

## **The Graduate School of Frontier Sciences (Graduate Program in Sustainability Science) University of Tokyo pays a courtesy call to the Vice Chancellor, University of Nairobi on 23rd February 2015**

Professor Tahashi Mino and Professor Masafumi Nagao from the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences (Graduate Program in Sustainability Science) University of Tokyo paid a courtesy call to the Vice Chancellor, University of Nairobi on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2015. During the visit, Prof. S.G. Kiama, Director and Prof. David N. Mungai, Deputy Director, Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies briefed the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Prof. Isaac Mbeche who was representing Prof. P.F. Mbithi, the Vice Chancellor, University of Nairobi on the collaborative activities between the University of Nairobi and the University of Tokyo.

It was reported that the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences (GSFS) was established in 1998. It was designed to be a graduate school whose guiding principle is to create new fields of science through a transdisciplinary approach that pushes the boundaries of traditional interdisciplinary research. The GSFS brings together highly motivated faculty members from diverse disciplines to lead students in identifying and tackling transdisciplinary challenges in various domains of society such as energy and environment among others, where solutions have become more difficult to achieve through research confined by the established boundaries of science. Thus this school has a mandate similar to the one for WMI –To cultivate positive ethics, values and practices towards the environment by training stewards who foster peace, holistic sustainable development and link theory with practiceø

In collaboration with the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies, GSFS launched the 2015 Global Field Exercise (GFE) which started on 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2015. The experiential learning activity involves graduate students from the GPSS (University of Tokyo) and the WMI graduate students and faculty. The theme of the GFE is sustainable urban development and focuses on sustainability issues in the informal settlement of Kibera, Nairobi County. At the end of the training on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2015, the participants will be presented with certificates of successful participation by the Wangari Maathai Institute.

Other collaborative activities include:

1) Collaboration between the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences, University of Tokyo and the University of Nairobi

a) The MOU was concluded and signed by both parties. The MOU provides for student exchange between the University of Nairobi and the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences (Graduate Programme in Sustainability Sciences ó Global Leadership Initiative).

It also provides for academic exchange which involves exchanging faculty, administrative staff and researchers; exchanging students; conducting collaborative research; holding joint lectures and symposia, and exchanging academic information and materials.

2) In December 2014, Prof. David Mungai, was invited by Professor Tahashi Mino to participate in the Graduate Programme in Sustainability Science (GPSS) as a member of the International

Advisory Board. The mission of the Board includes: review program curriculum and educational activities; provide advice, guidance for continual improvement; help identify perspectives or future directions that GPSS-GLI should pursue; Suggest new ideas concerning pedagogy, curriculum, underlying educational concepts, and other educational issues regarding sustainability science.

3) In November 2014, Prof. S.G. Kiama attended the UNESCO Conference on Education for Sustainable Development at which he participated in the Panel on "The Role of Higher Education for Sustainable Development in Africa". He also visited the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences where he made a well received presentation of the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace & Environmental Studies.

4) In January 2015, Prof. Mungai attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> GPSS-GLI International Symposium and the International Board meeting held at the University of Tokyo.

5) The University of Nairobi has also developed a MOU with the United Nations University (UNU). The programme is coordinated by Prof. Masafumi Nagao from the Japanese side. The former VC, Prof. G.O. Magoha and the VCs of the Kenyatta University, University of Ghana, and University of Ghana signed the MOU in October 2011. The VCs of the University of Cape Town, the University of Ibadan, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology, University of Development Studies (Ghana) have also signed a similar MOU. The MOU is on the conceptualization, development and implementation of innovative MSc. programmes at these participating universities. In Kenya, the MSc. in Sustainable Urban Development, jointly developed by the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University was implemented in the 2014/2015 academic years with 5 students in the first cohort. The programme is being mounted at the Department of Geography & Environmental Studies with Prof. David Mungai as the program coordinator.

6) The University of Nairobi is also participating in the Next Generation Researchers (NGR) consortium – a group of young researchers (under 40) from the ESDA Universities. The group, under the coordination of Dr. Mutisya have developed research proposals, attended symposia in Japan and also published a number of papers together with senior researchers.