

CSDES LAUNCHES THE GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS (GIS) LAB AT CAVS, UoN.

The Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies (CSDES) in partnership with the Department of Land Resource Management and Agricultural Technology (LARMAT) on Wednesday 11th February 2015 launched the GIS Lab at the Department of LARMAT, CAVS.

The facility was set up at UoN in a bid to fulfill one of the four main objectives of the Centre that seeks to improve coordination of interdisciplinary education, research and outreach for drylands in Kenya.

The Lab was officially opened by Mr. Isiah Parnell, Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy as the chief guest. While addressing participants, he acknowledged the role of education as the most powerful tool for shaping the future.

Mr. Parnell recognized the UoN-CSU partnership for producing well trained teachers who are sharing their knowledge of drylands management with a new generation of Kenyan scientists and researchers, many of whom come from the pastoralists communities most affected by climate change. "It has enhanced the quality and depth of education for students, and helped to ensure that they graduate with 21st century skills that contribute to Kenya's growth and development." He said

Prof. Peter Mbithi, Vice- Chancellor, UoN who was the host commended the strong partnership exhibited between UoN and Colorado State University (CSU) in implementing the three years project. The Don said that the setting up of the GIS lab presented a significant step in the use of new technologies to build capacity of students and faculty to address emerging issues and challenges facing the Country and Africa as a whole especially in drylands.

He appreciated the important role of the Centre at the University in contributing to the quality of teaching, research and training through various short courses, experiential field courses, conferences and seminars.

"UoN appreciates the role that CSDES continues to play in complementing the university teaching training and research and outreach to the current and emerging challenges and opportunities for partnership with stakeholders in addressing national development agenda." He said.

The Vice Chancellor reiterated the commitment of UoN to support the vision and mission of the Centre. He promised to ensure that the process of institutionalizing CSDES at the University will be finalised by mid-2015.

Speaking during the event, Prof. Agnes Mwangombi, Principal CAVS said that the College was committed to poverty reduction and sustainable livelihoods in Kenya and the region through adoption of new technologies in training and research programs.

“The College, through the various departments will work closely with other stakeholders, development agencies and knowledge-based institutions taking into consideration emerging global and regional trends to improve livelihoods,” she said.

CSDES was established at UoN in 2011 as a partnership project between UoN and CSU that was funded by USAID- HED Initiative. The Centre seeks to contribute to sustainable dryland ecosystems and improved livelihoods through innovative trans-disciplinary education, research, partnerships, policy dialogue and community outreach initiatives.