

**OPENING REMARKS:  
THE KNH-UON ETHICS AND RESEARCH CONDUCT  
SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP  
CCU, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI  
NOVEMBER 20, 2013**

- Deputy Vice-Chancellors
- Principals, Deputy Principals
- Deans/Directors
- Heads of Departments
- Distinguished guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen

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I take this opportunity to welcome all our guests to this sensitization workshop on ethics and research conduct.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This forum brings together the University Senior Management, Deans, Directors, Chairmen of Departments, Research Development, Advisory Board and Biosafety Committee members as key players in policy development and implementation with respect to research activities within the University.

Today's workshop is essentially a sensitization forum on issues of bioethics and research ethics. We probably know that the University of Nairobi has had a functional Ethics and Research Committee which is mandated to vet and approve for implementation research proposals from across the departments, Schools and Colleges in this University.

The members of this committee will have an opportunity to share information and interact with us as key policy makers. It is hoped that the deliberations of this forum will help enhance the services of the Ethics and Research Committee and cultivate a conducive environment for research.

As a University, the stage is well set for quality research. For instance the establishment of the Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Production and Extension was well thought out and timely. The office has enabled the University to progressively consolidate research related activities and research management. Ideally, this office will hopefully become a one stop shop for all research queries and services. It is therefore very encouraging to note that this office has organized this sensitization workshop on research ethics for University senior

management to appreciate the role of ethics in research and to support and encourage staff members and students to adhere to the Principles of Ethics as they conduct their research.

The University of Nairobi Research Policy 2013 underpins and drives the research mandate of the University. As a University we are also privileged because it is within the University that the highest concentration of professionals and technocrats can be found. As such, research at the University should underscore our institutional core values, particularly freedom of thought and expression, innovativeness and creativity, team spirit and teamwork, professionalism and respect for and conservation of the environment.

Within this, the issue of research ethics and biosafety cannot be over-emphasized. We appreciate the diverse types of waste materials are generated from the University research and service activities. These include organic and inorganic waste, biohazards e.g. medical waste. The University has set up an institutional Biosafety Committee that addresses issues of safe waste disposal. There will be a presentation in this forum to elaborate on this issue.

One of the key products of research is innovation. The University of Nairobi has a strong Intellectual Property Policy and a fully functional Intellectual Property Office that manages potential and actual innovations that may require protection through patents, copyrights etc.

The recent establishment of the Research Development Advisory Board is another milestone that confirms the commitment of the University in Research and Development. This Board supports the University development and implementation of research-related policies. The ongoing restructuring of the grants office is aimed at enhancing management of research grants to enable easy access and accounting for funds.

As management we appreciate the challenges facing the Ethics and Research Committee particularly in human resource capacity and infrastructure. It is noted and appreciated that the workload for the ethics and research committee has grown from 30 proposals per year in 1991 to almost 700 proposals in 2013. The mandate of the Ethics and Research Committee has also

expanded overtime to include vetting of a wide range of research including clinical trials that require close monitoring and oversight. This growth must be supported by commensurate up-scaling of human and physical resources. As a University we shall strive to render the necessary support.

Being a training institution, the need to impart research ethics skills and attitudes to our students is critical. The Committee therefore must support the vetting of Undergraduate and Postgraduate proposals to enhance quality without. This does not in any way remove the responsibility from the Supervisors.

Since the University generates a wide spectrum of research proposals including basic research, applied research, social sciences, biomedical and clinical research, there is need to

broaden and expand the membership to create subcommittees that can address specific concerns.

As a policy, it is important that all research implemented within the University be supported by an ethics approval. The review process will be guided by whether the proposed research is minimal or high risk.

Ladies and gentlemen we shall get to understand more as we listen to the presentations. It is my honor to welcome you to this workshop and my sincere hope that the contributions made here will stimulate a more streamlined structure for managing ethical conduct of research.

I wish you all a fruitful discussion. Welcome to this sensitization workshop. I now declare this workshop officially opened.

Thank you.