Macintosh HD:Users:smchiza:Desktop:Sandiso 2012& 2013  Work:Letterhead:MRC letterhead indd.pdf

**DATE:**  10 September 2014

**MEDIA:** All

**RELEASE:** IMMEDIATE

**SAMRC announces funding commitment as a key partner in the Newton Fund UK/South Africa joint research programme**

The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) will be committing R60 million in funding for research in TB (R 30 million) and Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD’s) (R 30 million) over a period of three years. This will be matched by R100 000 million from the UK MRC and GSK. The two-pronged funding, which is a part of a broader collaboration for scientific research between the UK and South Africa, was announced at the launch of the Newton Fund in Cape Town South Africa today.

“The Newton Fund Provides a unique and timely opportunity for South African Scientists to partner with British Scientists to work together to solve current health problems that face South Africa”, said SAMRC President Prof. Glenda Gray. “The fund will not only be a great addition to already existing health research projects focusing on TB and NCD’s, but the development of more research projects which will ensure an increase in the development and nurturing of young South African scientists,” she says.

While the TB research will aim to halt the transmission of TB in low-resource settings, funding allocated to the study of non-communicable diseases will focus on diabetes, hypertension and cancer.

***Capacitating a new generation of scientists***

Emphasising the SAMRC’s commitment to the development of young scientists, Prof Gray mentions that the call for proposals for the SAMRC Research Capacity Building Fund (recently announced) which plans to provide R25 million to five previously disadvantaged Universities in South Africa, has already been disseminated and well received.

“Funds such as the Newton Fund and the SAMRC Research Capacity Building Fund not only advance science and research but also advance capacity in the form of young scientists. We are committed to training the next generation of scientists by producing 1 000 medical PhD graduates in the next 10 years, and transforming the cadre to reflect that of that of the country,” she says.

The SAMRC, which has in the past month sent out two exciting calls for proposals on research projects worth millions of rands, will lead the call for proposal on the UK/South Africa joint programme and implement the call on behalf of all partners namely; UK Medical Research Council and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK).

**Note to the editor:**

The Newton Fund is part of the UK’s official development assistance. Its aim is to develop science and innovation partnerships that promote the economic development and welfare of developing countries. The fund is £75 million each year from 2014 for 5 years.

The UK-SA Newton Fund will fund joint projects in the areas of research into TB and non-communicable diseases, human capital and infrastructure development, weather forecasting and big data, among other things.

Also announced as key partners in the UK/South Africa joint programme are the National Research Foundation (NRF), Square Kilometer Array (SKA) and the Economic and Social Development Council (ESDC).

For more information, visit the Newton Fund policy document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/newton-fund-building-science-and-innovation-capacity-in-developing-countries/newton-fund-building-science-and-innovation-capacity-in-developing-countries>

**Technical Facilitation:**

For more information on the SAMRC latest calls for proposals please follow:

<http://www.mrc.ac.za/Media/2014/24press2014.htm>

<http://www.mrc.ac.za/Media/2014/23press2014.htm>

**Media Facilitation:**

**Keletso Ratsela**

South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC)

Mobile: +27 82 804 8883

EMAIL: [keletso.ratsela@mrc.ac.za](mailto:keletso.ratsela@mrc.ac.za)

**ENDS.**