

SPEECH BY PROF JULIUS O. NYABUNDI PhD, OGW, VICE-CHANCELLOR, MASENO UNIVERSITY ON THE REGIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE ON FORCED DISPLACEMENT AND MIXED MIGRATION IN THE EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA: CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS ON 8TH MAY 2019 AT RADISSON BLU HOTEL, NAIROBI, KENYA.

- ***Director Fathia A. Alewa, IGAD***
- ***Distinguished delegates from the IGAD member states,***
- ***The UNHCR Regional Director, Mr. Bornwell Kantande***
- ***The Executive Director of OSSREA, Dr. Truphena Mukuna***
- ***The Representative of GIZ, Ms. Kokebe Hailegabriel***
- ***The Representative of the World Bank, Ms. Joanna P. De Berry***
- ***The Representative of the IGAD Chair, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia***
- ***The Deputy Director of the Refugee Affairs Secretariat and the representative of the Host Government, the republic of Kenya, Mr. Michael Oloo***
- ***Researchers, Policy makers and Practitioners, Donors and IGAD partners,***
- ***Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,***

May I on my own behalf and that of Maseno University community of staff and students welcome all to this Conference on Forced Displacement and Mixed Migration in the East and Horn of Africa: Current Trends and Future Directions, I sincerely thank all that have found time to attend and participate in this very

important gathering of scholars, experts and officials of various strategic organizations.

The conference has recognized challenges that have precipitated the reality of human mobility and displacement as being among others;

- Conflicts and political instability
- Chronic poverty
- Extreme climate variability
- Human trafficking and
- Smuggling of persons

UNHCR informs us that over 3 million refugees could be traced as coming from Democratic Republic of Congo, Somali and South Sudan by the end of 2017. Almost another 6 million were displaced from Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan. It is indeed a challenge involving a colossal number of Africans concentrated in the East and the Horn of Africa.

Maseno University academics identified forced displacement and mixed migration as a serious challenge to development and with OSSREA, Moi University and IGAD have made efforts towards addressing this issue. Maseno University was involved in this matter right from the initial Leaders' summit of 2016 and the special IGAD summit of 2017.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Maseno University's Research Group on Forced Migration and Vulnerable Livelihood is a team of scholars that has the full support of the University Administration and to all those sponsoring and participating in the search for solutions like the World Bank, German Cooperation, IGAD, The Government of Kenya, OSSREA and Moi University, I can assure you of the commitment of the University in the efforts to address the dynamics of forced displacement and mixed migration.

The heart-rending experiences of fellow Africans perishing in the Mediterranean Sea and in the vast Sahara desert must be tackled with scientifically tested solutions most preferably emanating from our scholars and researchers. I wish to thank IGAD for showing confidence in Maseno University and in the University's faculty in addressing the issues of irregular movement of people in the region and in Africa.

It must not be forgotten that Africa has historically gone through immense suffering resulting from forced movement of peoples. Slavery and slave trade caused devastation whose negative impact is still fresh the world over. Colonialism also vested on Africa complex dynamics of separations of communities and implanted negative ethnicity that has been the catalyst of socio-political conflicts in present times.

In post-colonial Africa apportioning blame to foreign forces regarding forced displacement and mixed migration of African populations is no longer tenable. The AU as an indigenous organization and pan-Africanists everywhere must wake up to the fact that blame for home-based problems must be addressed by applying strategic home-based policies and solutions. Scholars in the African academia must thus sharpen their research skills towards solving African problems.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

On almost the same dates next month Maseno University shall be hosting a conference on "Promoting Research Excellence for Sustainable Socio-economic Development". Forced displacements of mixed migration in the East and the Horn of Africa is also associated with socio-economic under-development and chronic poverty. Maseno University intends to conspicuously foreground research as a way of persistently inquiring for innovative eradication of chronic poverty on the continent. The conference shall indeed be a pre-cursor to an international conference planned for 2020, again to be hosted by Maseno University. I appeal to those who are here to use this opportunity to network

with the University through the conference secretariat so that your contacts are available for communication regarding the envisaged international conference.

Conferences are meant for scholars to exchange ideas from differing perspectives on a given challenge in real human situations. This particular conference on forced displacement and mixed migration is meant to help us engage on scholarly and policy interrogation of the challenges of forced displacement and how these relate to other forms of migrations; assess emerging knowledge; and to engage each other on how mixed migration affects the political landscape, the economies in the region and in Africa and how it impacts international migration. Broad as these aims may be, they are however, very specific, and are practicable.

I urge scholars, experts and all officials gathered here to tackle this issue seriously and in the end come up with dependable path description for future policy formulation and management parameters.

May I end by reiterating Maseno University's commitment and support for these proceedings and for any future meetings, conferences and all efforts towards actualization of the recommendations arising from this and consequent deliberations.

I thank you

Julius O. Nyabundi PhD, OGW.

Vice-Chancellor

MASENO UNIVERSITY, Kenya,