

**REMARKS BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DURING THE BORLAUG LEAP ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION RECEPTION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI ON 4TH MARCH 2014**

- The Vice President for International Programmes, Association of Public and Land-grant Universities;
- The Vice Chancellor, University of Nairobi;
- The Principal Secretary, State Department of Agriculture;
- Invited Guests and Borlaug LEAP Alumni;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am delighted to join you today at this inaugural meeting of the Norman E. Borlaug Leadership Enhancement in Agriculture Programme (LEAP) East Africa Alumni Association. We thank the conference organizers for according the University of Nairobi the privilege to host this inaugural meeting.

We appreciate the US Agency for International Development for funding the Norman E. Borlaug LEAP under the US Government's Feed the Future Borlaug 21st Century Leadership Initiative and the International Programmes office, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, University of California Davis for effectively managing the Programme.

It is gratifying to note the rich variety of Borlaug LEAP stakeholders in this reception marking the Late Dr. Norman E. Borlaug's 100th Birthday, including scientists, policy makers, former LEAP fellows (including over 30 Kenyans), mentors and representatives from the USAID. This is a clear indication of the importance placed on this Programme by various institutions.

This reception is also an expression of the recognition of the legendary commitment by Nobel Laureate Dr. Borlaug to raising the standards of living, through his scientific and humanitarian achievements, for people in all communities to enable them live decent lives.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The Norman Borlaug Leadership Enhancement in Agriculture Programme continues to make valuable contribution towards the enhancement of global capacities for agricultural development through provision of fellowships to outstanding graduate students in the field of agriculture and related disciplines. The programme, therefore, supplements government funding of research in agriculture.

The LEAP programme presents an opportunity to Kenya of leveraging research, science, technology and innovation for socio-economic development towards the realization of the Kenya Vision 2030. The Kenya Government, through the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 has committed to allocate 2% of the GDP to research and development. The LEAP programme can be considered to greatly supplement the government's commitment towards funding research.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The LEAP East Africa Alumni Association presents a wonderful opportunity for up-coming leaders in agricultural research to develop fruitful networks, collaborations and partnerships for synergistic benefit. This will greatly enhance the Regional capacity to address the numerous challenges that bedevil the agriculture sector.

I encourage you to sustain the vibrancy of the LEAP East Africa Alumni Association as a platform for exchange of ideas and generation of innovative partnerships and collaborations. In executing our mandate as the State Department responsible for Science and Technology, we shall endeavor to facilitate international collaboration and linkages in research between the local Alumni and the global community.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you well and reiterate the commitment to support this initiative of bringing together the East Africa LEAP Alumni and others for networking, partnership and collaborative purposes in Science and Technology. I look forward to the outcomes and recommendations of this conference.

Thank you.