

**SPEECH FOR GUEST OF HONOUR AT THE OPENING  
OF THE 14<sup>TH</sup> NAPRECA PRE-SYMPOSIUM  
WORKSHOP**

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Ladies and gentlemen,

Welcome to the University of Nairobi, welcome to the College of Biological and Physical Sciences in this Chiromo campus.

Also welcome to this event which is dubbed the 14<sup>th</sup> NAPRECA pre-Symposium workshop. I hope all of participants and resource peoples had a comfortable transit to Nairobi and you have settled well in your hotel rooms.

This is yet another event of its kind being staged by NAPRECA on our campus, another workshop having taken place here in

2004. More than 40 potential participants applied to come here this week and are qualified; this is definitely a sign of the enthusiasm these workshops are being viewed with by you. It is also a reflection of how much impact NAPRECA is having in the region since it was established in 1988 as a UNESCO network program.

This network was established in East and Central Africa for the mobilisation of scientists to contribute effectively in the development of science of natural products and their utilisation in the sub-region. The main activities of NAPRECA are to stage symposia so that researchers can exchange ideas; NAPRECA has a scholarship program sponsored by The German Academic Exchange (DAAD) which has helped train more than 120 graduates from the region to MSc and PhD levels. Those trained with this scheme are now holding crucial positions in

Universities and research institutes in East and Central Africa. Of course the other activity which has been a constant in NAPRECA calendar are workshops for young practitioners that are held every year and are called pre-Symposia workshops or summer schools for those that do not fall in the years when the biennial Symposia events are held.

The role of NAPRECA, in as much as it seeks to develop usable products from our rich flora and fauna, is quite important for the region. Being in the tropics, the biodiversity is quite high and the resultant competition for survival between organisms is quite intense and has resulted in development of defence principles in great diversity and high concentrations especially in sedentary species thereby making our plant and microbial biota quite attractive for the kind of studies you pursue. We can only encourage you to take yourselves seriously as the society would

be glad to be seeing development of cheap, safe, effective and environmentally friendly chemicals and drugs for human, veterinary and agricultural use.

For you to come up with products it is important that the chemistry of biota is combined with biology in form of bioassays to determine activity and potential toxicity and then technologised through pharmaceutical formulations. At the chore of Chemistry in this area are extraction, fractionation and formulation. But sometimes, natural extracts and/or their compounds are not that active. So I support the process of isolation and determination of structures of compounds from herbs because this offers the path to synthetic structure modification for optimisation of activity and reduction of toxicity if any.

This 14<sup>th</sup> NAPRECA pre-Symposium activity is quite wholesome as it offers parallel workshops on state-of-the-art spectroscopic methods, modern Synthetic methods which will stress on the important considerations to be made when synthesising bioactive compounds. Furthermore certain crucial bioassays methods will be demonstrated to remind researchers about the key position of bioassays in this work.

I therefore believe that the participants in workshop will find a lot that is useful in their present or future research; the knowledge you gather this week will certainly be important to you for a long time. I feel honoured to be the one to declare this workshop officially open. Also meet new friends, take their contacts, ask them what facilities they have in their institutes at home, keep them on your mailing lists for future collaborations.