

Extract from:

THE INDEPENDENT
on Saturday
22 April 2017

News

Find us at:

 www.iol.co.za/ios  @IOSnews_SA
 IOSnewsSA  @IOSnewsSA

March to highlight funding plight for science research

DUNCAN GUY

VIVA SCIENCE. That's the message leading scientists and other citizens hope to get through via a march in Durban's city centre today.

Their call includes high-lighting the critical import-ance of sustained and stra-tegic support by governments and funding agencies to ad-vance and promote scientific research and innovation.

"We have a Ministry of Science and Technology and we have a National Research Foundation... but when it comes to the portion allocated to science, it could be better," said leading Durban scientist Quarraisha Abdool Karim, associate scientific director of the Centre for the Aids Pro-gramme of Research in SA. However, the march hoped to speak more to the public, she stressed. "We take a lot of (science-based) things in life for granted. We walk into buildings with electricity and toilets and other comforts." She said people needed to understand that things such as child immunisation saved lives.

Abdool-Karim also said the marchers hoped to encour-age people to talk about science rather than thinking it was a distant and unapproachable topic.

"It's also to promote careers in science, the importance of science in making our lives more comfortable."

"We need to counter cam-paigns like 'don't immunise' and the belief that HIV was manufactured in a laboratory."

"It's important that the next generation sees science as important, or we shall regress."

The march in Durban forms part of an International March for Science aimed to increase public awareness of the importance of science in addressing the many challen-ges like climate change, food security, opportunistic diseases, life threatening epidemics and the biomedical and basic sciences. Other institutions taking part are the University of KwaZulu-Natal; the SA Medical Research Council; Maternal, Adolescent and Child Health Research, and the Africa Health Research Institute.