February 20, 2014

Director’s Message

It is a great time of year for us at the Uganda Virus Research Institute. We are able to reflect on the great sense of accomplishment as we think about the wonderful accomplishments we had in 2013.

Ticking off several successful activities is a great feeling. It is truly such accomplishments that are driving UVRI towards its vision of being: “a world class centre of excellence in health research”. As an Institute, we are always looking for ways that help us attain this vision and improve our staff’s capacity while delivering services to the nation.

Our flagship Open Day on Science – a national event that only UVRI together with Makerere University has held in the country – was held in July for the second time, gathering more than 2,000 students from 30 schools, an event that gave UVRI print and electronic media coverage for several weeks. The Open Day was graced with the presence of the Hon. Minister of Health, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda and the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention Director from Atlanta, Dr. Thomas Frieden. At the close of the year, the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative successfully hosted a fisherfolk consultative meeting to address the unique health needs of this community and discuss ways of dealing with them in December. The Medical Research Council celebrated 100 years of research worldwide. We are happy to partner with these reputable organisations.

We were also able to review our Strategic Plan of 2009/2014 with moral and financial support from the International Association of National Public Health Institutions (IANPHI); Public Health England (PHE) and local and global partners. Further, a four persons’ team visited UVRI in June (at our invitation) to contribute to the Institute’s communications plans. Fruits of several conversations on communications saw Ms. Jennifer Bakyawa come on board the same month of June. As a communications fellow at UVRI, she was tasked with helping improve the coordination and harmonisation of communication across all UVRI Divisions and its partners. We launched our Clients Charter in the same month laying a foundation for UVRI’s commitment to serving its clients and stakeholders and how it will keep its promise to provide feedback to these clients.

The National Influenza Centre (NIC) at UVRI organised the first regional influenza symposium in October in close co-operation with Makerere University Walter Reed Project. The fourth MUII symposium was held at UVRI campus in Entebbe. The meeting is one of the partnership activities between Makerere University and UVRI was well attended by both young scientists of the two institutions as well as their supervisors and mentors. Our senior scientists were in September treated to a joint training workshop on communicating research with journalists from various media houses.

2014 promises to be another exciting year for UVRI in the media with several activities such as a media training of our UVRI/ Makerere University Infection and Immunity Research Training Centre planned to be implemented.

We continue research on various viral and other communicable diseases in 2014.

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