

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH/ENGAGEMENT VISIT TO YATTA
FARM, MACHAKOS COUNTY
CSDS (UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI)/COLORADO STATE
UNIVERSITY/YATTA FARM
NOVEMBER 1, 2013**

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University of Nairobi**

- Protocol

Ladies and gentlemen

I am delighted to be here at the Yatta Farm, which for all of us, I hope, will be a learning experience on how to improve livelihoods through better management of the resources we have.

The University of Nairobi is a research intensive university with a reputation for excellence and a strong and vibrant research culture. It is our objective to ensure that our research, across all disciplines remains relevant by positively impacting the community and the region

As such the University of Nairobi has the Research, Production and Extension Division whose primary function is to provide

strategic research direction and to manage the overall research performance as a core function of the university by maintaining and advancing the University's research profile, research training, technology transfer and commercialization of research outcomes.

As we all know, research is the backbone to development, providing solutions to societal problems through to transfer of knowledge and technologies, interactions and reflection, thereby improving community livelihoods.

The interaction we have today with the Yatta Farm, Colorado State University faculty, University of Nairobi faculty and the community and the various interest groups represented here is one such interaction that would lead us to optimal utilization of new knowledge resources for better livelihoods.

Ladies and gentlemen, for the benefit of today's interaction, I seek your indulgence to highlight a number of areas of expertise within the University of Nairobi, specifically the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS) that we could capitalize on to achieve the desired level of development.

The main objective of the college is to contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods in Kenya and the region through the well designed training and research programs.

As such the college, through the various departments, partners with communities, development agencies and knowledge-based institutions, taking into consideration emerging global or regional trends to improve livelihoods.

For instance, just to mention a few, the Department of Land Resource Management & Agricultural Technology (LARMAT) taking into consideration the challenges associated with dryland farming offers training that is geared towards solving environmental problems, better soil management and irrigation agriculture.

The Department of Public Health, Pharmacology and Toxicology offers training and undertakes research in disease control in livestock and human and sanitation, while the department of Animal production covers the areas of animal nutrition, animal breeding and livestock production.

While the department of Agricultural Economics equips learners sufficient skills in economic concepts in managing agribusiness and undertaking agricultural extension work.

In addition, we offer skills enhancement courses to farmers and interest groups in a variety of fields like indigenous poultry production, and greenhouse farming.

These courses, which are mainly offered over a period of 3 days, seek to impart the required knowledge and develop the competencies required to ensure sustainable farming practices among rural farmers. The courses target farmers, NGOs, Youth and Youth Groups, Extension Personnel, Agro-chemical companies and any group or persons interested in acquiring these skills.

Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot finish without mentioning the unit that has organised this community interaction, Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies (CSDES) headed by Prof. Jesse Njoka and our Colorado State University partners.

The CSDES is a deliberate initiative geared towards managing challenges of climate change and variability, loss of ecosystem resilience, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, land fragmentation, land tenure and land use changes, conflict over natural resources, increasing vulnerability of dryland livelihoods to droughts and floods and loss of access to global markets faced by pastoralists and agro-pastoralists especially in the arid and semi-arid areas.

The Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies (CSDES); a partnership between the University of Nairobi and Colorado State University was established as the hub of a web of collaborative institutions engaged in education, research and

action supporting dryland communities to improve the capacity of pastoralists to cope up with the many challenges they face in the sustainability of their lands and societies as a lasting empowerment to them.

This forms the basis of today's community engagement visit today and it is my hope that the various interest groups represented here through Yatta Farm would be able to form strong collaboration that can transform our objective of creating relevant knowledge that build individual and institutional capacity for sustaining and improving the ecosystems and human livelihoods in Kenya.

Thank you all for taking the time to come on this community visit and I look forward to the University of Nairobi engaging further with you all.

Thank you.