

SPEECH FOR THE ACTING DIRECTOR GENERAL, MINISTRY OF HEALTH, DR, PATRICK AMOTH, DURING THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 12TH KEMRI ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC AND HEALTH (KASH) CONFERENCE HELD ON 18TH FEBRUARY 2022:

***The Chairman, KEMRI Board of Directors - Dr. Daniel M. Mbinda,
KEMRI Board of Directors present,
Director General KEMRI, - Prof. Sam Kariuki,
Chairman, KASH, Conference Organizing Committee – Dr. Cecilia Mbae
All Key Plenary Speakers.
KEMRI Senior Management members and staff present;
Distinguished Scientists & Participants joining us online,
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Good Afternoon,

I am extremely delighted to be with you this afternoon for the official closing ceremony of the 12th KEMRI Annual Scientific and Health Conference which begun three days ago. As we conclude this very important conference it is equally gratifying to note that this conference had attracted more than 500 participants with over 190 abstracts from both research institutions and academia.

Am pleased to note that KEMRI put Kenya on the global research map following the launch of two major innovations namely Covid-19 PCR testing kit and Malaria detection testing kits during the Pre-conference event graced by our Chief Administrative Secretary Dr. Rashid Aman.

I want to reiterate the words of our CAS, that the two kits will go a long way in improving Malaria diagnostics and COVID-19 disease detection, which remain foremost health challenges not just in Kenya but across the globe.

Once again on behalf of the Ministry of Health, I want to congratulate the team and leadership for having taken up the challenge by His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta to come up with local solutions to our local problems. I want to reconfirm the commitment of the Ministry of Health in supporting the production and commercialization of these two flag ship products which will save the country a lot of financial resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I note with a lot of appreciation of the conference themes which are in line with the KEMRI's motto of '*In Search of Better Health*' which has been contributing to the discourse on Universal Health Coverage by conducting research into, Communicable, Non-Communicable Diseases, and Neglected Tropical Diseases thereby generating cost-effective interventions, innovations in service delivery and surveillance of emerging health threats. We at the Ministry of Health are confident that the reference laboratories at KEMRI are a key pillar of support in HIV, Malaria and Tuberculosis programme activities in Kenya.

Ladies and Gentlemen, what we need to do now is to focus on packaging our outputs/evidence and recommendations to inform evidence policy formulation at different levels of policy making and action that will contribute directly to the national discourse of managing pandemics, Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and development. In this regard I am informed that there was a successful symposium in which the MoH, Parliamentarians, WHO and researchers deliberated on how to translate research more efficiently to policy and product. It is equally gratifying to note that this has been reflected in the discussions that you have had over the last three days of this successful conference.

Colleagues, as you know that mathematical modeling studies are increasingly being recognized as an important tool for evidence synthesis to inform clinical and public health decision-making, particularly when data from systematic reviews of primary studies do not adequately answer a research question.

I want to challenge KEMRI to take a step further to use data they have generated for the last four decades and using computer algorithms combined with artificial intelligence come up with models that can predict infectious disease pandemics and epidemics in the Africa. And I hope that these findings and recommendations from this conference, will contribute directly to the national health and development not only in Kenya but the entire region.

Finally, as an Institute we need to think about KEMRI in the context of a knowledge based rather than production-based economy with emphasis on invention and innovation which is a system of consumption

and production that is based on intellectual capital. In particular, It is the ability to capitalize on scientific discoveries and basic and applied research. That is the direction that KEMRI should go. **That is the future.**

Colleagues, we need resolutions that will provide solutions that are not just timely, but responsive and result-oriented to our current realities in our health systems. We need to further, repackage KASH to national human health dissemination platform where all not only KEMRI staff and partners gather to share findings.

Ladies and gentlemen, with those few remarks it is my pleasure to declare the 12th KASH Conference officially closed.

Thank you

Dr. Patrick Amoth
Acting Director General
Ministry of Health

Delivered by: Dr. Andrew Mulwa
Director Medical Services, Ministry of Health