

Media release: "Unearthing the Past"

The National Museum, Bloemfontein is pleased to announce a mentorship programme in fossil preparation, co-ordinated by long-serving staff member Mr John Nyaphuli and sponsored by the Technical Training and Capacity Support Programme of the Palaeontological Scientific Trust's (PAST) *Scatterlings of Africa* Project. Mr John Nyaphuli has worked as a fossil preparator in the Karoo Palaeontology Department of the National Museum since 1973. He has 37 years experience in field excavation, mechanical and acid fossil preparation and is one of the finest fossil preparators in the world. He has discovered numerous fossils and in recognition of his excellent contribution to Palaeontology, both in the field and laboratory, was awarded Honorary Life Membership of the National Museum in 1999 and Honorary Life Membership of the Palaeontological Society of Southern Africa in 2004. Mr Nyaphuli has trained numerous preparators at various institutions over the years and the National Museum is eager to begin a new mentorship programme with two trainees, Ms Sabie Chaka and Mr William Molehe, who joined the staff of the Museum recently. The new preparators will be preparing fossils as part of an educational programme to promote Palaeontology at schools in Bloemfontein. The fossils will provide learners with the unique opportunity to touch the remains of animals that lived millions of years ago. The educational aspect of the programme will be launched in 2012 in association with PAST's *Walking Tall Educational Theatre Project*, a programme that uses theatre to inform learners about the story of life on Earth.

For queries speak to Dr Jennifer Botha-Brink

Karoo Palaeontology Department, National Museum, Bloemfontein

051 447 9609 or jbotha@nasmus.co.za