

# NYANI NEWS

Quarterly Newsletter of Institute of Primate Research

A Research Directorate of the National Museums of Kenya

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## IPR DELINKING FROM NMK AND TRANSFORMING INTO A NEW CORPORATE ENTITY WITH EXPANDED NATIONAL MANDATES

BY DR. PIUS ADOYO



IPR-NMK Delinking Committee retreat at Pepercon Resort Naivasha 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> July 2016

The Institute of Primate Research (IPR) has over the last 60 years of existence, evolved to become a facility that conducts basic biomedical and preclinical research using non-human primates to understand human health problems (Biomedical Research) as well as ecology and conservation of non-human primates (Bio-conservation). It is therefore recognized to have dual functional mandates namely Bio-medical and Bio-conservation. IPR has in its previous strategic plans, identified legal status as key strategic issue.

The institution is not anchored in law. The NMK act 2006 (section 4) broadly captures the entire scientific mandate of NMK as 'places where research and dissemination of knowledge in all fields of scientific, cultural, technological and human interest may be undertaken'. This definition is too broad and fails to adequately and succinctly capture the current functions of IPR. Moreover, the basic biomedical and pre-clinical research that is currently undertaken at IPR does not align with NMK mission of heritage management. This has limited the institution access to finance and resources required for research and its operations. In view of the challenges, it is important that the mandate and operations of IPR needs to be clearly defined and broadened if need be for consideration in the proposed new legal framework

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## DIRECTOR'S FOREWORD



### THE ROLE OF INSTITUTE OF PRIMATE RESEARCH IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The IPR is a global premier scientific research facility based in Nairobi Kenya. Although globally well known, the institute has been struggling in demonstrating a national niche. This has concerned me as the Director, since this is first and foremost a publicly funded primate research facility in Kenya. To tackle this agenda, a number of strategies will have to change in the organization. The organization is reviewing its mandate and relevance as an institute under the Heritage Act. Because this has been found to have a serious mismatch, IPR is in the process of delinking from National Museums of Kenya. The Delinked IPR, proposed to be renamed Kenya Institute of Primate Research (KEPRI), has already applied to National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Once registration is granted, KEPRI plans to revamp organizational functions, mission, vision, tag-line and research theme. This will be supported by new and/or improved strategy documents accompanied by obtaining AAALAC accreditation.

In order to focus the national niche and contribute more precisely to development of the country, KEPRI will strengthen its key role in providing functions of a national primate centre, become a reference facility for venom and snakebite research, breed laboratory research animals that meet local and international standards, house a centre of excellence for scientific validation of natural products and exhibit focal point status in capacity building in animal welfare, ethical use and care of nonhuman primates and other experimental laboratory animals in Kenya.

The institute has adopted a new mission of “to enhance human health and well-being through translating findings from basic research into medical practice and meaningful health outcomes”, vision of “to be a global centre of excellence in translational research for life” and tag line of “translating life sciences”. In the short term, KEPRI will be undertaking research in priority areas that include Snake Bite/Anti-venom Research, Zoonosis, Natural Products Research, Khat Research, Cannabis/Opium Research, Antimicrobial Research and Breeding Research (e.g. immunogenetics). These and other strategic research thematic areas are captured in a research strategy document that the organization will review from time in order to continually improve in performance. The process of registering with NACOSTI coupled with AAALAC accreditation are targeted for completion in the fourth quarter of 2017.

To deliver promptly on the issues discussed above, KEPRI must, in the short term, complete construction of the new baboon (nyani house) containment facility plus the resource centre, expand incineration capacity by acquiring a new one and overhauling the current machine, replace the aging motor vehicle fleet, fence the forest under institutional management and create an endowment fund for research. The organization will also ensure that aging research equipment is replaced and new ones installed, expand and improve marketing of Masinde Muliro joint training programme, revamp monkey breeding programme, run a vibrant institutional risk management and biosafety programmes, and manage an innovation oriented internship programme.

