



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND VETERINARY SCIENCES
OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL**

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23rd October 2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

PROF AGNES WAKESHO MWANG’OMBE, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

Prof Agnes Wakesho Mwang’ombe is the Principal of the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS), University of Nairobi. I am a Professor of Plant Pathology. I’m married with one grown-up daughter and my home county is Taita-Taveta, Coast, Kenya..

I have a PhD degree in Plant Pathology and Diploma from Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine, University of London, Britain (1988), MSc degree in Plant Pathology (1982, University of Nairobi) and a BSc in Agriculture degree (1977, University of Nairobi). I served as Dean, Faculty of Agriculture from 13th March 2003 to 18th May 2005.

I’m a board member of Vision 2030 Delivery Board (April 2009 to current, VDB), KEFRI Board (December 2012 to current), Consortium Board for Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research (CB-CGIAR, February 2011 to current) which oversees the 15 CGIAR Centers which include ILRI, ICRAF, CIAT, ICRISAT, CIMMYT, Bioversity International, CIP, World Fish, IRRI, Africa Rice to name just a few. Consortium Board for Consultative Group of International Agricultural Research

(CB-CGIAR) headquartered in Montpellier, France.

I have previously served as Chairman, Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA, April 2007 to May 2013); Director, Kenya Commercial Bank Board (1998-June 2001); First chairperson, Kenya Professional of Women in Agriculture and Environment Association (KEPAWAE):1995-2001; CGIAR Gender Diversity Program based in ICRAF: Advisory Committee Member and Mentor of young women in Agricultural Sciences through a Fellowship Program to Strengthen the Careers of African Women Scientists in Agricultural and Environmental Sciences:

- 2005-2007: Funded by The Rockefeller Foundation,
- 2008 to 2011: AWARD Member and Vice-Chair: Funded The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

President of African Crop Science Society: Elected October 2003 upto 2005; Advisory Board Member: CTA, Ede, Netherlands: From February 2003 to 2005; Scientific Advisory Committee Member: CTA, Ede, Netherlands: Since February 2005 to 2012.

In 2008, was awarded the Elder of the Burning Spear (EBS) medal by His Excellency the President Mwai Kibaki, in recognition for my role in the development of Education and Agriculture in Kenya; Was awarded the Best Woman Researcher for Outstanding Contribution to Crop Production In Africa during The 9th African Crop Science Society Conference (ACSS) which was held in Cape Town, South Africa from 28th September to 1st October 2009.

I have attended and continue to attend several international, regional and local conferences as invited speaker.

I have attended numerous local and international courses on leadership and management such as the 5th CGIAR Senior Leadership Training Program, 29th June to 3rd July, 2009, at the prestigious IMD, Lausanne (ranked number one worldwide in executive education, *Financial Times*, 2008,*The Economist*, 2008).

The knowledge, skills and experience acquired has helped me to provide strategic direction in the College through development of Strategic plans followed by setting yearly targets and reporting the outcomes through various channels. I was one of the team members for University of Nairobi which developed the first strategic plan of 2005.

In the University of Nairobi, as my responsibilities changed from being a Scientist and an Academician to also an Administrator as a College Principal, my research focus changed tremendously from being disciplinary based to multi-disciplinary/inter-disciplinary research programs with value chain concepts integrated. As a College Principal, I have

recognized the huge human resources and developed mechanisms to tap on this resource to mobilize research funds into the University. This meant actual training of Academic Staff to harness the various competencies/skills represented in the college through building alliances and effective teams for addressing grants calls with wide society impacts. Through the International training I have received in leadership and managerial skills, I have applied for support from ASARECA to train Academic staff in proposal and Scientific writing including mobilizing different disciplines and forming competitive Research and winning teams.

This resulted in the increase of the college research income from Ksh30 Million (2007/2008) to over Ksh100 Million (2008/2009) and to the current annual income of over Kshs300 million. My own personal contribution in the grants-mobilization is above Kshs150 million as a result of a grant of US \$ 4.7 Million from the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) over a three year period for setting up the Seed Management Institute (SEMI: www.semis-africa.org) at CAVS. AGRA has just provided another grant of US\$1.82 Million for the phase II program at SEMI. SEMI is a collaborative program amongst several partners, namely IOWA state university in USA, CIMMYT (a CGIAR Consortium center), KEPHIS, KARI, private seed companies and seed consultants in USA and India, with CAVS as the lead institution. SEMI is funded by AGRA and its aim is to build capacity for private seed companies in sub-Saharan Africa for improved adoption of high yielding crop varieties for mitigation against food and nutrition insecurity in Africa.

I have attracted several other grants to the University of Nairobi from diverse development partners namely European Union, Rockefeller Foundation, BADC, USAID, RAIN-ASARECA, Unitar, IrishAid, AGRA, RUFORUM. These grants have provided laboratory equipment, office furniture and refurbishments, motor vehicles, greenhouses and the latest two grants from AGRA mentioned above which will enable us construct and equip a seed-processing factory and laboratory.

