

## ICTechHub joins UNDP to improve public service delivery

Last month, more than 68 teams of young innovators registered to take part in a Virtual Hackathon aimed at improving public service delivery. The hackathon, a first of its kind locally, was initiated by the United Nations Development Fund (UNDP), in partnership with the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), ICTechHub, and Green Enterprise Solutions. The ICTechHub is housed at NUST and it is responsible for talent scouting, mentorship, sponsorship and product development in the ICT sector.

The ten-day event called on young innovators, tech-bodies, solution designers and service delivery experts to go head-to-head and compete in developing and presenting innovations and ideas that address challenges experienced by the government in service delivery.

"This our way of contributing to public service improvement through citizen-driven innovation. It allows the country to benefit from the creative energies of its young people," said Ms Josephina Muntuumo, a Computer Science Lecturer in the Faculty of Computing and Informatics (FCI).

The winning teams were all led by female innovators, a remarkable achievement in an industry that is male-dominated. The prizes were as follows:

**First Prize (US\$5 000)** Pro Food Challenge App

- a team that developed a multi-stakeholder e-commerce platform

**Second Prize (us\$3 000)** E-passport system - a team that showcased an e-Passport Service for the Ministry of Home Affairs

**Third Prize (US\$2 000)** Traffic Tickets system - a team that created a Traffic Ticket Management System for the Ministry of Safety and Security. The innovators expressed their gratitude to the organisers for acknowledging their hard work. Their solutions will be incubated at a local IT company to provide support to reach sustainable levels of implementation before handing them over to the custodian government offices.

"Through the hackathon, we showcased the talent amidst our young Namibians in improving and digitalising services.



**Celebrating Innovation: UN Resident representative Ms Alka Bhatia (second from left); Special Advisor to the Hon Prime Minister, Advocate Nangula Mbako (centre), pictured with members of the winning team behind the ProFood Challenge App.**

Providing such multi-stakeholder platforms between innovators, NGOs, government agencies and the private sector allows innovation to benefit all citizens," remarked Ms Marly Samuel, Tech Innovation Coordinator, ICTechHub.

Recently, the Office of the Prime Minister launched the Namibian Public Sector Innovation Policy, which is part of the government's mission to leverage ICT to solve socio-economic issues.

According to Prof Heike Winschiers-Theophilus, a researcher in the FCI, inclusive innovation has been identified as a critical catalyst in the development of Namibia.

"If harnessed and supported, it can create immense value. Innovation will be a key determiner of how we improve the way we deliver services to all our citizens wherever they may be," she said.

## From Typist to Council Member...Frans shares her two decade journey



Ms Juanita Frans

Ms Juanita Frans is the newly elected Staff Representative to the NUST Council. She garnered the majority votes in a two-day poll held amongst the campus staff. This victory makes her the first female to occupy this seat. She is currently the Manager of Business Systems and Processes in the IT Department.

"I have been at the Institution since the very beginning, 26 years and eight months to be precise. I strongly believe that my good understanding of higher education and my vast experience as a staff member of this prestigious Institution, since its inception, has equipped me to serve at Council level. Congeniality and sound professional relationships are at the core of any Institution's success and I believe the same applies to NUST," she said confidently. Frans started working at the then College for

Out-of-School Training, which later became the Polytechnic of Namibia, as a Data Typist in 1994 within the Examinations Department. Over a period of two decades, she has furthered her studies, and worked her way up to managerial level.

Asked if she could single out one pertinent issue that she would like to address as she begins her term that ends in 2022, she said: "I acknowledge that this will be a new arena that I am entering but being pertinently determined in nature, one burning issue I would like to see being finalise is the appointment of a Vice-Chancellor. This will ensure stability and sound progress for the University." Frans is also the Executive Committee Chairperson for the Integrated Tertiary Systems (ITS) User Group and an executive member of the Southern African Association for Institutional Research

(SAAIR). Furthermore, she represents the staff on the Universities Pension Fund (UNIREF).

"I have always managed to contribute to my "avant-garde" University's strategic goals, specifically with the aim to enable others. Innovation is at the forefront of Universities of Technology, but I believe we should never lose sight that we are all human. I have grown to accept challenges and adventures and I strive to make systems and procedures memorable to others, because I simply love seeing innovative ideas through to fruition," she added.

Frans holds a Masters of Business Administration from the Regent Business School, South Africa.

In a statement from the University, the campus community congratulated Frans. "We wish her all the best during her term in office," reads the message.

## Lecturer makes it to ICC Investigators List

Dr Pilisano Masake, a lecturer and Deputy Head of Department: Social Sciences, in the Faculty of Human Sciences, was recently included in the List of Professional Investigators of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC is the permanent institution that is vested with the mandate to prosecute and punish persons responsible for the commission of the most serious crimes of international concern. The ICC complements national courts and strives to build a just world.

In a letter addressed to Masake from Mr Esteban Peralta Losilla, Chief: Counsel Support Section, ICC, he indicated that Masake has met the qualifications necessary to be included on this prestigious list of persons who are eligible to assist in proceedings before the Court. His duties as a Listed Professional Investigator include investigating core international crimes such as genocide, crime against humanity, war crimes, and crime of aggression. "I have investigated crimes domestically, and it has always been my aspiration to show case my

criminal investigations skills beyond Namibia – thus, this is a massive achievement for me. I stand to learn and to be exposed to new investigation techniques; gain skills in the field of criminal investigation; gain new experiences and competences," he said.

Masake holds an LLD in Public Law: International Criminal Law (Stellenbosch University); an LLM (Stellenbosch University); a Masters in Policing Practice (Southern Business School); and an LLB and B-Juris (UNAM). He has vast experience having previously served as a detective in

the Namibian Police Force for over 15 years. At NUST, since 2017, Dr Masake has lectured various courses that include Crime Investigation, Criminal Procedure and Criminal Law. "My exposure to international criminal investigation, international criminal procedure, and international criminal law would, in no uncertain terms, empower and afford me an opportunity to gain further knowledge and skills – which can be explicated in the courses that I lecture. In this manner, there is high possibility of skills transfer – from international criminal justice to the criminal justice classroom at the University, for the benefit of the Criminal Justice students and the country at large," he remarked. Prof Alinah Segobye, the Dean of the Faculty, said: "As the Faculty and indeed the University, we are honoured by this recognition of the expertise bestowed on Dr Masake. We hope it will lead to more accolades to his already highly accomplished career."



Dr Pilisano Masake