed in a very short time and this recognition at a national level could not have come at a better time. My personal congratulations to the entire CAPRISA team for their immense efforts to date."

Following a rigorous international review, this 5 year award estimated at about R50 million, is being made to CAPRISA and the University of KwaZulu-Natal. The monies will be utilised for training and research.

The Centre of Excellence will be collaborating with researchers at the Universities of KwaZulu-Natal, Cape Town, Western-Cape and the National Institute for Communicable Diseases. In addition, there are collaborations involving several international institutions including Columbia and Harvard Universities.

A key component of the CoE is the training of medical students, post-graduates and young scientists in a range of disciplines, including laboratory, clinical and public health research.

The main goal of the NRF-DST CoE in HIV Prevention is to undertake research aimed at understanding and ameliorating the high risk of HIV in women, especially young women, in South Africa".

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Notes to Editors:

For more information on UKZN, please visit www.ukzn.ac.za and www.caprisa.org; or to arrange any media interviews, please contact Indu Moodley, Media Liaison Office on 031 260 7213/0835559508 or at moodleyi@ukzn.ac.za