**DR. HASTINGS OZWARA**

## IPR DELINKING FROM NMK AND TRANSFORMING INTO A NEW CORPORATE ENTITY WITH EXPANDED NATIONAL MANDATES

*Cont. from front page*

On recognition of the mismatch between the biomedical research function of IPR and the mandate of NMK, a National Task Force was appointed by the NMK board of Directors in February 2016. Among other among other terms of references, the delinking Task Force was to advise the NMK board on step by step process of delinking IPR from NMK leading to a legal entity and the Financial, Infrastructural & Human Resource implications of the process.

Dr. Hassan Wario Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts stated at a past delinking stakeholder's meeting that NMK is now on track to positive reforms. IPR outgrew its original mandate from primate behavior and human evolution to biomedical research. Therefore, it is inevitable to let IPR exit so that NMK can focus on its core mandate. NMK has been suffering by doing too much. However the organization needs to undertake more outreach activities. National monuments are in serious need of repair; hence NMK should not spend resources in activities that are outside its mandate.

The NMK has to let IPR go. Although splitting is painful, once it is achieved, there should be no turning back. The CS noted that a good report had been developed and the various IPR delinking scenarios provided had sufficient details in a step by step form.

The CS believed that the NACOSTI route (amendments to the STI Act no. 28 of 2013) was a more plausible. He was not sure whether merging IPR with KEMRI would be good. IPR will cease to function under KEMRI whose mandate is biomedical. He was going to support the NACOSTI route. Justification (Current Position)

*Cont. page 3*



*Waterfall at Oloolua nature trail at Institute of Primate Research*

Currently, Kenya lacks a National Primate Centre. There is poor transition of ideas from bench to products and services. Supply of sufficient good quality laboratory animals for research is unmet. The Country lacks venom and anti-venom quality control and services. IPR thus proposes to expand its mandate in order to address these lacking national needs. In the process, the organisation proposes to change its mandate and exit the National Museums of Kenya

#### ***Key findings and taskforce recommendations***

The Task Force Identified & Evaluated four (4) scenarios for delinking IPR from NMK. It also considered the Financial, Infrastructural & Human Resource implications of the process. The recommendations were made in order of preference. 1). That IPR be given a legal mandate as a body corporate through any of these three routes; (i). IPR becomes an independent institution under the proposed policy and legislative Biosciences process driven by NACOSTI, (ii). IPR becomes a body corporate under Science, Technology and Innovations Act 2013, and (iii). The Institute be established under Executive order by the President.

In considering the three (3) possible Routes; the taskforce recommended that the pursuit of IPR's legal anchoring be effected through the miscellaneous amendment to the Science, Technology and Innovations Act No. 28 of 2013.

In making its recommendations, 1). The committee cognisance of the complexity and urgency of the delinking process which is projected to end in the current financial year 2016/2017 and 2). Given that the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) budgeting process for 2017/2018 – 2019/2020 will commence in September 2016, the committee proposes that (i). IPR should be enabled to participate in this process in readiness for the delinking outcome (ii). The NMK board considers setting up a working team tasked with responsibility of shepherding the delinking process to its logical conclusion

# THE INSTITUTE OF PRIMATE RESEARCH ATTAINS PROVISIONAL AAALAC INTERNATIONAL ACCREDITATION

BY DR. LUCY OCHOLA

Biomedical research involving animals is subject to and controlled by a number of laws, regulations and policies that protect the welfare of these animals. In Kenya, this is outlined in the Wildlife Act Cap 276, STI-Kenya, OHSA-Kenya, guidelines for care and use of lab animals (Vet association Kenya, IPR/ CNHR/ NACOSTI) and international guidelines (COIMS, CITES, EU-PRIMNET, PVEN).

In order to improve IPR's visibility in the international arena, the Institute of Primate Research decided to seek full international accreditation with the association for the assessment and accreditation of laboratory animal care international (AAALAC). AAALAC a private, nonprofit organization is recognized worldwide as a sign of quality and sound science, it promotes the responsible treatment of animals in science through a voluntary accreditation program and assessment programs. The accreditation process is complex and takes months to even years to complete. It examines every aspect of an institutions facilities, policies, procedures, personnel and the program of veterinary care.

