

**OFFICIAL OPENING SPEECH  
TRAINING OF WRITERS WORKSHOP ON  
DROUGHT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION:  
IS OUR RESEARCH EFFECTIVE AND RESPONSE ADEQUATE?**

The guest speaker,

Principal, CHSS

Dean, Faculty of Arts

Chairman, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies

Distinguished guests

Participants

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my pleasure, on my own behalf and that of the top University Management team, to warmly welcome you to the University of Nairobi to participate in this important workshop. I am pleased to know that the organization of this workshop is a tripartite collaborative venture between our Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, the German Development Institute and CETRAD. This fulfills the mandate of my docket as the DVC Research Production and Extension, as well as the overall University's mission, vision and core values.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The University of Nairobi's Research Policy (2008) recognizes that the existing gaps that underlie the realization of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Kenya Vision 2030 cannot be adequately addressed without the inputs of institutions of higher learning and research. This training

workshop for policy writers is an excellent intervention towards addressing such gaps.

One of the strategic objectives for the University of Nairobi Research Policy is to initiate and strengthen collaborative initiatives with other national, regional and international institutions. Currently, the University of Nairobi can boast of being linked with over 100 international institutions around the world, covering a diverse range of disciplines as well programmes. This includes a long-term partnership with CETRAD – one of the co-organizers of this workshop.

The University will continue to seek and promote such partnerships and linkages that ultimately support the core functions of the University as outlined in the University Strategic Plan (2008-2013). This training workshop is indeed within the spirit of the Strategic Plan and will significantly enhance the competitiveness of the institution.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am informed that the objectives of this training workshop are two fold. The first one is to exchange knowledge among participants – through the invited guest speakers – on pertinent issues dealing with drought, climate change and adaptation. This includes the question whether our research is effective and our response adequate. The second objective is to increase knowledge and capacity in writing policy briefs – a key element in influencing policies.

With my experience as a researcher for many years, there are few issues I would like to bring to your attention that could benefit this workshop. The environment in which policies are formulated today, whether in Kenya or elsewhere in the world is very complex, uncertain and unpredictable because citizens are more enlightened, have rising expectations and are making more demands for services which satisfy their individual needs.

Moreover, national and global events are increasingly impacting on our systems of governance and service delivery due to improved communication technology and human rights. These global issues certainly demand good governance. This environment needs policies that are cross-cutting, well coordinated and effectively implemented in a cost-effective manner.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Presently, the drive in Kenya's national development is steered by two very important forces: Vision 2030 and the new constitutional dispensation and devolution. These two forces have drastically changed the environment for policy formulation and implementation. The new system of governance demands that the traditional approach in policy formulation and implementation be replaced with a new system that is participatory in approach. Such approach must be highly inclusive and transparent as a basis for fostering individual rights as stipulated in the new constitution. Furthermore, the new devolved system of governance with 47 county governments requires sustainable social and economic policies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This paradigm shift has implications in the way government ministries and departments collect information, synthesize such information, make decisions, and finally implement the decisions. Government ministries should endeavour to create favourable environment, mobilize resources, and set guidelines for good policy making which meet international standards. Public policies should therefore have a strategic objective which is to ensure that the policy is citizen centred. In addition, policies should be directed to achieve the goals, and mission of Vision 2030, including the achievement of MDGs.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The government cannot achieve this alone. It needs the support – directly or indirectly- of research and institutions of higher learning. Universities should take a leading role in research that helps to identify best policies and best ways to implement such policies.

Finally ladies and gentlemen,

I wish you a very fruitful training workshop and hope that you will share your proceedings with my office. It is now my humble task to declare the training workshop officially opened.

Prof. Lucy Irungu.

DVC, Research Production and Extension

University of Nairobi