



**COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS**

**REMARKS FOR**

**H.E. DR. CAROLINE KARUGU**

**DEPUTY GOVERNOR, NYERI COUNTY AND**

**CHAIR, DEPUTY GOVERNORS FORUM, COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS**

**HANDING OVER CEREMONY OF ULTRASOUND EQUIPMENT FROM NORVATIS and**

**ECHO OF LIFE BUTTERFLY PROJECT**

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI TOWERS**

**OCTOBER 29, 2020**

***The Vice Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Prof Stephen Kiama  
Eng. Kariuki Muchemi, Chairman, University of Nairobi Enterprise Services Board,  
Dr. Hitan Majejda, County Chief Executive, Nairobi County  
Dr Gladwell Gathecha, Head, Division of Non-communicable diseases, MOH  
Dr Racey Muchilwa, Head of Africa region, Novartis (acknowledge as necessary)  
Prof Henry Bukachi, Chief Executive Officer, The Heart Center  
All other dignitaries, here present***

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

**Good Morning,**

1. I would like to begin by publicly commending the partnership between the Novartis Pharmaceutical Company, University of Nairobi Enterprise Services (UNES) and the Heart Center in support of national and county governments in addressing one of the most felt needs in healthcare delivery in Kenya – heart health.

2. I wish to express sincere gratitude for the generous donation by Norvatis to the people of Kenya who live in hard to reach counties.
3. I understand the donation of 30 ultrasound equipment to Kenya is the highest single donation of its nature by Norvatis. We appreciate the gesture and trust bestowed on County Governments to manage this kind of investment.
4. On behalf of the county governments of Kenya, I am honoured that your esteemed Company thought to support our efforts to improve quality of diagnostics and management of heart conditions specifically in the counties of Nairobi, Kisii, Kisumu, Kericho and Kitui. It shows that there is shared concern by key stakeholders to prevent and control the emerging threats by non-communicable diseases in the country.
5. It is deeply gratifying to see a private sector corporation take up the mantle to work together with county governments to improve the well-being of citizens. That is true service, and we highly commend you for it.

6. You have by making this donation fulfilled a felt need among many needy Kenyans who have no access to such advanced services. It will enable them improve their quality of life without incurring unbearable costs that sometimes leaves families impoverished.
7. While county governments together with donor partners work on strategies to avail adequate diagnostic and treatment equipment, this support comes in handy to bridge an immediate gap in the short term.
8. The Ministry of Health and county governments are at advanced steps towards rolling out the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) strategy in the country. As we speak, there has been a week-long consultative process by the MOH and county leaders, including governors and CECs; to fine tune details of how this game-changing strategy will be implemented in the country.

9. Non- communicable diseases have emerged as a major concern in the planning process and we have been keen to ensure it is addressed in the financing and benefits package for UHC.
  - I wish to commend the MOH for developing national guidelines for management of cardiovascular diseases, which also details the magnitude of the problem and the package of care available at each facility level from community to the highest referral facilities.
  
10. To demonstrate the magnitude of the problem in Kenya, I would like us to reflect on the following statistics:
  - it is estimated that 25% of hospital admissions are due to CVD and 13% of autopsies revealed CVDs as cause of death (2), representing the second highest causes of death after infectious, maternal and perinatal (3). The CVDs are costly to diagnose and manage leading to premature death among the most productive individuals in the society. They are key contributors to poverty due to catastrophic health spending and high out-of-pocket expenditure.
  
  - 13% of Kenyans currently consume some form of tobacco products

- 19.3% of Kenyans currently drink alcohol with 13 percent of these consuming alcohol on a daily basis
  - Nearly a quarter (23%) of Kenyans always add salt often before eating or when eating
  - 28% of Kenyans always add sugar to beverages.
  - 6.5 percent of Kenyans do not engage in the recommended amount physical activity.
  - 56% of Kenyans have never been measured for raised blood pressure
  - Of course these statistics vary by counties, with some counties bearing a bigger burden and therefore requiring greater attention to manage patients.
11. With the advanced plans to launch universal health coverage in the country, the COG and county governments will seek opportunities to work with Novartis, the University of Nairobi, the Heart Center and other partners to ensure heightened focus on non-communicable diseases, including heart diseases that are fast spreading across the country.

- The financial, human resource and equipment requirements are immense, but with strategic partnerships such as these we are optimistic to make huge strides to reach all communities in the country, ensuring that they do not get impoverished in the process of seeking needed healthcare.
  - The University of Nairobi is a pioneer institution of medical research in Kenya and the Africa region. We commend the University for fostering this kind of strategic partnership with Novartis and the Heart Center, and challenge you to seek to scale such initiatives that stand to benefit Kenyan citizens under the dispensation of UHC.
  - The Heart Center is also making notable contribution in building health workers' skills to manage cardiac conditions. We welcome you to work with county governments to improve our people's well-being.
12. With today's donation we can immediately reach a few needy communities and have some level of assurance that households and health facility staff can put them into immediate use and save lives.

13. I assure you that the county health departments will make good use of the equipment generously donated to improve the health of citizens in their jurisdictions.
14. **As I conclude,**  
County governments are acutely concerned about the enormous gap in diagnostics and management of heart conditions and non-communicable diseases in general, and the long-term capacity to guarantee control of these diseases. In the medium to long term we seek partnerships to bridge these gaps in cost-effective ways.
15. It is our desire that the donation from Novartis and the technical assistance from University of Nairobi and the Heart Center, marks the beginning of a strong and continued cooperation with the Council of Governors and county governments to work together in partnership to serve Kenyans across the nation on the path towards a healthy, prosperous people. Together, we can make immense contributions to the attainment of the country's universal health coverage goals and Vision 2030 aspirations.

Thank you and God bless you.