REMARKS BY PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI, VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI DURING THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY TRAINING HELD ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2016 AT CENTRAL CATERING UNIT (CCU) AT 9.00 A.M.
The Organizers,

Training Facilitators,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Let me also welcome you all to this very important function where we are mounting intellectual property training for our intellectual property committee members and other relevant groups.

As you are aware, intellectual property is a product of research and innovation, which are tied to the University’s strategic objective of contributing to the development of society through creation, preservation, application and dissemination of knowledge.

Innovation is the major source of improvements in the quality of life. It is through innovation that we are able to overcome many of the challenges that confront our society.
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 benefits of innovation, on the other hand.

The quest by the University of Nairobi to maintain a pole position as the leading public university in the country and Africa in terms of teaching and research necessitated the creation of the Division of Research, Production and Extension.
The constituent units of the new division were deliberately chosen on the basis of the extent to which they informed the University’s research agenda. This was the case with the establishment of the Intellectual Property Management Office to handle innovation and intellectual property.

The University of Nairobi has a long history of contributing to the national development agenda through its research activities. It recognizes the public benefits from new products, processes, plant varieties and other intellectual creations resulting from discoveries, inventions and creative activities by the University staff, students and associates in the course of their University engagements.
Indeed one of the core values of the University is “innovativeness and creativity”.

Since its creation, this Division has made tremendous efforts to deliver on its mandate. On the policy formulation level, the Division put in place the Intellectual Property (IP) Policy. It has also drafted policies on plagiarism, Research and Open Access which have been adopted by the University management. All these policies have had a positive impact on the capacity and visibility of the UoN research agenda.

In recent years, diminishing or prorated disbursements from the exchequer have severely militated against the university’s efforts to expand and run its academic programs
and upgrade its capacity for research through procurement of state-of-the-art equipment and hiring and retention of relevant and qualified personnel. To further confound the picture, the increased assertiveness of the various segments of Kenyan society that has been brought about by the 2010 constitutional changes require the university to justify its continued public investment into its programs by making available goods and services through technology transfer. The wheels of technology transfer start their rotation at the point of disclosure of research results.

The University Management recognizes the problem of low levels of disclosure of research results due to corresponding low levels of awareness of IP and lack of appropriate
motivational packages for creativity. In this regard, Management has consistently supported the Division to do all in its power to ensure that the IPMO is facilitated to create awareness about IP so that IP creations are duly protected and commercialized for the benefit of the university, IP creator and society.

I note with satisfaction that these efforts are beginning to bear fruit and that more and more of our staff and students are routinely consulting the IPMO for advice on IP issues before publishing their research results. Specifically, the University is committed to optimizing the environment and incentives for research and creation of new knowledge by ensuring that benefit-sharing provisions of the IP policy are
implemented. On top of this, the University management has appointed an Intellectual Property Committee to oversee the implementation of the Intellectual Property Policy.

In furtherance of its mission, the university enters into partnerships with individuals, organizations and institutions at national, regional and global levels. This workshop is a testimony to that arrangement.

I note from the program that resource persons have been drawn from our national intellectual property offices. I am fully appreciative of the fact that it is the same offices which provided logistic and other support to the university to formulate its IP policy and set up the office to implement it.
This is a testimony of the cordial relationship existing between the university and these very important offices. I wish to assure you that the university values this relationship and shall do all in its power to nurture it.

With those remarks, it is my pleasure to now declare this workshop officially open.

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