

10 UoN students to undergo training in Israel

Ten students from the University of Nairobi are among the 120 students flagged off by the Cabinet Secretary for Water and Irrigation, Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, for an 11-month advanced agriculture & irrigation training in Israel.

The students drawn from the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Studies (CAVS) are Dennis Tomoina, Charles Origa, Bria Apondi, Hassan Araft, Suleiman Mutuli, Charles Oduor, Peris Lusano, Grace Makumi, Esther Nyangaresi and Mohamend Olenyo.

The 120 students were drawn from 10 institutions; University of Nairobi, Egerton University, Jomo Kenyatta University, Kenya Water Institute, Ramogi and Karen Institute among others. The 120 students will travel to Israel between 24th and 31st July ready to start the training on 1st August 2017 for the next 11 months on Advanced Agriculture and Irrigation at Arava International Centre for Agricultural Training (AICAT) in Israel where students will be attached to work with farmers in Kibutz.

Over 300 students have been trained since 2016 when His Excellency the President Uhuru Kenyatta and Prime Minister of Israel His Excellency Benjamin Netanyahu signed the Jerusalem Declaration where President Uhuru Kenyatta made a promise of bringing about a paradigm shift from rain-fed agriculture to irrigated agriculture that will remove Kenya from the yoke of food and water insecurity by rapidly increasing the acreage under irrigation to over a million acres while equally building local capacity through technical training in collaboration with Israel through MASHAV in line with Vision 2030.

In this regard, Kenya has entered into a pact with Israel to double the intake of Kenyan students under this programme from the current 600 to 1,200 over the next six years. On its part, Israel promised to provide assistance through:

- i) Doubling the number of Kenyans training in Israel and also establishing the Irrigation and Water Engineering Institute in Kenya to give the country technical capability as its increases its acreage under irrigation to over a million;

- ii) Transferring Israeli technology and knowledge to Kenya and giving financial and logistical support as well as direct Israeli investment by Private Sector in the Galana Project;
- iii) Continuing to support small-holder irrigation schemes and reviving some that had collapsed like the one in Kibwezi and new ones in Ukambani and other semi-arid areas;
- iv) Providing technical support to the recently-established Category 2 Groundwater Centre for Regional Studies to enhance access to clean water for all Kenyans through exploiting the great groundwater potential that Kenya has;
- v) Partnering with Kenya in developing the great potential that Kenya has on its 500km Coast from Vanga to Kiunga turning the salty sea waters of the Indian Ocean through desalination into millions of cubic metres of fresh water;
- vi) Supporting Kenya's new Water for Schools Programme that will soon be launched to connect all our public schools to water;

To this end, Kenya and Israel signed a 10-point Declaration that will see the two countries deepen and widen their cooperation in the water and irrigation sector, dubbed the Jerusalem Declaration. To ensure the implementation of the Jerusalem Declaration, a joint steering committee was formed. The committee was given until July 2016 to ensure implementation of the same before the expected historic visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in July 2016.

The Ceremony that took place at Maji House was graced by Cabinet Secretary for Water and Irrigation Hon. Eugene Wamalwa and Ambassador of Israel to Kenya Amb. Yahel Vilan. Others who represented the Universities included Prof. Rose Mwonja Vice Chancellor of Egerton University, Prof. Steven Kiama, Principal College of Agriculture and Veterinary Studies (CAVS), Prof. John Kimenju, Dean Faculty of Agriculture and Johnson Kinyua, Director of University Advancement from the University of Nairobi.