

SPEECH BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE KENYA VETERINARY BOARD MARKING THE END OF THE TENURE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018-2021



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Today the 20th day of March 2021 marks the end of our tenure and the last day in office as Directors of the Kenya Veterinary Board (KVB) having had a very successful stint at the helm of the KVB. I wish to thank the almighty God, the leadership of the Executive and Legislative arms of the Government including their representatives, Members of the Board of Directors of KVB, Management and Staff of KVB, Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Paraprofessionals and members of the Public who consume our services for the cooperation accorded to KVB to enable us achieve the milestones during the 2018-2021 period.

Launching the Kenya Veterinary Board Resource Centre and Headquarters

This week we officially opened the Kenya Veterinary Board (KVB) Resource Centre and Headquarters, having fulfilled a milestone dream I had for the veterinary profession in Kenya when I took over the leadership of this esteemed regulator. This achievement is as nostalgic as when I led the veterinary stakeholders in ensuring the successful passage of the Veterinary Surgeons and Veterinary Paraprofessionals (VSVP) Act in 2011. The VSVP Act not only provided for the regulation of the entire veterinary practice scope but also established the Veterinary Medicines Directorate to focus on regulating veterinary pharmaceuticals.

Achievements and Experiences of the Kenya Veterinary Board 2018-2021

Despite the Covid-19 and other challenges, the KVB has successfully implemented the agenda it set out to undertake when the current Board took office in 2018. The KVB despite having been in existence for almost 70 years, and now playing a critical national role, had remained without an appropriate operational base. The KVB in 2018 set out to build a Resource Centre and Headquarters, hire staff to deliver the mandate, operationalize the regional offices and ensure registered veterinary practitioners are able to carry out their business successfully during the strategic plan period 2018-22 which has largely been achieved or on course to be done one year to the end of the Plan period.

The Secretariat led by management has in addition delivered on majority of the Board mandate assignments as scheduled in the annual workplans however, the issue of quacks remain a challenge and should be addressed fully in the next strategic focus since the KVB's capacity to address the vice has been built.

The KVB has delivered its mandate despite some individuals' relentless sabotage efforts that were although unsuccessful, but extremely time consuming and annoying. I only challenge veterinarians in leadership to focus on delivering for their constituents and institutions they represent while desisting from playing negative energy emissary roles, and to stop investing in tackling individuals at the expense of issues which only end up demeaning the profession. At the end, KVB has emerged stronger despite the inconvenience that has been visited on the committed Board members and staff.

Regulating Veterinary Pharmaceuticals

The separation of regulation of veterinary medicines and human medicines which we achieved with the establishment of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) in 2011 and later operationalized through VMD Regulations in 2015 needs everybody's support to guarantee safe use of veterinary medicines. It is therefore the view of the KVB that VMD leadership returns to focus on this noble mandate that underpinned its establishment. I was confronted with commercial interests during my tenure while recruiting the Council Members of VMD and I must state that profession is faced with an awkward scenario where the law establishing VMD was not applicable to the appointment of the Directors of VMD and yet they are expected to enforce the same law. I invite all the veterinarians

to ensure that they comply with the law at all times since legislation is an equalizer and removes the behaviour akin to the law of the jungle.

Independence, Discipline and Finality of KVB on Veterinary Decisions

If functional, the KVB should not be popular especially with quacks and its clients who are in the habit of testing the elasticity of the law. The behaviour of veterinarians while subject to national legislation, is governed under the VSPV Act and Regulations and a robust Code of Ethics. The role of the veterinary profession is to promote animal health, animal welfare, public health and the protection of the environment. Veterinarians must adhere to high ethical standards and be prepared to apply their specialised knowledge and skills in the interest of others. Members of the public are invited to register any concerns they have on delivery of veterinary services whether from public or private service providers to the KVB who will adjudicate fairly.

