

KEMRI-WELLCOME TRUST SEMINAR

CHIROMO CAMPUS

APRIL 8, 2013

Distinguished researchers

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my pleasure, on my own behalf and on behalf of University of Nairobi Management to welcome the KEMRI-Wellcome Trust team to the University and to Chiromo Campus. I am also pleased to welcome all the participants to the seminar today.

I am informed that today's seminar, other than targeting a strengthened collaboration between UoN and KEMRI-Wellcome Trust, is also hoping to interest young researchers into a career in research, especially in the Natural/Health/Physical Sciences, Population Studies and Geography.

Many of the things we do in our daily lives are based on common sense, what we have learnt through personal experience or observations and many times there are gaps in knowledge, theories, and personal experiences about how some things can work better and how some can be improved. This is what makes

research critical in satisfying intellectual curiosity as well as finding answers to life's questions.

A recent daily nation publication described research as the missing link in Africa's development. To put this into perspective statistics from UNESCO indicates that the entire African continent is home to only 2.3% of the world's researchers. The same UNESCO report also estimates that on average, Africa has only 169 researchers per one million inhabitants.

The UoN Research Policy (2013) also recognizes that the existing gaps that underlie the realization of the MDGs and the Kenya Vision 2030 cannot be adequately addressed without inputs of institutions of higher learning and research.

As such, one of the strategic objectives for the University of Nairobi is to initiate and strengthen collaborative initiatives with other national, regional and international institutions covering the diverse range of disciplines and programmes at the UoN including research.

The University is committed to seeking and promoting such partnerships and linkages that will ultimately support our core functions as outlined in the University Strategic Plan 2008-2013 as well as support the development of our nation.

The UoN and KEMRI-Wellcome Trust are currently collaborating in joint postgraduate supervisions and research project with a number of our units, for instance; CEBIB, School of Biological Sciences and School of Mathematics among others.

In an attempt to strengthen the collaboration that already exists, the office of the DVC (RPE) is also currently discussing possibilities of expanding this collaboration to include creating joint research fellowship positions at the University with the objective of build a critical mass of researchers working closely with the research institutes to generate research grants in a sustainable manner.

If successful, this arrangement will enhance the growth of research capacity at UoN through supporting a sustainable research mentorship programme and improving our research infrastructure. (Dr. Sam Kinyanjui will speak more on this)

As we all know, research is a key component of University training and also of national development. In fact, an invigorated research culture and environment starts with sound postgraduate research training and mentorship.

This seminar is therefore in tandem with the University of Nairobi research strategy whose goal is to strengthen our research capacity for a sustainable national development.

Lastly, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me welcome you again to Chiromo Campus, and I wish you a fruitful seminar. I hope that ideas that will be generated here will be disseminated widely with the aim of improving science but also improving livelihoods, policies and practice within our region and beyond.

May I now welcome Dr. Sam Kinyanjui to give a brief background on capacity building and collaboration opportunities at KEMRI-Wellcome Trust.

Thank you.

Professor Bernard O. Aduda

Principal,

College of Biological & Physical Sciences