DVC (RPE)'s remarks at

The SCI Grant Writing Workshop

Wednesday, 30 April, 2014

Director, School of Computing and Informatics,

Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

On behalf of RPE Division I wish to take this opportunity to appreciate this grant writing workshop initiative which is geared towards sharpening your skills in grant and proposal writing as well building competitive research groups within the School.

Research has been described 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.

In terms of research output Africa's contribution is estimated to be 3% of global research output, half of which (1.5%) is attributed to South Africa, 0.95% to Egypt and about 0.5% to Kenya. When we look at research output by discipline about

0.38% is attributed to Kenya in Agricultural Sciences research. About 0.46% is attributed to Egypt, 0.69% to South Africa and 0.95% to Nigeria.

This is because many of Africa's best students take their higher degrees in Europe, Asia, North America and too few of them return. Thus The African diaspora provides powerful intellectual input to the research achievements of other countries.

The disparity in research capacity and competitiveness is also reflected within the UoN, where research activity is unevenly distributed across the disciplines at the university. Just to demonstrate the disparity of research competitiveness, the distribution of research activities and hence grants shows that CHS accounts for 75% of the 3.6 Billion grant portfolio, while CAE, CEES and CHSS together account for less than 10% of the UoN grants portfolio.

Ladies and gentlemen, as a university, our core functions are teaching, research and service to the community. In order to enhance out teaching mandate, we constantly review our academic programmes. At the same time, to enhance our research we must build our research capacity, competitiveness, research management and infrastructure.

As we know the main determinants of a world class university are based on the quality of research undertaken and how well it attracts grants from funding agencies and governments. In addition, research output in terms of publications, innovations, technologies, patents and other forms of intellectual property are also determinants of a world class university, and translates to economic growth and national development.

As such, the University of Nairobi's mission statement is "*To provide quality university education and training and to embody the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the Global community through creation, preservation, integration, transmission and utilization of knowledge*" is in tandem with the Kenya Vision 2030 whose aim is to strengthen the foundation for a knowledge economy.

The government recognizes that ICT is a critical foundation for economic development and Kenya's vision of a knowledge based economy which aims at guiding the current industrial development path towards innovation where creation, adoption, adaptation and use of knowledge plays a great role in driving productivity and economic prosperity.

Under the first midterm plan, the ICT sector made tremendous progress in areas like mobile cash transfer. The country also witnessed the development of 60% of the planned national ICT infrastructure, culminating in the development of the Kenya Information and Communications Regulations of 2010 which has led to improved competition and broad choices of ICT services.

The government also recognises the challenges facing the ICT sector some of which are; inadequate ICT skills, inadequate research and financing, coupled with low level of exploitation of ICT. The need to address these challenges form the backbone to the ICT flagship programmes of; upgrading the national ICT infrastructure, improving public service delivery, developing the ICT industry and upgrading the national ICT capacity.

Ladies and gentlemen, I believe that we as researchers and innovators can utilize the identified ICT flagship programmes and challenges to leverage our research to address the identified flagship programmes and manage the identified challenges.

I wish to take this opportunity to commend the SCI fraternity on the activation of the Computing for Development (C4D) technology incubation laboratory as a centre of excellence in

ICT research and innovation. I also wish to commend you for this grant writing initiative which I am confident will lead to valuable research and innovation.

Ladies and gentlemen, in recognition of the fact that Kenya and Africa as a whole continue to experience various societal challenges, specifically in the areas of health, climate change, food insecurity and poor access to water and sanitation, I wish to encourage SCI to collaborate with other schools to explore possibilities of leveraging their ICT skills to solving these societal challenges especially in health, climate change and agriculture.

The RPE Division has put in place a number of mechanisms to enhance the capacity to attract more funding and also to build the capacity of individual researchers, and this workshop fits well with RPE's commitment to supporting such efforts and initiatives.

Notably the University has subscribed to Research Professional Africa in an attempt to make funding opportunities accessible to staff members. I therefore appeal to staff to access the platform and respond to the calls.

Thank you again for dedicating your time to participate in this grant writing workshop. I trust that you have found this

workshop valuable and that the experience and skills acquired during this workshop will go a long way in enabling you to push forward your research and innovation agenda.

Thank you.