

SA to set up its own space agency

JOHANNESBURG: President Kgalema Motlanthe last week signed a Bill which would see the country set up its own space agency, the Department of Science and Technology said.

Spokesman Nhlanhla Nyide said the Bill could see the country pull together all space-related activities under one banner later this year.

"The agency will oversee development of space missions, develop technology platforms, and acquire, assimilate and disseminate space satellite data for any organ of state," he said.

The agency was approved by the cabinet in December 2008, to stimulate the country's capabilities among leading nations in the innovative use of space science and technology.

"The project is expected to boost the economy and create jobs. The first step towards its establishment will be the appointment of a board of 10 to 15 members, a chief executive officer and a chairman appointed by the minister of science and technology."

Some of the projects it will co-ordinate include the Square Kilometre Array bid, the Southern African Large Telescope, and the launch of South Africa's second indigenous satellite, Sumbandilasat. - Sapa

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