

Ladies and gentlemen, I join you all in witnessing the 2012 Nairobi Branch Ploughing contest. This is an annual event organized by the Kenya Ploughing Organization (KPO) which is a sub committee of the Nairobi International Trade Fair (NITF) Executive committee which I Chair. I am therefore proud to be associated with this event.

Agriculture is the main stay of the Kenyan Economy contributing significantly to the country's GDP and employing a significant proportion of the country's labour force. The Kenya's population continues to grow annually necessitating increased food production for the rising population. This can be partly achieved through improved efficiency in agricultural practices.

Ploughing is a primary cultivation activity that contributes to seedbed preparation. Good ploughing results into an excellent seedbed thereby improving crop yields. Through the ploughing competition, this can be partly achieved. The ploughmen and women acquire essential skills for good quality ploughing through preparation and participation in the event.

At the Agricultural Society of Kenya, it is our core mandate to support agriculture through dissemination of relevant information to our farmers in the region. This we will continue to carry out in all our shows and trade fairs in the 15 Branches across the country.

I also wish to recognize the presence and participation of the youth in this event. Participation of the young farmers from secondary schools and the college (CAVS) of the University of Nairobi is encouraging. This is a manifestation of the interest our young people have developed in agriculture.

Considering the fact that skilled labour lies in the youth who are the majority, the future of agricultural development for this country seems bright. I encourage them to maintain this spirit.

I have noted that a number of institutions are involved in this event and include our universities, Ministry of Agriculture, Private organizations, NGO's among others.

The event has therefore formed a good forum for interaction between these stakeholders in agriculture and the farmers. This will enhance collaboration

between these institutions, a significant step towards promoting a collaborative effort in the dissemination of agricultural technologies to the beneficiaries.

I believe the farmers present, students and the general public have been able to learn from the exhibitions. I encourage the participants to propagate this knowledge as they proceed back to the areas of residence.

Finally, I take this opportunity to thank the University of Nairobi for allowing the use of the Kabete Farm for this year's Ploughing Heats and thank all of you for your contributions in enabling this event to be successful.

God bless you.