

SPEECH BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, KEMRI, PROF. SAM KARIUKI, DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 11TH KEMRI ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC AND HEALTH (KASH) CONFERENCE HELD ONLINE FROM 8TH -10TH JUNE 2021.

The Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Health - Dr. Mercy Mwangangi;

The Chairman, KEMRI Board of Directors - Dr. Daniel M. Mbinda;

KEMRI Board of Directors Present;

Chairman, KASH, Conference Organizing Committee – Prof. Charles Mbogo;

All key Plenary Speakers;

KEMRI Senior Management members and staff present;

Distinguished Scientists & Participants joining us online,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning!

I take this opportunity to welcome you all to the 11th KEMRI Annual Scientific and Health (KASH) Conference that begins this morning, 8th, June 2021 to Thursday, 10th June 2021. It is indeed, an exciting moment for KEMRI to host this Conference online for the first time in its decade history.

Chief Guest, Ladies & Gentlemen,

The KASH Conference is a special event in the Institute's calendar and we are honoured to have very special guests joining this conference Online, a testimony of your determination and resilience despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

As an Institute, we are honoured with the presence of our Chief Administrative Secretary, Dr. Mercy Mwangangi as our Chief Guest. Madam CAS please feel welcome and accept our utmost appreciation. I also, acknowledge the presence of other Senior Officials from the

Ministry of Health, our partners and collaborating institutions, vice chancellors of public and private universities and other invited guests.

I would also like to take this opportunity to sincerely, thank my colleagues at the KASH Organization Committee led by Prof. Charles Mbogo and his committee members who have worked tirelessly to overcome all the odds and vagrancies posed by COVID-19 pandemic to make this Conference a reality.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the 11th KASH Conference is a forum for dissemination of research findings and networking not just for the young scientists, but also for our more experienced scientists. The official **launching of the Cochrane Review Kenya Chapter** a Knowledge Management platform shortly is a testimony of this networking prowess. Cochrane Review is a platform that is geared towards improvement of health where decisions about health and health care are informed by high quality, relevant and up-to-date synthesized research evidence. Let me take this opportunity to welcome all of you to visit our website on www.kemri.org to access this resource.

In addition, if the calibre of key speakers and scientific presentations is anything to go by, then our standing as a leading health research institution with a formidable research culture that is robust, responsive and result-oriented cannot be overstated.

Distinguished participants, please allow me to highlight a few items that stand out in the **11th KASH Conference programme**. This year's Conference theme is **“Strengthening Health Systems in Kenya through Research, Pandemic Preparedness, Technology and**

Innovations in the post COVID-19 era” which is not just timely for the country and the rest of Africa, but I dare say globally, thanks to the prevailing COVID-19 global pandemic, which has ravaged the entire globe.

KEMRI strongly takes cognisance of the Presidential declaration on the four pillars of development in particular, the Universal Health Coverage to which deliberate efforts are in being put in place to position it at the top in KEMRI’s flagship in providing not only solutions for diagnosis and management of diseases, but also affordable and available quality health care, including disease surveillance.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, It is refreshing to note that at out of the **77** abstracts received **74** were accepted for presentation with one keynote speaker during the plenary session while five of them were slotted for the plenary talks on different thematic areas which include COVID -19. The conference is also hosting at least three (3) symposia and 13 scientific sessions.

The KASH Conference is a forum for dissemination of research findings and networking and therefore I look forward to a robust discussion that will come up with resolutions and I believe solutions that are not just timely, but responsive and result-oriented to our current realities in our health systems.

Finally, allow me to take this opportunity to also, sincerely appreciate the KEMRI Board of Directors, led by our Board Chair, Dr. Daniel M. Mbinda. The Board has not only supported this Conference, but as

management, we have continued to benefit from their wisdom, guidance and direction.

I wish to also sincerely thank all the participants at this Conference, and especially, those who submitted papers for presentation. Without participants, we cannot have a Conference. Most sincere appreciations to all our partners and collaborators who have supported most of this work being presented here today. Finally, to the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Health who have given us moral and financial support towards making this conference a success.

I trust and believe that we will have a good and successful conference, and I thank you all for your participation and support.

God bless you all.

Prof. Sam Kariuki
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