

# News

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## Funding opportunities for post-graduate research

A number of post-graduate funding opportunities have been advertised at various Universities.

For more information, visit [www.gssa.co.za](http://www.gssa.co.za) and click on the "funding opportunities" link.

### Postgraduate Opportunities in Benthic Ecology and Biodiversity

**Institution:** University of Cape Town 2007

**Topics:** Marine invertebrate biodiversity, ecology and/or systematics.

**Contact person:** Prof Charles Griffiths at UCT (021-6503610)

**Email:**  
[cgriff@pop.uct.ac.za](mailto:cgriff@pop.uct.ac.za) or  
[Griffith@egs.uct.ac.za](mailto:Griffith@egs.uct.ac.za).

### 3 MSc studentships: BIOTA - Southern Africa (Phase III)

Each bursary is worth approximately R40000, but for the latter two bursaries below there are

good opportunities to apply for co-funding to raise this to R65000.

### Projects:

- 1) Effects of termites (*Macrotermes* spp.) on soil chemistry in Namibia.
- 2) Effects of fog and dew on soil respiration in Namaqualand.
- 3) Effects of fog and dew on plant physiology in Namaqualand.

### Deadlines:

Candidates need to be chosen during 2007. The projects can run 2007-2008 or 2008-2009. However, there will be a 'first come first serve' situation. If a suitable candidate applies, he/she will be given the bursary.

**Contact:** Dr Charles Musil  
[musil@sanbi.org](mailto:musil@sanbi.org)

Dr Anthony Mills  
[mills@sanbi.org](mailto:mills@sanbi.org)

### Post doc opportunity:

**Institution:** School of Animal, Plant and Environmental Sciences, University of Witwatersrand

**Topic:** examining the impact rodents have as seed predators on vegetation, with field work in Kruger and Nylsvley nature reserve.

**Commencing:** May 2007

**Contact person:** Dr. Anouska Kinahan  
[Kinahan@gecko.biol.wits.ac.za](mailto:Kinahan@gecko.biol.wits.ac.za)  
or Prof. Neville Pillay  
[neville@gecko.biol.wits.ac.za](mailto:neville@gecko.biol.wits.ac.za)

**Address:** University of Witwatersrand, School of Animal, Plant and Environmental Sciences, Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa  
**Tel:** 011-717 6452 (office); 073 325 8351  
**Fax:** 011-403 1429



# 'Turn words into actions' Rwandan president urges

**Kimani Chege**

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Source: SciDev.Net

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[ADDIS ABABA]

Rwandan president Paul Kagame has urged fellow African presidents to heed calls by the continent's scientists for increased funding.

He also reminded them of the need to bridge the gap between promised intentions and concrete deeds.

Speaking at the African Union (AU) summit held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Monday (29 January), Kagame said that "we must be mindful that statements of intent do not remain just that â€“ statements".

Kagame said that the recommendation from African science ministers to set aside one per cent of gross domestic product for science, technology and research was not enough.

"Is this not too little too late?" he said, adding that countries need to raise the amount but also

plan how best to use the money to benefit society.

"Clearly it is not just about investment in science and technology, but also about improving the efficiency of this investment for greater impact on all aspects of national life."

Kagame pointed out that Rwanda was currently spending 1.6 per cent of its gross domestic product on science and technology, but hoped to raise it to three per cent in the next five years.

This would draw it level with spending common in the developed world. The current AU average is less than 0.5 per cent.

He said that African leaders and policymakers "got it right" in 1980 when they insisted that Africa needed to use science and technology as the basis for the continent's socioeconomic development, a commitment ex-

pressed in the so-called Lagos Plan of Action.

"Twenty-seven years later, that statement still rings true," he told the summit.

His comments came shortly after strong pleas to support science and technology were made by Calestous Juma, chairperson of the AU's high-level panel on biotechnology (see African presidents urged to boost science), and the AU commissioner for human resources, science and technology, Nagia Essayed.

Kagame's comments have received wide support among African scientists, many of whom see him as a champion of science and technology across the continent.

Ghana's president John Kuffor — who was voted next chair of the AU — noted the urgent need for heads of states to work together on issues of science.

