

LAUNCH OF THE AFRICA COORDINATING CENTRE FOR ABANDONMENT OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (A.C.C.A.F).

Speech read by the Principal, College of Health Sciences, Prof. Isaac O. Kibwage

I welcome you all on this auspicious occasion when the College of Health Sciences, University of Nairobi, officially launches the AFRICA COORDINATING CENTRE FOR ABANDONMENT OF FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION.

FGM is a major public health problem in many African countries. ACCAF will help to stimulate and facilitate the abandonment of FGM in Africa and beyond. The University of Nairobi has been identified and hosts the Centre based on its demonstrated capacity for effective partnership and collaboration. The Centre is a partnership between the University of Nairobi, universities, international organizations within the UN, development partners and NGOs. The Centre has the following four objectives:

1. Advocate, educate and create a supportive environment for cultural change.
2. Support, networking and knowledge exchange between researchers, health professionals and community workers on the abandonment of FGM.
3. Identify knowledge gaps, support and stimulate research in the field of FGM.
4. Improve health care for women and children who have undergone FGM.

Within five years the Centre intends to achieve the following among others:

- **Resource mobilization:** initial resources have been mobilised especially from University of Sydney, USAID and UNFPA.
- **Infrastructure:** Structures and mechanisms of the Centre have been established within the College of Health Sciences.
- **Scientific communication:** the Centre has successfully conducted one international conference and several workshops so far. More are planned as per the ACCAFs strategic plan
- **Research and Training:** The Centre will train and support research leading to Masters, Ph.Ds and Postdoctoral qualifications in the region. It is expected that many publications and abstracts in referred journals will enhance the visibility of the Centre, UoN and the region.

May I take this opportunity to thank especially the UoN Senate for approving the establishment of the ACCAF within my College and giving support in terms of staff time and premises. I further wish to express my profound gratitude to especially WHO-Geneva, University of Sydney, USAID and UNFPA for all the support to the Centre so far.

On behalf of the College of Health Sciences, and on my on behalf, once again, thank you all for taking time from your busy schedule to grace the launch of the ACCAF within my College.
Thank you