



THE UNITED STATES EMBASSY  
Windhoek, Namibia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 20, 2015

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### **Namibian Scientist Advances to Semi-finals in American 2015 Tech-I Competition**

*...and he needs your vote to advance*



One young Namibian scientist has been selected as a semi-finalist in the Technology Idea (Tech-I) 2015 competition by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) and the U.S. Department of State. The competition is offered as part of the Global Innovation through Science and Technology (GIST) initiative.

Immanuel Hango, 31, earned a place as a semi-finalist based on his idea to stop the spread of cholera in Namibia through his company Profile Namibia Chemicals, a chemical and industrial minerals startup based in Walvis Bay. One of the solutions identified by Namib Chemicals is to produce chlorine for water purification by electrolyzing salt using abundant solar energy. The use of solar

energy in this application contributes to sustainable development of Namibian resources in the most environmentally-friendly manner.

U.S. Ambassador Thomas Daughton said of Hango, “Immanuel embodies the spirit of applying innovative solutions to the world’s toughest challenges. His project has the opportunity to galvanize global attention for Namibia at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Kenya in July. Invest with your vote to help Immanuel #StarttheSpark.”

As a semi-finalist in the GIST competition, Hango needs votes to advance to the finals and potentially attend the Global Entrepreneurship Summit 2015 (GES) which takes place in Nairobi, Kenya in July. Tech-I finalists will have the opportunity to meet with President Barack Obama, who will attend the Global Entrepreneurship Summit as part of his fourth presidential trip to sub-Saharan Africa bringing together business owners, educators, policymakers and investors to support the growth of new enterprises in developing regions.

“I would like the public to vote as I am the only Namibian in the semi-finals. This will not only benefit me, but it will help bring Namibia on the map in the science industry,” said Hango.

The public can vote for him by logging into the GIST website and following simple voting steps at <http://www.gistnetwork.org/tech-i/vote>. Voting is open through June 11, 2015. Voting,

combined with expert scores from the first phase of the competition, will help determine the top 15 ideas and top 15 startups for Tech-I 2015.

Hango said he began to study the spread of cholera while exploring applications of chlorine in areas such as the construction industry, food processing, water treatment, and plastics. “I found the need to study the outbreak of cholera after cases of the disease were recorded last year in different regions of the country” said Hango. “Last year,” he explained, “more fatal cases were reported in Otjozondjupa, Oshana and Khomas.”

Cholera is caused by the vibrio cholera bacteria found in dirty or sewerage water. Hango said cholera can be prevented simply by purifying water with diluted chlorine. However, the product chlorine is not easily accessible to those living in rural areas. “A spoonful of chlorine can dilute up to 20 liters of dirty water; but currently, all chlorine products are imported into Namibia which makes it expensive for an ordinary Namibian to afford,” he said.