

SPEECH BY HON. ADAN DUALE, ASSISTANT MINISTER FOR LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 1ST PAN-AFRICAN SEMINAR ON ALTERNATIVES TO ANIMAL EXPERIMENTS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON SEPTEMBER 23RD 2009 IN NAIROBI, AT THE KENYA INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION.

The Director of Veterinary Services
Representatives from various organizations
Lecturers
Participants
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am happy to be with you here today and to officiate at this important forum. Your presence signifies the importance you attach to animal experiments in education and training in the country and the world over. I wish to take this opportunity to welcome all of you to this activity and for our foreign visitors; welcome to Kenya and feel at home.

I wish to commend the effort by Africa Network for Animal Welfare (ANAW) and the International Network for Humane Education (InterNICHE) for convening this first ever Pan-African Seminar on Alternatives to Animal Experiments in Education and Training in our country. I am informed many such seminars, conferences and training events have been successfully held in many other locations around the world by InterNICHE in collaboration with universities and partner organizations.

In our midst, we have brothers and sisters from across Africa coming from medical, health, veterinary and animal welfare professions. We also have lecturers, teachers, laboratory technicians and students in educational institutions across Kenya. This seminar will undoubtedly be very beneficial to you as it seeks to present the pedagogical, ethical and economic advantages of humane alternatives to animal experiments and the dissection of purpose-killed animals in education and training.

This seminar could not have come at a better time than now when the whole world is agitating for reduction and eventual replacement of the use of animals in experiments and testing. For this to be achieved especially in Africa, adequate preparations such as these educative sessions need to be fully supported by the academia and all other stakeholders. Therefore, as a participant, the two days of this seminar present the opportunity for you to learn about and help implement such alternatives to the experimental use of animals in the African continent.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am aware that the International Convention to Ban the Practice of Experiments on Animals has requested for Kenya's adherence to the Convention. As a country, we recognize the value of life in all its forms and manifestations. We also underscore the enormous progress accomplished by the scientific research in this area of experiments on animals.

I therefore challenge all concerned stakeholders and professionals in this area to consider the request by the International Convention to Ban the Practice of Experiments on Animals against scientific studies that have declared animal experiments as antiquated, dubious and immoral.

As I come to the end of my remarks, I consider it worthwhile to remind us that we need to learn and cope with the reality of technological trends and our past experiences. In Kenya just like in many African countries, a sizeable number of bright students especially female have had to drop their ambition of pursuing medical, veterinary and health science careers in favor of the arts and social sciences because of the challenge to experiment on animals which mostly involves dissections and killing.

This sort of scenario in our education system requires our academia to interrogate the available alternative scientific studies that do not use live animals in experiments and training and develop ways in which such new evidence based information can be embraced while the standards of education are maintained to ensure that Africa produces graduates that are well equipped for high caliber human resource.

With these remarks, ladies and gentlemen, I wish you fruitful deliberations as I declare the Pan-African Seminar on Alternatives to Animal Experiments in Education and Training officially open.