Press Release

In order to support Space and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education in Namibia, High Commission of India informs about the launch of Mission ShakthiSAT. The Mission will provide the opportunity to female Namibian students to participate in a satellite launch to the lunar orbit. The objective is to empower female learners to excel in STEM and be motivated to further studies in STEM fields specifically in satellite technology. Dr Smita Francis, a renowned space enthusiast and expert in the field of upstream space technology, based in Namibia, is spearheading this project in Namibia. Details of the Mission and its objectives are given below.

Namibia rapidly embraces digital technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) to drive innovation and economic growth. AI is revolutionizing sectors such as agriculture, environmental monitoring, and cybersecurity in Namibia. To achieve Namibia's Vision of 2030, we need to promote STEM studies and careers to the younger generation. It is known globally that the percentage of Women in STEM fields and STEM careers is less than 30%. According to available data, the percentage of women in engineering and STEM fields in Namibia is roughly around 30%, indicating a significant under-representation of women in these sectors compared to men. This aligns with the trend across many Sub-Saharan African countries where women make up less than 30% of STEM graduates at the tertiary level. To bridge this gap and ignite interest in space and STEM education, Namibia has been included in the prestigious Mission ShakthiSAT—Namibia, a transformative initiative to empower Namibian female learners in space exploration. Namibia has been steadily advancing in space technology, with initiatives to develop expertise in satellite communication, Earth observation, and scientific research and Mission ShakthiSAT—Namibia will further enhance Namibia's capabilities.

The Mission, which focuses on promoting STEM to female high school learners, will introduce and enhance the learning of eligible participants in Physics, Mathematics and Coding with a focus on satellite technology. The objective of the project aligns with the vision to introduce young Namibians to advanced space technology, AI applications in satellite communication, and data-driven decision-making. The participants will gain hands-on experience in these transformative fields. By participating in this project, Namibia will not only enhance its role in space exploration but also equip its future leaders with the skills necessary for the digital age.

What is Mission ShakthiSAT Namibia?

Mission ShakthiSAT Namibia is an ambitious project spearheaded and dedicated to fostering STEM education and gender equality. The Mission is designed to empower Namibian girls by providing them with hands-on training in satellite design, coding, and space technology. Namibia is among 108 nations invited to participate in this project. The project includes a satellite launch to the lunar orbit, supported by various global stakeholders a milestone placing participating girls at the forefront of space exploration.

108 Namibian girls will be selected to undergo an intensive 120-hour online training program covering subjects such as physics, orbital mechanics, programming, satellite systems, and payload design.

One top-performing girl from Namibia will be selected and will have the opportunity to travel to India for hands-on training in satellite design and fabrication. This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity will enable her to gain first-hand experience in designing, assembling, and testing satellite systems, paving the way for future innovations in Namibia's space sector.

Mission ShakthiSAT Namibia will expose Namibian learners, particularly girls, to cutting-edge space technology. The training modules will help develop their engineering, mathematics, and programming skills, enhancing the country's STEM education landscape.

Globally, there is a small percentage of women currently in space-related careers; this project directly addresses gender disparity by encouraging girls to engage in space sciences, engineering, and technology. This initiative will break stereotypes, fostering a generation of female scientists, engineers, and space professionals. By developing young Namibian talent in satellite technology and related fields, this initiative will contribute to

the country's long-term vision of expanding its space sector. It aligns with Namibia's broader goals of advancing its satellite communication and aerospace research capabilities.

Namibia's Participation and Coordination

This program will be delivered online, allowing all selected Namibian students to participate from their locations. The Namibian Coordinator for this project is Dr. Smita Francis, a seasoned space technology expert in innovation. Dr. Francis has extensive experience in space-related projects and is a leading advocate for STEM education and gender equality in engineering and technology.

Conclusion: A Partnership for a Brighter Future

The Indian High Commission in Namibia is supporting this initiative, recognizing its importance in strengthening Namibia's capabilities in space technology and STEM education. This collaboration emphasizes the potential of international partnerships in empowering young minds and positioning Namibia as a key player in the space industry.

With this project, Namibia is taking a giant leap toward creating a skilled, diverse, and innovative future workforce in space technology. This initiative will not only benefit Namibian students but also contribute to the country's growing role in space exploration.

The future of space belongs to everyone. Let's inspire, educate, and empower Namibian girls to reach for the stars!

Female learners who are interested in participating in this program can enrol online at **https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfXtCdj8GXixMY3O_pGwSeQdvDarrZ5UBZXnIMxcm0k3_RYDA/viewform**

For any queries, Dr. Smita Francis can be contacted at smitafrancis@gmail.com

Last date for enrolment 21st March 2025. Terms and conditions apply.