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Media Release

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For immediate release:

Top grade 12 science learners to jet off to London

The top National Science Olympiad performers in grade 12 will be jetting off to the United Kingdom on Tuesday 25 July to attend the London International Youth Science Forum (LIYSF).

Ambroise Muller, Jailing Yu and Anza Tshipetane will be attending the two-week residential LIYSF being held at Imperial College London.

These learners will be exposed to science lectures and demonstrations from leading scientists, and visits to industrial sites, research centres, scientific institutions and organisations, including world class laboratories and universities.

Speaking about the National Science Olympiad, 18-year-old learner, Tshipetane, said the exam was very challenging and required her to think critically. "The questions were broad and went beyond the confines of the syllabus," she added.

The 16-year-old learner, Muller, said the exam was challenging and required knowledge that is not required for final examinations. "However, a lot of the questions were based on the matric topic "genetics and genetic engineering", and we had fortunately finished that section of work the previous week in class. This helped me a lot to answer the questions in the Olympiad," he added.

Tshipetane is proud of herself and the hard work she put in order to be a top Girl Learner and top learner from previously disadvantaged schools. She comes from a humble background from Tshisahulu village in Limpopo and was raised by a single mother.

Tshipetane said she has been working towards this achievement and her zeal to achieve against all odds pushed her to use university materials to prepare for the exam. "With such a great deal of preparation, it is quite obvious that I was aiming for this, but still, I was really shocked when the results were announced," she said.

She is very excited and anxious to see what else the world of science has in store for her. She is looking forward to meeting other science "geeks" like her from around the world. She believes that this opportunity will inspire her.

“It is such a great honour to be selected to represent not only my school and community but my country as a whole on such a prestigious event,” she said.

Tshipetane is passionate about science and the opportunity will inspire her to explore the scientific world and broaden her scientific thinking. Next year she plans to study Medicine at the University of Cape Town.

Speaking about the trip to London, Muller said he was surprised and did not expect to travel to London. “This truly means a lot to me and I am truly grateful to SAASTA for granting me this fantastic and unique opportunity,” said Muller.

“I trust that this will be an extraordinary experience for me, attending world-class lectures, being able to walk through universities such as Cambridge and Oxford, visiting London... I am sure that the LIYSF will be very enriching,” he added.

LIYSF attracts more than 400 of the world’s leading young scientists aged between 17 and 21 years from more than 60 participating countries. There is an active social calendar with events designed to enable those from around the world to learn about different cultures.

The scope of LIYSF extends further than broadening scientific understanding to engaging students in learning about other cultures and helping them develop lasting, international friendships.

The National Science Olympiad is one of the flagship projects of the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement. Since 2005, the 53-year-old project has offered learners in grades 10 to 12 an exciting opportunity to compete in science with fellow learners from Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Namibia.

In 2017, about 37 000 learners from all nine provinces and three SADC countries participated, including learners from Harmony Gold Mining areas in Gauteng, North West and Free State provinces.

The main aim of the competition is to identify talent, to encourage excellence in science education and to stimulate interest in the sciences. It seeks to inspire young people to consider careers in science and technology.

Ends

Photo caption: Anza Tshipetane

Sidebar

Learners to attend the London International Youth Science Forum (LIYSF)

Name & Surname	Gender	School name	Province	Grade	%

Top Learner – Physical Science					
Jailiang Yu	Male	Crawford College Pretoria	Gauteng	12	80
Top Learner – Life Science					
Ambroise Muller	Male	Redhill School	Gauteng	12	67
Top Girl learner – Physical Science					
Anza Tshipetane	Female	Mbilwi Secondary	Limpopo	12	63

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About the South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement (SAASTA)

SAASTA is a business unit of the National Research Foundation (NRF) with the mandate to advance public awareness, appreciation and engagement of science, engineering and technology in South Africa.

SAASTA's contribution to the NRF's vision is to grow the pool of quality learners today who will become the scientists and innovators of tomorrow.

It aims to be the leading Science advancement agency in the country by promoting and communicating the value and impact of Science, Technology and Innovation in a dynamic knowledge economy. It also intends to contribute significantly towards building a Science, Engineering and Technology (SET) human resource base. For more information on the operations and programs within the NRF please visit www.saasta.ac.za

About the NRF: The National Research Foundation (NRF) was established on 1 April 1999 as an independent statutory body in accordance with the National Research Foundation Act. The NRF is a key public entity responsible for supporting the development of human resources for research and innovation in all fields of science and technology. The organisation is one of the major players in educating and training a new generation of scientists able to deal with South African and African needs. The organisation encourages public awareness and appreciation of science, engineering and technology, and facilitates dialogue between science and society. Its vision is to contribute to a prosperous South Africa based on a knowledge economy. For more information on the operations and programs within the NRF please visit www.nrf.ac.za