KVB through rigorous enforcement of the law ensures that veterinarians in the public and the private sectors have the necessary qualifications, scientific expertise and experience and are free from any financial, commercial, hierarchical, political and other pressures which might affect their competence to make sound professional judgments based on existing scientific data. KVB is final in matters veterinary regulation and if any of the vets are unhappy with its decisions please do not waste the precious time of any senior government official but proceed to the High Court for it is the only one with jurisdiction to countermand KVB decisions.

While the majority of veterinarians have gone about their assignments with decorum, over the last three years we have noted a trend where very few but vocal veterinarians have perfected the art of peddling misinformation to their colleagues and members of the public. I have deep concern for the small team of vets who throughout my tenure relentlessly invested in modern propaganda, which wasn't only to misinform or push an agenda but aimed at exhausting one's critical thinking, and finally annihilate the truth with the sole aim of derailing our focus as KVB, fortunately they failed. I believe the detractors will one day recover their consciences and focus on working for the common good of the profession. A lie repeated becomes almost a fact to the unsuspecting many. For those unlucky to have been disciplined please address the facts and avoid sideshows.

Kenya Veterinary Board Stakeholders

The KVB has critical stakeholders that reside within the public and private sectors comprising those in advocacy, training or delivering veterinary services. We recognize the Directorate of Veterinary Services, that's expected to be the lead public service provider alongside the 47 County Veterinary Services and therefore hold them responsible for any shortcomings in this arena. Registered private practitioners are expected to deliver veterinary services to the public at a fee and we hope that public sector service providers will always partner with the private sector. To the associations such as the Kenya Veterinary Association (KVA), Kenya Animal Scientist Practitioner Association (KASPA), Kenya Veterinary Paraprofessional Association (KVPA) and Animal Health Technicians Association of Kenya (AHTTAK) please prioritize the entire advocacy agenda for the Animal Resources Industries. A key focus is the regulation of veterinary pharmaceuticals that the Health Sector is bent on wresting from our space through the multiple initiatives led by the Kenya Food and Drug Authority Bill of 2019 that will bring to nought all the efforts invested in better regulation of veterinary medicines. Eternal vigilance is key.

The quack menace and discipline of veterinary surgeons and veterinary paraprofessionals

Veterinary surgeons, veterinary paraprofessionals and the publics who are their clients have been increasingly confronted with the exploits of quacks that have invaded the serene practice spaces of the profession of Veterinary Medicine. I wish to assure veterinarians and the public that the KVB has built capacity to lead the onslaught on the quacks and therefore I wish to invite all the veterinary practitioners and our clients the animal owners to cooperate in exposing these crooks for the law to take its course.

The KVB is going to invest in consistent public education and with the 7 regional inspectorate offices, delivery of veterinary services will be at their optimal where only veterinary surgeons and veterinary para-professionals will be licensed. Veterinary professionals must adhere strictly to their code of ethics to ensure that illegal competition cannot match the services they deliver.

KVB in the next frontier must focus on cutting edge regulation of the profession based on information communication and technology to maintain its regional leadership and join the leading international veterinary professional regulators. KVB's independence in decision making is not negotiable and the incoming Board of Directors of KVB must safeguard this right to ensure the management under the Chief Executive Officer are able to independently carry out the functions as set out in the VSVP Act and Regulations guided by the robust Code of Ethics to better serve the Animal Resources Industries. For the incoming Board of Directors always avoid personalizing corporate issues for it is the way of entry for detractors. For those I may have wronged I seek your forgiveness and I also forgive those who went out of their way to offend me but remember not to thrive on rumours but tacit information which is available for those who genuinely need it. For the KVB Secretariat under Dr Ragwa, well done and with that singular focus and commitment KVB will be as great as always as you serve your clients under the next Board.

THANK YOU, VETERINARIANS, FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE YOU AND GOD BLESS THE PROFESSION AND OUR REGULATOR.



MARKING A TRANSITION (2018--2021) IN THE VETERINARY PROFESSION IN KENYA: LONG LIVE THE VETERINARY PROFESSION.