

PROF. C.O. OTHIENO BRIEF FAREWELL SPEECH

As Prof. Othieno bid farewell to his second home (UoE) you could feel the joy and pride in his achievement. He began his speech by thanking the Almighty God for giving him an active long-working life from 1966 to date which is a real blessing. He then thanked the teams that he had the privilege to share his career with, the Tea Research Institute in Kericho, colleagues at Moi University (1994-2013) and University of Eldoret (2013 to his retirement day). In his speech he reminded the colleagues and students that the two basic resources for life, apart from air, on earth are:

AVAILABILITY OF: (a) FRESH WATER AND (b) LAND WITH SUITABLE SOIL

Proper management requires knowledge of the processes involved in the two is a must for sustainable agricultural production.

EXCERPTS FROM HIS SPEECH - ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES:

“When I joined the Chepkoilel Campus of Moi University in 1994 as a Soil Scientist, the School of Agriculture, offering only postgraduate studies, was very small, with Prof. E. Auma as the Dean and the late Prof. Maritim and Prof. Mark Odhiambo, the Agric. Economists. Prof. Sutton, the only Soil Scientist, had left. I can’t remember if the department had any student”.

“The late Prof. John Okalebo, a soil scientist, joined the University in 1995, a year after me and, the two of us, respecting one another, formed a true **working-team**. In 1997, Dr. C. Serem transferred from the Department of Forestry to the Department of Soil Science team”.

“I consider lack of or weak team-work and, sometimes, **unhealthy** competition and sometimes lack of **respect** for each other in the department or school could be the major contributing factors to slow development of the school/department, including low students enrolment. Also, the increased number of Kenyan universities, most with faculty/school of agriculture could be a contributing factor”.

“The various departments in the School decided to have undergraduate programs and I was asked to spearhead the development of an undergraduate Soil Science degree program. My experience as a Soil Scientist, coupled with my undergraduate degree in Soil Science, allowed me to overcome the initial challenges that arose during the development of the program, which was eventually approved by the Senate”.

“Soil Science department has, since its inception, produced many M.Sc. graduates more than 30, including our present HoD and over 10 Ph.D. degree holders”.

“As with other departments, the Soil Science department requires each M.Sc. or Ph.D. student to publish his/her research findings, as presented in his/her thesis, in a refereed journal. The department is proud of its achievements in this area”.

“Perhaps there are more, but I know two of our Ph.D. graduates who are now **full Professors**: P. Kisinyo, at Rongo University and P. Opala, at Maseno University”.

Congratulations Prof. Othieno and we wish you a retirement full of happiness, health and friendship