

OPENING REMARKS

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Minister for Higher Education Science and Technology, Kenya

I am indeed greatly privileged to address this distinguished congregation of researchers and scholars drawn from all over the world, and brought together under the auspices of the Global Consortium of Higher Education and Research for Agriculture (GCHERA). There is no doubt that such a gathering is bound to come up with sustainable solutions to the various problems we meet in our daily lives.

We in the Ministry of Higher Education, together with all institutions of higher learning in Kenya warmly welcome all conference participants to the country. I also pay tribute to Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology for organising this conference, which, much to our pride is being held in Africa for the first time.

Your Excellency, it is gratifying that the majority participants in this forum, numbering slightly over two hundred, are actively involved in teaching and research in agriculture and related disciplines. This is important to us in Kenya since a large segment of our economy is agriculture-driven to the extent that good performance in the sector translates to improved overall economy. So important is the sector in our country that all our public universities offer agriculture and related disciplines in their curricula. In addition to encouraging results from our university researchers, the institutions of higher learning also continue to provide the skilled personnel crucial in supporting and accelerating agricultural production particularly in the rural areas.

As a ministry, we pledge to continue supporting research and innovation in our universities to accelerate national development. Indeed, my ministry is now encouraging researchers to integrate science, technology and innovation. This is particularly important within the context of demands for global economic competitiveness, sustainable development and equity concerns. It is in this light that the National Innovation System was establishment under the ministry. The system offers an opportunity for Kenya to acquire, exploit and defuse knowledge for the achievement of sectoral and collective national goal.

Once again, I wish to underscore the importance ministry attaches to such forums as this particular conference. The ministry views these as opportunities for scholars throughout the world to review emerging developments and challenges within their disciplines.

Welcome to you all, and, enjoy fruitful deliberations.