UNIVERSITY INDUSTRY LINKAGES BREAKFAST MEETING

Main Objectives of the meeting

1. Strengthen linkages with industry in order to improve university research that is tailored to industry needs.
2. Increase the participation of industry in curriculum review and development to ensure that graduates are relevant for the market.
3. Discuss and develop mechanisms for sharing research and innovation output for adoption and scale-up (enterprise development).
4. Share the progress of innovative University Industry linkages programmes that Kenyatta University has initiated (Student Work Induction Programme (SWIP), Student Training in Entrepreneurship Promotion (STEP), Chandaria Innovation Incubation Centre among others.

The expectations for the Ministry are that they will persuade and encourage stronger University Industry linkages in Kenya aimed at boosting achievement of Kenya Vision 2030 and the Big 4 Agenda inline with the Ministry's Goals and objectives, as outlined in the numerous policies.

1. The rate and pattern of industrial growth in Kenya in the last two decades has been unsatisfactory. Industry created too few jobs, and many industries tended to use inappropriate, capital intensive technologies. The manufacturing sector continues to depend heavily on imported equipment and raw materials, thus aggravating balance of payments problems.

2. The Kenyan government, however, has recognized the important role played by universities so as to spur economic growth. This calls for coordinated policy actions to multiply linkages between universities and businesses that should be deployed by national and county governments, by firms and by universities themselves to enhance the contribution which tertiary institutions can make to enhance economic growth that addresses the challenges of poverty and unemployment in the country.

3. In a globalizing environment in which the competitiveness of firms and the economic prosperity of major urban centers hinge on technological dynamism and the capacity to nurture innovation, Kenyan universities have an increasingly vital role play. Beyond the traditional role of teaching, leading universities in Kenya should impress the need to enlarge or build research capabilities in basic research and also in technology development as being vital for economic growth and development.

a. There is need to transform the Kenyan economy from resource base/low technology towards technology-based economic growth. This transformation is guided by the desire to make the economy less dependent on natural resources, and other limiting factors that inhibit growth. Technology-based economic growth is guided by a number of factors and their successful integration in an economy. A common characteristic of highly industrialised economies (HIE) is their investment in knowledge production and translating the knowledge into innovative products. Production patterns in HIE have changed from mass scale production towards product differentiation, i.e.,
novel innovations in an existing product or creation of a completely new innovative product.

b. Formal and informal networks among various actors should become a key feature in our innovation process. Many of the novel products should be traced to the interactions and partnerships among firms and between firms and universities and R&D institutions who should become the engines of innovation. Emergence of science-based industries (also termed as “high-tech” industries) should motivate universities to have a more direct role in the innovation process.

c. To boost achievement of Kenya Vision 2030 and the Big 4 Agenda, we must deliberately institutionalize the nexus between industry and academia since that is exactly where the next radical innovation is going to come from.