

OPENNING REMARKS:
AFRICAN PERINATAL PROBIOTIC STUDY MEETING
MAANZONI LODGE
30th July to 2nd August 2014
Prof. Lucy W. Irungu
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
(Research, Production and Extension)

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome you to Kenya, those who have travelled across countries to attend this workshop and to everybody welcome to this University of Nairobi activity.

We would have loved to hold this workshop in one of our UoN campuses but due to ongoing activities it was not possible. In any case, the design of the workshop probably requires that it be held away from the hustle and bustle of the city of Nairobi.

The University of Nairobi's mission to create, preserve, integrate, transmit and enhance utilization of knowledge to embody the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the global community puts transformative research at the core of achieving this mission.

I am aware that the team gathered here have specific interest in participating in the African perinatal probiotic study, and that the objective of this workshop for the participants is to discuss the study design, draft and plan of Action in readiness for the grant applications.

Indeed if this proposed research comes to fruition, it will bear the characteristics of transformative research involving a fundamental

shift from basic research to applied research, from seeking just answers to seeking solutions.

My personal view about research is that, from its conception, research should link outputs to improved livelihoods, and in the case of health research, improved health care delivery. Therefore transformative health research should enhance knowledge for implementation, early diagnosis and treatment of diseases.

The current revolution in health research is creating unprecedented opportunities to delineate the mechanisms of disease, thus opening up novel strategies for: prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of disease. However, every research should attempt to delve into areas of research that are required to inform policy and practice in pursuit of national development agenda.

Therefore, it is time for all of us researchers to respond to how we as researchers and as nations can position ourselves optimally to contribute to as well as benefit from this revolution in transformative health research.

Ladies and gentlemen, I see new opportunities for mutual gains and joint solutions offered by global interdependence and collaboration which brings about accelerated flow of knowledge, technologies and financing across borders, thereby enhancing productivity. It is therefore encouraging to note that this probiotic workshop elicits a broad engagement of researches, academicians and other professionals, local, national and global.

I am informed that the goal for the research, if successful will be to reduce neonatal mortality, and as you may know, Kenya, has a high neonatal mortality 31 deaths per 100 live births, making such a study very relevant to the local circumstances. I am encouraged by this initiative and can only advise that the best approach with

any research challenge is to carefully assess issues and discuss options with colleagues before committing to a course of action best positioned to bring solutions.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish you fruitful deliberations, and hope that the study comes to fruition.

It is now my humble task to declare this meeting officially open