UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI DURING THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AUDIT WORKSHOP FOR PRINCIPALS, DEANS, CHAIRMEN, HoDS, AND SELECTED RESEARCHERS HELD AT THE CCU ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2018 AT 9.15 A.M.
• The Managing Director, KIPI
• The Director, IP – UoN
• The Deputy Vice Chancellors
• College Principals
• Deans and Directors
• Head of Departments
• Researchers from various Units
• Ladies and Gentlemen
The pursuit of knowledge is the basic principle behind research. Universities that exploit research enterprises have crucial roles to play in developing differentiated and effective academic systems and fueling the growth of market economies for their countries.

The University of Nairobi produces noteworthy research outputs. These outputs serve two broad
objectives; to enhance the body of knowledge and secondly to spur innovations that are a source of improvements to the quality of life and also to address the many challenges that confront our society.

It is true that discoveries and inventions may occur in the course of teaching, research and other intellectual and administrative activity by faculty,
staff, fellows, students, and other individuals within the University community. Some of these discoveries have the aspects of novelty, non-obviousness and utility and therefore need to be protected as assets that can be vital to our products or services, or for success and profitability when commercialized.
Intellectual property plays an essential role in innovation by capturing the economic value of innovation, thereby encouraging investment in research and development (R&D), and by arbitrating between the encouragement of investment in innovation, on the one hand, and the sharing of the social benefit of innovation, on the other hand.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

According to Reuters Report on Europe's Most Innovative Universities – 2017, The Katholieke Universiteit Leuven from Belgium was ranked best and it is because it maintains one of the largest independent research and development organizations on the planet. In fiscal 2015, the university’s research spending exceeded €454 million, and its patent portfolio currently includes 586 active
families, each one representing an invention protected in multiple countries and industries.

From the report, Imperial College London is the second and its researchers are celebrated for the discovery of penicillin, the development of holography and the invention of fibre optics. The University of Cambridge is third and it is greatly associated with 91 Nobel Laureates.
In Africa, the 10th edition of United Nations’ Global Innovation Index 2017 placed Kenya third after South Africa and Mauritius. It is also ranked 80th globally. Further, the report states that sub-Saharan Africa draws its highest scores in institutions and market sophistication. This index surveys approximately 130 economies using metrics such as, patent filings to education spending and thus
offering an in-depth overview of innovative activities that increasingly drive economic and social growth.

Our Universities have formed an indispensable part of this growth. The University of Nairobi has had a long history of contributing to the national development through its research activities. It recognizes that the public draw benefits from new products, processes, plant varieties and other intellectual creations
resulting from discoveries, inventions and creative activities by the University.

Recently, our student named Cynthia Allela became the winner of Bata Apprentice competition. She displayed her creative expertise by creating an adaptable design that can be adjusted to assume different forms and now will have her designs sold in select Bata outlets countrywide. Additionally, in
what has become part of Africa’s major space science breakthrough, engineers from the University of Nairobi partnered with Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) to build a 10cm cube nano-satellite called Kibo-CUBE Satellite. The joint project was worth more than 100 million Kenya shillings and this first-ever locally-built satellite will be launched in two months time. Upon launch, the satellite will be used in collecting data for innovation in areas of
importance to Kenya’s economy and prosperity such as agriculture, natural disasters and telecommunications.

Among many examples, these are landmarks that clearly illustrate our capacity in “innovativeness and creativity” as one of the core values of the University.
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The University through the Intellectual Property Management Office has acquired a substantial IP portfolio, which has contributed to enhancing the visibility of the University.

The University Management recognizes the problem of low levels of disclosure of research results due to corresponding low levels of awareness of IP and low
motivation for creativity. The complexities and investment of both human and capital resources in the process of innovation and commercialization is a major challenge to the University.

The University is therefore in the process of putting in place strategies to manage and commercialize its innovations. To initiate this process, the University is carrying out an Intellectual property Audit, which
is funded by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and I want to thank WIPO for this partnership. The team carrying out the IP Audit consists of Consultants, Research Assistants and staff from RPE division.

The objectives of the IP audit are:

- To identify, catalogue and describe actual and potential IP assets,
- To assess the level of IP awareness,
• To identify other factors that are affecting IP generation, protection and commercialization and,

• To use the findings to develop a strategy for increasing IP applications by the university and enhance commercialization of IP assets from the University.
I note from the program that participants are drawn from the University staff and also from national IP institutions that administer and manage Intellectual Property and Innovations.

Finally,

I wish to express our utmost gratitude to the Kenya Industrial Property Institute (KIPI) and specifically to Mr Silvance Sange, MD KIPI. KIPI has been very
supportive of this process and facilitated our request for funding of the IP audit to WIPO. It is my sincere hope that the workshop will be a fruitful one.
With these remarks, I declare this workshop officially open.

PETER M.F MBITHI, PhD, EBS
VICE-CHANCELLOR
AND
PROFESSOR OF VETERINARY SURGERY