Introductory Speech

By

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At the Planning Workshop for the Research Project on Institutional Technology Transfer Policies and Strategies in East Africa

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Dr. Florence Turuka, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Communication, Science and Technology

Professor Samuel Wangwe, Session Chairperson

Dr. Adalgot Komba, Chairman, STIPRO Board of Directors

Distinguished Participants

Members of the Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

Fore most, let me begin by expressing a very warm welcome to all of you to this launching workshop towards the implementation of the research project on institutional technology transfer policies and practices in East Africa. I also wish to very sincerely thank you all for accepting our invitation and for your presence here today. A very sincere thank you goes to our guest of honor for accepting to officiate at this meeting, despite his extremely busy schedule.

Let me also take this opportunity to express a sincere gratitude to our partners in this project from KIPPRA- Kenya and ACODE- Uganda. Thank you very much Eliud and Susan and your colleagues for excellent collective endeavor so far.

Distinguished Participants

A very special thank you also goes to colleagues who have travelled from outside Africa, and for some at their own expense, just to share their experience with us. May I make special mention here of Prof. Mona Dahms from Aalborg university who is going to share with us a very important concept of problem based learning as it relate to issues on technology transfer, but also relevant to our current national debate on the quality of education; Dr. Bo Gorranson from Lund university. Bo is our long term research collaborator, but also my teacher when I was a student of science policy at Lund University about 20 years a go; Dr. Andrew Coulson, a friend in research from University of Birmingham, Uk.

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, I am standing before you to introduce the major objectives of this workshop, however, before I do this, for the benefits of those who might be hearing of us for the first time, allow me to very briefly explain the business STIPRO is in. The science, technology and innovation policy research organization is a think tank dealing with policy research in science, technology and innovation. Let me explain a bit about this kind of research as it is often confused with research in natural sciences which is basically on understanding the natural world around us, largely dealing with things and objects: Once you have key words, science, technology, innovation and research, this is what easily comes in mind. But research in science,

technology and innovation policy is concerned with people, their activities and interactions; it is therefore in the field of social sciences.

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen

In a nutshell STI policy research seeks to understand the activities and relationships in the important actors in the national systems of innovation with the intention to put in place corrective measures through evidence based policies; and of course also to advance knowledge in the area: We also do basic research in this area where we test and develop theories, using empirical evidence from local context. This is important because to have an effective policy research or analysis, one needs to be equipped with correct **conceptual** and **theoretical** frameworks. The two remains essential for diagnosing events, explaining their causes, prescribing responses, and evaluating the impact of different policies. This means relying on a false or flawed theory could lead to undesirable policy outcomes.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

STI policy research is extremely important in connecting science to development. Without it, at the very least, one cannot even be able to set correct priorities in scientific research because good research policy is informed by policy research.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

With this brief background on policy research in science, technology and innovation, it is now much easier for me to briefly explain the objectives of this one day workshop. As indicated in your invitation letters, it is a workshop towards the implementation of a joint research project on institutional technology transfer policies, strategies and practices in East Africa. We all know that knowledge transfer or exchange between the knowledge generating institutions such as universities and R&D organizations and the potential users of this knowledge is the most problematic area in the development process, and it is the area with scarcity of knowledge, especially for poor developing countries. We at STIPRO and colleagues from Kenya and Uganda have decided to illuminate more light on this gray area in literature, taking the case studies of three East African countries. Specifically we want to focus on institution level policies and practices for knowledge transfer so as to draw lessons that can inform policies both at the institutional and national levels. So it is basically a workshop to discuss this research idea. The rest of the presentations are to a large extent meant to contribute to the discussion of this research project. For instance the three background papers from the three countries are meant to provide us with broader national environments within which the research project is placed.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have carefully selected the participants of this workshop – basically we have four important groups:

First are those from the STI policy making; second are those affected by the policy, that is, the knowledge users; third are those who do research that support direct commercial or non commercial application, but whose activities are guided by the STI policy; and finally those who do research that support the policy process, like us.

Distinguished participants

It is our sincere believe that all the groups have sincere interest in a technology transfer policy that works:

1) If you are a policy maker and are interested in policy that works, you will want to have some local evidence that will guide your policy decisions.

2) If you are among those who do research so as to support production of innovative goods and services in the country, and are true to your country, you will want to be guided by the right policy so as to ensure success.

3) If you are from the productive sector; you will certainly be interested in this project. Right policies that will facilitate your access to appropriate knowledge that will make your products to be competitive in the market should be in your best interest.

4) Finally, if you are policy researcher in this area, and you are true to your country, you will certainly want to do it correctly, and therefore you will be interested in sharing, not only the final output, but the process itself. No policy researcher can get the process right alone. It requires the contribution of all the groups mentioned above because they know better on what is happening on the ground.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

If I end my speech without a word of thank you to two most important groups in this project, I will be short of gratitude. First is the think tank initiatives who are supporting the initial work towards the implementation of this projects, and second is my colleagues at STIPRO who worked hard towards the organization of this workshop.

With these few remarks I now call upon Dr. Adalgot Komba, the Chairman of the STIPRO Board of Directors to welcome our guest of honor to address workshop participants.

Thank you all for your attention.