UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

WELCOMING REMARKS BY PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI, VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI AT THE PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS BREAKFAST MEETING HELD AT CHANDARIA AUDITORIUM ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2018 AT 7.30 A.M.
RUFORUM Vice Chancellors, Professors and Staff;
Key Partners and Stakeholders;
Members of the Fourth Estate,
Distinguished participants;
Ladies and Gentlemen;
I am pleased to welcome you this morning to the University of Nairobi and particularly to this Chandaria Auditorium for a stakeholder’s interaction on the forthcoming RUFORUM biennial conference and the Sixth Africa Higher Education Week scheduled for 22-26, October 2018 in Nairobi-Kenya.
RUFORUM biennial Conference is a special event that brings together African Universities, Research Institutions and Industries that are engaged in Agriculture research, education and agri-business.

This Forum is very important for a continent that suffers from perennial food deficit.
Every biennial conference therefore gives us the opportunity to reflect on the challenges that face our continent and to develop innovative solutions of making Africa self reliant.

The University of Nairobi is therefore proud to be one of the founding members of RUFOREUM in 2004. We have since that time played a pivotal role in expanding the Network and focusing on its positive
outcomes. For example, we currently host several RUFORUM programs including the regional centers of leadership on Dryland Resource Husbandry where we train for the entire continent.

It is indeed very satisfying to note that five of the ten founding members of RUFORUM were Kenyan Universities.
It was therefore only practical that the University of Nairobi, together with other RUFORUM member universities in Kenya host the African Higher Education Week and Biennial Conference at the earliest time in Nairobi and the moment Ladies and Gentlemen is October, 2018.
Today Kenya has one of the highest memberships in RUFORUM with nine Universities. The members are: University of Nairobi, JKUAT, University of Eldoret, Moi University, Kenyatta University, Masinde Muliro University, Karatina University, South Eastern Kenya University and Egerton University.

My Colleagues, the RUFORUM Vice Chancellors, are all keen on improving the quality of education,
research and outreach being undertaken by our universities in line with the vision of the Government of Kenya and the African Union Agenda 2063.

One important way is through the national forums that brings together key higher education stakeholders at national level. In Kenya, ‘KENFORUM’ bring together universities in Kenya
and government research and extension, farmers organization and the private sector to provide feedback and input into our university programs.

Broadly, the purpose of the national forums is primarily to enhance the quality of university programs to ensure that they meet the priority needs, particularly of our stakeholders, including the communities around us (priority setting of research)
and to ensure that the universities are able to obtain feedback from their action research and outreach that can be integrated back into university training programs.

RUFOURM is African, organized and managed by Africans! It is against this background that this meeting here today was convened to request for your
support in organizing a successful conference and making it memorable.

We have a strong conviction that the upcoming Sixth RUFORUM Biennial Conference will bring out the true value and worthiness of African universities in shaping policy discourses and presenting research outputs that add value for the private sector, and other stakeholders.
We urge you to participate and support the Conference in any way that you can.

This meeting is dubbed media breakfast because we want persuade the members of the fourth estate to play an active role in dissemination of information about RUFORUM. We call upon you to carry the conversation to the ordinary people, the small scale
farmers who are the biggest consumers of our products.

We intend to partner with you to make the Nairobi conference very unique, memorable and impactful.
With those few remarks, I take this opportunity to invite you to join us for what I hope will be a useful networking breakfast session outside. *Bona appetite!*

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**PETER M.F MBITHI, PhD, EBS**

**VICE-CHANCELLOR**

**AND**

**PROFESSOR OF VETERINARY SURGERY**