IPR has achieved a Provisional AAALAC accreditation status and this marks an important milestone in the research agenda of IPR. This will promote scientific validity in the use of animals for research, open new avenues for contract research in which academic and pharmaceutical companies will be able to test their products at the institute. IPR is now on its way to join the over 760+ institutions in 29 countries that have earned AAALAC International accreditation

## IPR-MMUST TRAINING PROGRAM

BY DR. JILLANI

The long awaited, prestigious and coveted training program IPR has sought for is finally here: The Institute of Primate Research – Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (IPR-MMUST) training program! This joint program was initiated by Dr Ngalla Jillani teaming up with Dr Atunga Nyachio, Dr Daniel Chai and Ms Ednar Osoro from IPR and Prof Charles Mutai and Dr. George Sowayi from MMUST.

The MoU for this program was signed in 2015 followed by development and implementation of the training program in the academic year 2015/2016. Cohort one students comprising 28 MSc students from the School of Public Health, Biomedical Sciences & Technology, particularly the Departments of medical lab sciences and Dietetics and Nutrition started off as the pioneer group.

Teaching of the program started off in MMUST main campus in Kakamega, in September 2015, culminating into laboratory hands on experience and instructions by IPR faculty at the IPR campus in June 2016. A total of eight programs from the School of Public Health, Biomedical Sciences & Technology will be running; four PhD and four MSc programs. The PhD programs include: Laboratory Medicine and Technology; Pharmacology and Therapeutics; Medical Dietetics and Biomedical Sciences. The Masters programs are: MSc Medical Pharmacology and Therapeutics; MSc Medical Dietetics; MSc Biomedical Sciences; MSc Medicine and Technology.

# ENVIRONMENTAL ENRICHMENT

BY EVANS MORARA AND DR. DANIEL CHAI

Environmental enrichment is the concept which describes how the environment of captive animals can be changed for the benefit of the animals or rather mimicking natural behavior of captive animals, it's now a proven fact that only well bred well managed animals can provide good experimental results.

In the Institute of Primate Research Animal Science Department we have established a well trained enrichment team comprising of veterinarians, animal technicians and animal care staffs who are dedicated on improving welfare of our captive animals, designing and building enrichment tools and programs. This is in compliance with international guidelines of animal care and use in experimental setup. We have established four types of enrichment activities that are provided in animals alternating sequences daily and weekly basis.

## **Physical enrichment**

This includes cage enclosure size, design and complexity to give animals opportunity to express different behavior choices eg refuges, elevations, view points, visual barriers, sleeping sites etc. We have recently completed a new animal facility, Harmony 1 and 2 that provide all this.

## **Social environment enrichment**

This tackles contact and non contact aspects through habituation and socialization of our animal with technicians and animal care staffs visual and auditory devices. This also includes housing animals either in pairs or compatible groups of one male to 15 -20 females, it helps animals express natural behaviors like grooming, dominance breeding trends, aggression etc.

## **Food enrichment**

We provide different varieties of fruits and vegetables in different modes of presentations like chopping, using enrichment feeding devices, whole fruits, frozen and at normal temperature using extractors and other tools that we design and make in the department.

## **Occupational enrichment.**

Finally we provide enrichment tools for occupation and manipulation eg puzzle balls, swings, shakers, swings, hay for foraging and positive reinforcement sessions training our animals on some experimental procedures that are undertaken in the department like sample collections.



## THROUGH THE LENS



Above: The Institute of Primate Research team leading discussions on the Masinde Muliro University Partnership talks at Masinde Muliro University. From Left -Right Dr. Atunga, Chief of Research, Geoffrey Namachanja of Finance Department, Ednar Osoro Head of Planning Department, Dr. Ngalla Jillani, Senior Research Scientist and Dr. Chai Head of Animal Science Department



Above and Below Pic: Staff at the Conference room in IPR during the monthly seminar presentation. Presenting above pic. is Prof. Vladimir P. Zharov on his work titled *“Ultra sensitive Noninvasive Label Free Photo-acoustic Malaria”*



# GROWING IPR GRANTS AND PARTNERSHIP PORTFOLIO

BY EDNA OSORO



*Edna Osoro*  
*Grants & Contracts Officer*  
*Institute of Primate Research*

IPR realized a growth in IPR's grants and partnership portfolio by 25%. The IPR partners constitute both local and international collaborators. In the past, IPR predominantly relied on international collaborators. Sustained efforts have now realized an expanded engagement by local partners that has brought on board three public and one private university.

