

Speech by Elijah Songok, Director General at KEMRI

The Project PI, Alejandro,
Consortium partners present,
Scientific colleagues both international and local,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure to join you all to start off the two days' annual meeting of the STOP2030 Project. I welcome you all to Nairobi and to KEMRI.

Since the STOP Project started in 2018 with the then consortium of Spain, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Kenya, the Kenya Medical Research Institute has continued to offer its unequivocal support through one of its Centres, ESACIPAC, the scientific and ethics review body, SERU and several scientists at the Kwale and Kilifi sites. We continue to extend the same partnership and cooperation to the current consortium that comprises Ghana and Kenya as the only African countries.

Additionally, in the last two years, my office has signed several JOLAs (Joint Ownership and License Agreements) as required by the consortium. I am certain these have been helpful and will play a big role in ensuring that the Project objectives are attained.

I am aware that we are gathered here today to review the strides already made, discuss what needs to be done immediately and in future. I am sure you also want to agree on modalities of achieving the ultimate aim of having the Fixed Drug Combination (FDC) of albendazole and ivermectin undergo clinical trial, registered and accredited by the relevant authorities so that it can benefit deworming programmes worldwide.

The results of this project are, therefore, eagerly being waited for, not just in Kenya but by many other countries experiencing challenges in the control and elimination of STH especially in school age children who are the future of nations.

As you plan to proceed with the activities of the Project, I wish to assure of KEMRI's support (just as we give all other projects in the Institute) through the provision of our facilities, human resource and logistics to its successful conclusion. We have and will continue to support the national school-based deworming programme and any findings (such as the potential ones from this project) that will lead to the decline of STH as a package will definitely be of interest to us.

KEMRI has many Research Centres in the country with the headquarters and eight of them here in Nairobi. Should your schedule allow please pay us a visit and appreciate the various scientific efforts we are making in search of human health.

With those few remarks, ladies and gentlemen, it is my utmost pleasure to officially allow you to proceed with your two days 'deliberations and may God bless you.

Thank you.