Commercialization of research outputs is a key component for tangible development of any country. I have spearheaded this process at my college by offloading developed products/innovations through public private partnerships. So far the Rhizobia (a nitrogen-

fixing bacteria used for leguminous crops to enhance soil fertility and in the process reduce the use of inorganic nitrogenous fertilizers which are pollutants) has been commercialized through the University of Nairobi/ MEA Ltd partnership and this link was facilitated through British Council, a process I negotiated. In addition to this, I have negotiated the commercialization of developed beans at the College through Kenya Seed Company Ltd and Elgon Seed Ltd and initiated the production of healthy certified seeds and these have been issued with white labels by KEPHIS.

I have also initiated several outreach/extension projects through the college while ensuring that the research carried at the college has a clear strategy for reaching the ultimate beneficiaries. College based outreach activities focus on food and nutrition security and environmental care and rehabilitation. My own research has been very instrumental in developing capacities for rural communities in the areas of food and nutrition securities and economic empowerment through improved farming and income generation through off-farm sales of farm produce to lucrative markets.

As we focus on academic and research activities, learning resources are very essential. The learning resources are available in both hard and electronic formats. Through a proposal I wrote and my professional networks, I was able to secure for CAVS library two sets of TEEAL at a cost of US\$ one million each from Mann Library, Cornell University through a grant from CTA, Netherlands.

Income generation activities have grown from negative income to a positive through reorientation of human resources. In 2005 when, I was appointed Principal, the income generating units were loss making including the farms and income was negative. This trend of events has been reversed and the portfolio has grown substantially where income rose to Kshs39 million in 2008/2009 to just over Ksh 80 million in the just ended financial year. This has turned farms into better teaching and research facilities as intended. In addition, the farms now compete with other government and private Institutions at Nairobi International Trade Fair and lead the pact giving the college a very good positive image. In 2010 Nairobi International Trade Show, CAVS scooped 38 awards/trophies, in 2013, CAVS received 125 awards and 19 trophies and in 2014, CAVS received 141 awards and 23 trophies.

Academic programs have equally grown from undergraduate and postgraduate student population of about 850 in 2005 to current population of over 5600. The growth has included module 11 (Two) students. In 2005, the Module 11 income stream was less than Ksh10million but reached in 2013/2014 just over Kshs100million. I have embedded student retention and improved completion rates strategies in my management strategies. I engage the students directly, and through dialogue, address their pressing needs as they arise. I also facilitate extracurricular activities and mentorship for undergraduate and postgraduate students so as to produce not just a high performer but a more holistic graduate and professional.

As Principal, I have encouraged junior staff to apply for positions advertised within the college and where they lack required qualifications and competencies, to undertake training to later facilitate upward staff mobility. To address deficiencies in some disciplines and academic succession plan, I have proactively sourced for donor support for PhD training. Other capacity building initiatives are focusing on staff retooling both locally and internationally.

I have been instrumental in negotiating and setting up The Wangari Mathai Institute of Peace and Environmental Studies at the University of Nairobi which is based at CAVS. This is in honor of the first African Woman Nobel Peace Laureate who is also a Kenyan and a former Professor of CAVS.

As the College Principal, I'm a member of the University Management Board (UMB). I have played a major role in offering leadership through UMB. I have also acquired a lot of experience as a UMB member in the last 9 years on the various management issues of the University especially finance and academic. I continue to utilize that experience to offer direction and leadership in the development of the College.

At the International level, I am routinely invited to serve as a panelist/discussant on wider topics of developmental value as opposed to discipline based topics. This, in the process has widened my professional network which has become very beneficial to the College through provision of link opportunities for the staff with other professionals to address grant calls and attend conferences/workshops/seminars.

I also continue to encourage the development of a conducive atmosphere for research,

student mentorship and training and academic excellence and promote academic programs geared towards self-employment and job-creation amongst the youths in all our academic programs at the college. Experiential learning is an integral part of our curricular content delivery in the academic programs at the college.

Agriculture is the backbone of the economy of our country. The College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, University of Nairobi, has generated a lot agricultural technologies and developed several innovations which address food and nutrition security and poverty alleviations amongst many such-related issues in agriculture. Under my leadership at CAVS, these innovations will continue to be introduced to the graduating students through internships. There is a definite continued need to engage with other stake holders and especially the private during the training of the students through attachments, special lectures/seminars. This direct engagement of the students has continued to empower them with relevant technical skills.

I will also continue to ensure that the internationally and well established College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences in the University of Nairobi maintains her international position and standing through international collaborations and partnerships, an area I'm very conversant with.

By

Prof. Agnes Wakesho Mwang'ombe, PhD (London), EBS
Principal, College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, University of Nairobi and
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