Recognition Award for Your Excellence in Capacity Building, Networking and Mentoring Young Professionals

Presented to

Professor Agnes Wakesho Mwang’ombe

Prof. Agnes Wakesho Mwang’ombe has been the Principal of the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS) at the University of Nairobi in Kenya for close to 10 years. She previously served as Dean, Faculty of Agriculture at University of Nairobi during the period 2003 to 2005 before taking up the position of Principal in May 2005.
Prof. Mwang’ombe’s academic qualifications are a PhD degree in Plant Pathology and Diploma from Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, University of London, Britain in 1988; MSc degree in Plant Pathology obtained in 1982 at the University of Nairobi; and a BSc degree in Agriculture degree obtained in 1977 from University of Nairobi and Makerere University.

Prof. A. W. Mwang’ombe has been instrumental in the growth of the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences at the University of Nairobi. Academic programmes have grown for both undergraduate and postgraduate student population from about 850 in 2005 to the current population of over 5600 students. The growth has included module 11 (two) students. In 2005, the Module two income stream was less that Ksh 5million but reached in 2013/2014 to over Kshs 100 million. Prof. Mwang’ombe has guided curricula revisions of existing programs and developed new academic programs to meet the National and Regional demands. She developed clear marketing strategies for attracting students to her College while improving student retention and completion rates strategies in her management strategies. In doing so she has provided support structures and mechanisms including extracurricular activities to be able to produce not just a high performer but a more holistic graduate. The support spans from academic to social issues. Professional student mentorship has been her flagship program in the College. She has been a positive change agent and managed to rid her College of the perpetual student unrests as a result of her open door policy and dialogue.

As a College Principal, she has mobilized significant resources for her College, both human and financial. This has helped the College to increase its research income from about Ksh 30 Million in 2007/2008 to the current (2014/2015) value of over ksh 450 million. Over the years Prof.
Mwang’ombe has attracted several grants from diverse development partners including EU, Rockefeller Foundation, BADC, USAID, RAIN-ASARECA, Unitar, IrishAid, and AGRA, among others. As a leader in her College, she still engages in research and has published several papers in international peer reviewed journals. She has also supervised several graduate students.

In 2009, she was awarded the Best Woman Researcher for her contribution to advancing crop production in Africa by the African Crop Science Society.

Prof Mwang’ombe has spearheaded commercialization of research outputs at her College through offloading developed products through public-private partnerships while respecting IPR policy of University of Nairobi. As example, Rhizobia has been commercialized through University of Nairobi-MEA Ltd partnership. In additions, she has facilitated the commercialization of developed beans at her College through Kenya Seeds and Elgon Seed companies and has initiated the production of healthy certified seeds with support from KEPHIS (NPPO) in Kenya. She has also initiated several outreach/extension projects to ensure that the research carried at the College has a clear strategy for reaching the end-users.

Most recently, she was instrumental in negotiating with top management of the University of Nairobi to set up The Wangari Mathai Institute of Peace and Environmental Studies at the University of Nairobi which is based at her College. This is in honor of the first African Woman Nobel Peace Laureate who is also a Kenyan and a former Professor at her College.

Prof. Mwang’ombe was one of the four Women Scientists who set up a capacity building program for Women Agricultural Scientists in 2005-2007 under the gender and diversity programme of CGIAR which later created the African Women in Agricultural Research for Development (AWARD)
where she served as the Vice-Chair person during the period 2008-2011 and also as a Mentor. She was the first Chair of KEPAWAЕ where she focused on education for brilliant girls coming from resource poor family backgrounds.

Prof. Mwang’ombe has served in several boards which span from educational and banks to professional boards. She is currently a member of Vision 2030 Delivery Board (VDB), KEFRI Board, FEP Board and Consortium Board for Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CB-CGIAR) which oversees the 15 CGIAR Centers. She has previously served as Chairperson, Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA), from April 2007 to May 2013 and Board member of Kenya Commercial Bank from 1998 to 2001. In 2008, she was awarded the Elder of the Burning Spear (EBS) medal by the President of Kenya, His Excellency Mwai Kibaki, in recognition of her role in the development of Education and Agriculture in Kenya.

RUFORUM today recognizes the contribution of Prof. Agnes Wakesho Mwang’ombe to Agricultural Development in Africa, institutional building at University of Nairobi and for her exemplary role is promoting education and advancement of women in Africa and awards her the IMPRESSA Award for 2015.

*Windhoek, Namibia, 29 August 2015*