UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 5TH INTERNATIONAL GLOBAL NETWORK FOR PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING (GNPHN) 2019 CONFERENCE HELD ON TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2019 AT SAFARI PARK HOTEL NAIROBI AT 12.10 P.M.
• Your Excellency the First Lady of Kenya, Mrs. Margaret Kenyatta

• Cabinet Secretary for Education, Prof. George Magoha,

• Cabinet Secretary for Health, Sicily Kariuki

• Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and High Commissioners present

• Chief Administrative Secretaries and Principal Secretaries present
• The Chair of the Global Network of Public health Nursing Council, Prof. Linda Smith

• The President of Internal Council of Nursing, Ms. Annette Kennedy

• The partners from – USAID
  - IPAS
  - AMREF
  - JOHN HOPKINS

• The Nurses
• Delegates
• Invited Guests
• The press
• Ladies and Gentlemen
It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this 5th International Global Network for Public Health Nursing (GNPHN) Conference taking place in Africa for the first time.

This International GNPHN Conference is Co-hosted by the other partners. I therefore wish to congratulate you for this giant achievement! I also wish to inform you that this is a very special event in the research calendar of the University of Nairobi.
The high attendance at this conference demonstrates the importance that nurses attach to evidence informed practice for better client health outcomes.

It is not enough just to generate knowledge because knowledge only becomes meaningful and makes a difference when it is, utilized or applied, disseminated and when it is exchanged with peers in journals and fora such as this great conference.
Public Health knowledge should always be subjected to continuous testing and evaluated to validate the usefulness in improving health outcomes.

Conference environments offer an opportunity for collaborative engagement and a robust exchange of views with scientists of different backgrounds and experiences. It is within the conference mechanism that essential academic and social exchanges occur to make great things happen.
I am convinced from the program outline and research abstracts published, that we shall achieve outcomes that contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 3 through the Universal Health Coverage which is a global initiative. We as the University of Nairobi, undertake to train competent and skilled human resource for health and formulate quality policies through training and research.
Currently, WHO reports estimate that, the Global needs-based shortage of health care workers is at about 17.4 million and that nursing is hardest hit. Nurses form the largest health care professional workforce more than all others put together, provide up to 80% of health care services and work at all levels of health care systems globally. It means that the quality, quantity, and relevance of public health nursing workforce will have to be assured for UHC to succeed.
As a University, we are keen to bridge the gap in the supply of health professionals through training. We are proud to state that our undergraduate and postgraduate nursing programs produce an average of 160-200 registered public health nurses every year to support these global initiatives not only in Kenya but globally in all countries where they work.
On behalf of myself and the University of Nairobi community, I extend a very warm welcome to you all and particularly to those who are in Africa for the first time. I wish you all a very productive conference.
Thank you and God bless you.

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