



## Message from the Director

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CASELAP was formally established by University Council of Nairobi on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 2007 as a teaching and research unit focusing on postgraduate level capacity building in Environmental Policy, Environmental Law and Environmental Diplomacy. The primary objective was, and remains, to develop advanced level expertise in environmental governance. This was a reaction by the University to the fact that despite abundance of scientific and technical information on dangers of environmental degradation, actual threat to environment and depletion of natural resources has continued unabated. Such trends have threatened the threshold of sustainability of resource base and viability of sustainable development for the benefit of the public and private sectors.

Initially, CASELAP had conducted national, regional and global workshops which included training of the judiciary on access to environmental justice. That exercise had immediate results seen in judicial decisions in several environmental cases. On the other extreme, CASELAP as a member of a global learned society, organized a global conference under aegis of IUCN Academy of Environmental Law to discuss issues in Land Use and Sustainable Development.

Today, under the mandate by the Council, and with the core and expanding staff deployed by the University, CASELAP has established its credibility as a centre of excellence which will respond to the challenges of capacity building in environmental governance. The core function is to produce expertise at master's and doctoral degree levels. In addition it has prepared programme for teaching of short diploma and certificate courses such as Environmental Impact Assessment, Environmental Audit, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Economics of Environmental Governance. Many more may be prepared at the request of stakeholders in environmental governance. It is obvious in Kenya for instance that the majority of judges that have been trained in environmental jurisprudence will no longer be in service after the changes under the new constitution. Besides, it is axiomatic that the constitution will have encouraged promotion of good governance for sustainable development, and CASELAP is ready for these challenges.

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Apart from responding to the needs for sustainable capacity building CASELAP will now respond to



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national, regional and global needs for a credible and reputed think tank in environmental governance in Africa. Centres of that kind are common place in other continents. Oftentimes, those seeking think tanks to undertake challenging such services in environmental governance have had to look to European institutions. The position of CASELAP in Nairobi with the multitude of international public and corporate institutions, will offer handy local response which will be advised by distinguished scholars with global reputation.

Rapid expansion of CASELAP activities have been hampered by lack of physical accommodation. The plan to provide CASELAP with its own building will not only facilitate rapid response to the conceptual and practical challenges. It will also provide a home for local and international stakeholders in environmental governance. And if the stakeholders have contributed resources to construction and development of the Centre, they will assume a legitimate right to demand the services and to partnership in CASELAP.

Prof. Nicholas Oguge

Director, CASELAP

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