Continued efforts by the management seeks to establish greater partnerships in Kenya and in the region of commercial and corporate partners. The institution received 11 new grants through investigator initiated efforts. IPR prides in engaging 15 new scientific related partners that continue to support ongoing research efforts both technically and financially.

Central to the ongoing efforts, IPR has laid an ambitious plan of expanding the current funding portfolio for both scientific and collaborative programs. The Grants and planning office at IPR supports the identification of strategic partners and preparing the relevant documentation for joint work programmes. During the year, IPR has hosted 8 grant seminars with possible collaborators from various institutions including the Wellcome trust. Over 15 scientific seminars by visiting scientists were held on various ongoing research studies held in collaboration with IPR Scientists.

## IPR INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

IPR is a World Health Organization (WHO) collaborating center and an African Network for Drug and Diagnostics Initiative (ANDI). It is a reference centre for preclinical studies. IPR has an international advisory board (IAB), drawn from Europe, USA and Africa which advises on scientific matters. In addition, IPR has a wide international network of collaborators who have helped IPR to benchmark with the world standards including: Université catholique de Louvain: (UCL), Belgium; Leuven University, Belgium; University of Michigan, USA; Yale University, USA; Michigan State University, USA; Ohio State University, USA; Merck-Serono Co Inc, USA; International Society for Infectious Diseases (ISID), USA; National Institute of Health (NIH), USA, Yerkes Primate Centre in the USA; German Primate Centre in Germany, Dutch Primate Centre in The Netherlands; Case Western Reserve University in USA, Hyogo medical centre in Japan, Newcastle and Liverpool universities in UK, John Hopkins in USA Kenyan universities etc. On matters of ethical research, IPR has been accredited by WHO, NIH, Primate vaccine evaluation network (PVEN) and Helsinki Convention on humane treatment of animals for scientific purposes and good laboratory practice (GLP). More recently IPR has developed new collaborations including the Chinese academy of Science (CAS), and the JSPS (Japan) program. Currently, IPR is working towards stringent accreditation of the monkey welfare by a reputable International body of the American Association for Assessment of Laboratory Animal Centers (AAALAC) – for accreditation.

# STAFF NEWS

## NEW STAFF

The entire IPR fraternity welcomes the following staff



**Zaddock Ojal Ochieng'**

Joined IPR in August 2016 as an Administrative officer in the planning office. He has previously worked as an assistant human resource officer at Songs Oгода and Associates. He holds Bachelors in Business Administration from Kenya Methodist University.



**Evans Nick Ongata**

Joined IPR October 2016 as a ticket clerk in the Accounts Department. He has previously worked at Nyani Reproductive Health Society as a stores Officer.



**Halkano Molu Guracha**

He joined IPR in October 2016 as an assistant research scientist in the TID department. He has Bachelors in Analytical Chemistry from Jomo Kenyatta University. Was previously on internship at NMK in the phyto-chemistry department. Has worked as a programs officer in community initiative facilitation and also project coordinator with Buley conservancy.



**Miriam Kamuira**

Joined IPR as a Public Relations officer in October 2016 in the PR and Marketing section. She holds Bachelors in Business Administration from Kenya Methodist University, Diploma in mass communication from Nairobi Aviation College and Diploma in Broadcast Journalism from Institute of Commercial Management. She has brought diverse knowledge and skills gained from working at Kenya Methodist University for 5 years as an administrator. She has also worked as a supervisor with FEM-CARE LTD and as a Journalist with Radio Waumini.



**Esther Wangeci**

Esther joins IPR as a Senior Security guard

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PUBLICRELATIONS@PRIMATERESEARCH.ORG

INSTITUTE OF PRIMATE RESEARCH, NATIONAL MUSEUMS OF KENYA, P.O. BOX 24481 -00502, KAREN, NAIROBI,  
KENYA TEL: 254 -20-2606235/6  
WWW.PRIMATERESEARCH.ORG