UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

SPEECH BY DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR(AA) AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE MASTERS IN RESEARCH AND PUBLIC POLICY (MRPP) PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOP FOR UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI MPPR FACULTY 26TH APRIL 2017 MAANZONI HOTEL AND LODGES, ARTHI RIVER.

The Principal

Dean, Faculty of Arts

Chairmen of Departments

Members of the Faculty

All Protocols observed

Ladies and gentlemen.

Good afternoon!

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) which an independent, non-partisan pan-African not-for-profit organization established in 2011 and located in Nairobi, Kenya has established a working relationship with the University of Nairobi.

The University of Nairobi in Collaboration with Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) started the process of introducing the Master of Research and Public Policy(MRPP) in 2015.

The process of getting the programme launched has gone through the following stages:

(i) <u>**The Vice-Chancellors Committee and PASSGR**</u>

A meeting between the Vice-Chancellors Committee and PASSGR was held on 10th December 2015 and a mutual agreement to enter an MOU was agreed upon with the Department of Political Science & Public Administration being nominated as the host department.

(ii) <u>**Department of Political Science & Public Administration and PASSGR**</u>

A seminar bringing together staff from the Department of Political Science, University of Nairobi and the PASSGR team was held on 2nd February 2016 and the Department was taken through the ongoing PASSGR programme that is already being implemented by 14 Universities in Africa

(iii) <u>**Department of Political Science and Public Administration**</u>

The curriculum of the Master of Research and Public Policy degree was approved at a Departmental meeting on Thursday 5^{h} May 2016.

(iv) <u>**Faculty of Arts Curriculum Development Committee**</u>

The curriculum of the Master of Research and Public Policy degree was approved at a Faculty of Arts Curriculum Committee meeting held on Wednesday 29th June 2016.

(v) Faculty of Arts Academic Board

The curriculum of the Master of Research and Public Policy degree was approved at a Faculty of Arts Academic Board meeting held on Friday 5[h] August 2016.

(vi) College Academic Board (CHSS)

The curriculum of the Master of Research and Public Policy degree was approved at a Academic Board meeting of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences held on Friday 12[h] August 2016.

(vii) Board of Postgraduate Studies(BPS)

The curriculum of the Master of Research and Public Policy degree will be considered on Thursday 22nd September 2016.

(viii) University Senate

The curriculum of the Master of Research and Public Policy degree was considered by the 204th meeting of Senate held on 1st November 2016.

(ix) Professional Development Workshop

As part of the quality assurance process of the University, consultations were held between University of Nairobi and the PASSGR and it was agreed that the Professionnmal Development Workshop be held in April 2017 before the launch of the programme.

The University of Nairobi is therefore pleased that the Master of Research and Public Policy degree programme will be launching in May 2017.

<u>APPENDIX</u>

Collaborative Master of Research and Public Policy Program

**Meeting held between PASGR and the University of Nairobi
Tuesday, February 2, 2016, University of Nairobi, Kenya**

1. Introduction

The meeting was held at the University of Nairobi on Tuesday, February 2, 2016 and attended by a total of 18 management and lecturers of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration of the University of Nairobi and 4 PASGR staff (*list of participants appended*). The purpose of the meeting was to provide information on the collaborative Master of Research and Public Policy (MRPP) program. The meeting which was chaired by Dr. Adams Oloo (Head of Department) started at 10am with greetings and introduction of the PASGR team followed by that of the University of Nairobi.

2. Highlights of Presentation

The presentation began with a background of PASGR's work and its achievement in its three programs areas namely; Professional Development and Training (PDT), Research and the Higher Education Programme (HEP). A key aspect of PASGR's achievement in relation to research was the co-hosting of a Biennial Conference in 2015 with the Institute of Development Studies, University of Nairobi. It was expected that the evolving collaboration around the MRPP program would strengthen partnership with the University.

Dr. Pauline Ngimwa the Head of PDT program briefly introduced the features and ideas that shape the program. The program consists of 15 short courses which are essentially methodological and aimed at enabling researchers to broaden and deepen their research skills. Other modules within the programme are tailored towards public policy with a focus on engaging and communicating evidence based research for policy uptake; special emphasis is placed on gender. The modules are delivered in two blocks in April and October each year. She noted that preparations for delivery of the first block are underway and the call for applications will be

publicized in a couple of days. She also informed participants that the trainings are usually held in Nairobi and any changes in venue would be communicated at an appropriate date.

Dr. Muganda delineated between HEP and PDT and explained that the HEP also organises professional development trainings but participation is restricted to teaching staff in the MRPP programme. The training is centred on content and pedagogy with a view to strengthening delivery of MRPP courses. However, there are spill over benefits to other programmes since lecturers who teach on the programme also teach other courses in the university. Participants were also informed that there were plans to hold distinct PDT trainings for MRPP teaching staff in the near future. But, presently, the MRPP teaching staff wishing to participate in the intensive short courses offered by PASGR are identified through an independent selection process. Subsequently, teaching staff pay for transport and accommodation while PASGR meets the cost of module development and delivery.

