OFFICIAL OPENING REMARKS:
TOBACCO CESSATION WORKSHOP
THE SCHOOL OF DENTAL SCIENCES
JULY 8, 2015.
NAIROBI.

- Principal College of Health Sciences, Prof. Isaac Kibwage
- Dean, School of Dental Sciences
- Invited Guests and Researchers
- Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen

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It is my pleasure to be with you today to preside over the opening of the School of Dental Sciences Tobacco Cessation Workshop.

I am also delighted that you have made time for this very important forum which is geared towards tobacco use prevention and cessation in the country.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we are aware, Kenya is a populous country with an estimated population of 43 million. The WHO/UN Task Force on the fight against NCD Report (2014) estimates that 26% of Kenyan male population are smokers.

The same report indicates that 13.1 % of Kenya’s urban population are smokers, but the more worrying fact is that 15% of
children aged 13-15 are currently consuming some form of tobacco product and more than 25% of the youth are exposed to second-hand smoke at home. (We are all aware of the use of shisha (flavoured tobacco) hype among the youth in Kenya)

Tobacco use is identified as one the leading risk factors for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in Kenya. As we know it NCDs account for over 50% of hospital admissions and 40% of hospital deaths in Kenya.

Studies have shown that smoking is initiated early amongst Kenyans which raises the risk of premature deaths. Tobacco use currently causes one in ten deaths among adults worldwide, killing more than 5 million people a year. Unless urgent action is taken, tobacco-related annual death toll is set to increase, especially in the in Low to Middle Income Countries like Kenya.

Kenya is a signatory to WHO’s Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), whose guidelines for comprehensive tobacco regulation provides a favourable environment for population-based campaigns. Although legislative approaches such as taxation and prohibition of advertising have been effective, there is need for non-legislative, cost effective approaches such as population-based preventive campaigns
using health workers. A multidisciplinary approach by clinicians in Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation (TUPAC) has been reported to increase abstinence rates and is believed to be more effective than interventions delivered by health workers in a single specialty.

The WHO Global Oral Health Program has also identified the use of Oral Health Care Providers (OHCP) as an important cadre in implementation of tobacco use prevention and cessation counselling guidelines as one the priority goals in dentistry.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University of Nairobi as a knowledge based institution is charged with the mandate 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.

The University of Nairobi Strategic Plan (2013-2018) therefore commits the University to contribute towards the dynamic social needs that are a hallmark of civilization, development and improvement of human life.
Indeed it is to this end the University has developed and implemented a number of policies, structures and strategies that enable us to engage with the community and other stakeholders to get the generated knowledge to the end users. For instance we have the Extension and Outreach Policy whose framework is drawn from the University Vision, Mission, and core values to enable us contribute to local, national, regional and international development guides systematically implement extension and outreach services that the university provides to the community of the university.

Ladies and gentlemen, we know how tobacco use is impacting on the health of the people of Kenya. We also know the negative impact tobacco use is having on health, national expenditure and ultimately on our national development. We need to act to improve this situation. This initiative is therefore in tandem with the university mandate and national development goals and I wish to congratulate the team for this taking this initiative. The Office of the DVC (RPE) and indeed the University management is committed to support such initiatives to fully achieve their objectives.

I wish you a fruitful discussion hope that this will help in building a strong extension and outreach channel geared toward improving
community livelihood. It is now my humble task to declare the Tobacco Cessation Workshop officially opened.

Thank you.