

**SPEECH BY VICE CHANCELLOR OF EGERTON UNIVERSITY, PROF JAMES K. TUITOEK, DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF TEGEMEO CONFERENCE ON AGRICULTURAL INPUTS AND SERVICES: IMPACTS ON PRODUCTIVITY, COMPETITIVENESS AND FOOD SECURITY ON 18TH MAY 2006 AT SAFARI PARK HOTEL, NAIROBI.**

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE, HON KIPRUTO ARAP KIRWA,  
PERMANENT SECRETARY MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,  
USAID DIRECTOR, MR. STEPHEN HAYKINS  
CHIEF OF AGRICULTURE, BUSINESS AND ENVIRONMENT OFFICE, ALLAN  
FLEMING,  
DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLORS,  
DIRECTOR TEGEMEO,  
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

I welcome you all to this conference on Agricultural inputs and services and its impacts on productivity, competitiveness and food security. Increasing agricultural productivity is central to accelerating economic growth and improving the well being of both rural and urban people in Kenya. Agricultural productivity growth requires technology development, dissemination, adoption by farmers, access to financial services and to the high quality inputs. These aspirations are important today due to the challenges that our agriculture is facing as a result of increased global and regional competition and trade. It is with these concerns that Tegemeo Institute embarked on a series of studies on agricultural services and inputs and their implications for agricultural competitiveness and food security. This conference has been organized to share the research findings leading to policy recommendations that could address the two important issues of competitiveness in agriculture and productivity in the country.

The issues to be discussed in this conference are in line with the Strategy for Revitalization of Agriculture. The new agricultural strategy has identified key priority areas of intervention. Among these areas is improving access to quality inputs and financial services and strengthening the delivery of research, extension and advisory support services. The conference today will focus on these issues including the access to rural financial services practices and policy lessons in agricultural extension systems in Kenya, factors driving the growth in fertilizer consumption, seed production, delivery of services and the dairy and beef improvement services. These studies are intended to assist the SRA implementation process by tackling practical problems faced in the implementation process. Providing solutions to practical problems in the policy arena is in line with our strategy at the university and we are happy that Tegemeo Institute has over the last 15 years been doing this.

For the last one year, a researcher from Tegemeo has been working fulltime with the Agricultural Coordination Unit (ASCU) team to assist in fast tracking activities that are meant to spearhead the implementation of SRA. Mr. Minister we thank you for this collaboration and do hope that it will continue in order to enhance the partnership.

I also acknowledge that Tegemeo has also participated in a number of joint activities with the government and more specifically with the ASCU team. The institute worked with an inter-ministerial taskforce to develop a draft policy paper on value addition in the agricultural sector. The institute together with FAO and the Ministry of agriculture prepared a draft National Food and Nutritional security report. The Institute was also involved in the review of seed prices and cost of seed to farmers for the Ministry of Agriculture. On livestock issues, Tegemeo together with the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries prepared the draft dairy policy document and participated in the presentation of the draft to stakeholders. The institute also collaborated with the Ministry of Planning and National Development to prepare the Public Expenditure Reviews for the rural sector ministries. I thank the government for offering us an opportunity to shape policy formulation in these and many other areas.

Egerton university will continue to support and strengthen Tegemeo in its endeavor to deepen the empirical policy research and policy guidance to the government ministries, the Parliamentary committees, private sector, farmer groups and local stakeholders in the rural sector. As an emerging leading centre for agricultural policy analysis in Kenya, Tegemeo Institute looks forward to working with government to continue providing viable policy options for improving agricultural productivity and reducing poverty in the country. The institute will therefore continue to promote policy dialogue and advocacy by dissemination of research findings to a large number of stakeholders including government, private sector, and civil society. Using an extensive database from past and on-going studies, the institute will continue to play an important role in raising the analytical content and thus the level of debate on issues affecting Kenyan agriculture and rural livelihoods in Kenya.

Tegemeo is also investing in increasing local capacity in policy research and analysis through increased linkages with local and overseas universities and in working closely with the government. Towards this end, I wish to thank USAID for supporting us in this endeavor. Currently USAID through the current project with Tegemeo is supporting the training of three PhDs and one

Masters students at the Michigan State University and one PhD at the Colorado State University. Locally, the project is supporting the training of two students at Masters degree. I wish to encourage our local universities to increase their collaboration with Tegemeo particularly in the utilization of the strong database available in the institute as a resource for further training. On its part, Tegemeo will continue to offer opportunities for attachments and development of collaborative empirical research in various areas of interest.

I wish to thank USAID through Mr. Stephen Haykins the mission Director, for your continued support of agriculture policy analysis in the country through Tegemeo institute. USAID has contributed to the development of this home grown policy analysis capacity continuously for over 15 years. This support has contributed to strengthen the policy reform debate in the country. Empirical policy research has also assisted to shape and guide agricultural policy formulation in the country. We urge you to continue supporting us in this important area of our economy.

I wish also to thank our collaborators from Michigan State University department of agricultural economics. Scholars from MSU have worked with us since 1996 and have contributed to the capacity building of policy analysis in this country.

Lastly, I would like to thank the government and more particularly the Ministries of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Development and the Parliamentary Departmental committee on Agriculture, land & Natural Resources and the Parliamentary Departmental Committee on Finance, Planning and Trade for your continued support and collaboration with Tegemeo. We particularly thank you Mr. Minister for this partnership and do look forward to further collaboration in future.

It is my pleasure to invite you to address the gathering and officially open the Conference.

Thank You.