Further, attention was turned to the MRPP career trajectories. The MRPP provides dual learning pathways: a) the research pathway is tailored for students with an advanced research/academic scholarship focus; and, b) the policy practice pathway is tailored for students interested in using research as policy practitioners. Competencies for both pathways are delivered through a program architecture with a sequence of 10 foundation/compulsory courses and 6 concentration course electives. The entire programme runs for a period of one year full time but with a flexible delivery schedule and a field experience/internship. The emphasis is on alternative pedagogy that helps students to develop the requisite competencies: knowledge, skills and experiences.
The presentation further highlighted the principles that underpin MRPP, and other key programme features. While there is an emphasis to have uniform content and delivery across the MRPP network, the program has inbuilt opportunities that draw on local content to address policy issues in a national context. It was also observed that space was provided for two courses that a university may opt to include in the program. In addition, MRPP faculty had agreed on common assessment standards that de-emphasized the importance of examinations as they are less useful for evaluating the extent to which students develop competencies imparted in the program.

Dr Ngimwa noted that all the MRPP courses were collaboratively developed by academics across partner universities and PASGR. The courses are subjected to yearly reviews that will inform a comprehensive curriculum review in 2017. These processes will provide an opportunity for the university of Nairobi lecturers to contribute to the MRPP curriculum. The presentation was supported with a short video clip (8 minutes) that summarises collaborative activities of students and staff during the MRPP week.

Dr. Muganda concluded the presentation with a discussion on the proposed integration process and expressed hope that the program could commence at the University of Nairobi by September 2016. On preparations for launch, she revealed that PASGR will be providing some core text books as well as some IT equipment that will enable students to access digital case studies as well as other electronic teaching and learning resources offline (without internet). Dr. Muganda requested the University to set aside a dedicated lecture room(s) for MRPP classes. She also indicated that all 12 universities within the MRPP network have signed a single MOU. The MOU has been shared with the Administration of the University of Nairobi and the PASGR team would solicit feedback after the meeting. It was envisaged that pertinent areas that may not be adequately covered in the MOU could be captured in an addendum that will be signed separately.

3. Questions and Clarifications

a. *Are there options to introduce elective courses and how many can be introduced?*
Courses that are similar to those offered by the university are not substitutable. However, additional inputs into existent courses will be discussed during the programme review meetings held annually. There is space for two electives from among courses offered in other university programs that may be considered essential for strengthening MRPP competencies.

b. *What criteria are used to select participants of professional development trainings for staff development?*
For professional development workshops organized at programme–wide level (centrally) for MRPP lead course instructors; the university nominates a specified number of participants. However, such workshops are cascaded to other teaching staff with support from PASGR. For the

suite of short methods courses provided by PASGR to a wider audience including academics, researchers and policy actors; participants are selected competitively.

c. What are the expectations for the University once the MOU has been signed? And who graduates the students upon completion?

The University graduates the students because the program belongs to the University as one of the programmes in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration. PASGR is a facilitator and provides a platform for partner universities to share experiences and enhance capacities that strengthen the programme. Ultimately, the hope is for the programme to influence change across other programmes in the partner universities. A steering committee of VC-appointed representatives of each university and PASGR Executive Director make decisions that provide strategic guidance for the development and implementation of all programme activities. The Steering Committee is therefore responsible for the quality as well as effective and durable implementation of the MRPP.

d. How does this fit with what already exists in the department?

MRPP is a distinct programme and all its courses should be offered as designed. We appreciate that there may be some similarities with other courses offered in the department. However, it would be useful to examine the MRPP course content first then identify issues for discussion in the August program review workshop. Essentially, the current content is not cast in stone as the program is flexible enough to accommodate inputs that add value.

e. Do students have to register for MRPP separately?

MRPP students will undertake the normal university registration process for new students. The MRPP is a university programme that will be hosted amongst others in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration.

f. How will a balance be achieved, if the modules are weighed equally across the partner universities where credit systems differ?

The principle of credit weighting in the programme is that each course is weighted equally. This principle facilitates determination of credits in different university contexts.

g. Are the courses flexible to absorb locally relevant issues?
The courses have the flexibility to introduce content that is locally relevant, and this is one of the principles that underpin the design of the program. For example, the e-cases are essentially Africa specific and provide windows for examining similar issues in distinct national contexts. Research techniques and tools will also be applied to policy issues in different national contexts.

4. Concluding Remarks

The lecturers were encouraged to visit PASGR website and apply for the PDT program that starts in April 2016. Regarding strategic directions, it was also noted that PASGR is looking forward to launching a PhD program in 2018 and the University of Nairobi would be a potentially strong candidate for hosting the East African hub. Dr Muganda and Mrs Njogah thanked the staff for their enthusiasm towards the program as well as the useful feedback and questions. They expressed optimism that the collaboration will be a beneficial one going forward. From the University of Nairobi, Prof. Wanyande also expressed the excitement of the department to collaborate with PASGR and assured the team that everything possible will be done to ensure the success and quality expected of the program.