TALKING NOTES FOR HON (DR) MOHAMMED ABDI KUTI, CGH,MP, MINISTER FOR LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE BIOSCIENCES EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA (BecA) FACILITY AT THE INTERNATIONAL LIVESTOCK RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Your Excellency, Hon. Mwai Kibaki,
President & Commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am honoured to be among you today during the official opening of the Biosciences Eastern and Central Africa (BecA) Facility.

We in Kenya feel a sense of pride to host BecA, a modern research facility for Sub-Sahara Africa. I am gratified to learn that this facility has adopted an integrated research approach, using Biosciences to address animal and plant research, human health as well as the sustainable use of Africa's natural resources.

In Kenya the agricultural research system comprises Public and Private Agricultural Research Institutions, encompassing Parastatal Research Institutions, the Universities, Private Sector Institutions and several Regional and International research bodies that support and complement the National Agricultural Research agenda.

The challenge in how to establish an Integrated Research System that is well balanced to address the diversity of national development goals and objectives in light of limited resources. Another challenge that has faced our Agricultural Research System over the years is under funding. Investment in Agricultural Research stands at 2.1% of Agricultural GDP. This compares poorly with 600 million USD funding for the International Agricultural System.

The Government of Kenya is committed to reforming the current Agricultural System. In this regard, the government started the process in 2006 to establish a policy and the corresponding institutional and legal framework for the National Agricultural Research

System (NARS). The system will comprise all the country's entities responsible for research, towards developing Kenya's agriculture and maintaining the natural resources base. The NARS policy seeks to establish appropriate institutional arrangements and management structures to efficiently coordinate, mobilize and utilize resources. In addition, the agricultural research focus will be reoriented to respond to national development goals, market demand, client (farmer) needs and cross-cutting and emerging issues.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With these few remarks, it is now my honour to invite His Excellency the President, Hon. Mwai Kibaki, to address this gathering and officially open the Biosciences Eastern and Central Africa (BecA) Facility.

Your Excellency it is also my privilege to invite you and your delegation for lunch.

HON (DR) MOHAMMED ABDI KUTI, CGH,MP,
MINISTER FOR LIVESTOCK DEVELOPMENT