

AU to prioritise pollinators for food security



Prof Mary Gikungu, a researcher for Nairobi museum (2nd L) looks on as Dr J. Jaramillo (C), a global scientist at Bayer Bee Care hands over the signed contract to Dr Mzalendo Kibunjia. COURTESY PHOTO

BY BY BRIAN SSENOGA
editorial@nationmedia.com

Climate change is one of the leading concerns of the world today due to the effects it has or about to cause on any form of development including food security.

This is evidenced by the melting glaciers, disappearing forest cover, drying water sources in addition to the increasing pollution.

During a recent meeting in Kampala, researchers on bee health, honey production and pollination services united under the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU IBAR) warned that the African continent could be heading for the worst particularly in the area of food security given the declining rate of major crop pollinators.

"We seek to help in forging ways of sustaining the existence of bees and the proliferation and

sustenance of their colonies, especially in the light of the rapid losses of bee populations in some regions of the world and of major environmental stresses," said Prof Mary Gikungu, a researcher for Nairobi Museum.

"We must address ourselves to the role that African bees can play in Africa, harnessing their full potential and contribution to each country's development outcomes, the welfare and health of its people, its resources, environment and economy," she added. Gikungu pointed out that African crops require diverse pollinators including moths, bats and bees but the unfortunate bit is that they are dying off and the bees are much affected by the climatic change.

According to studies, there are about 20,000 different species of bees in the world pollinating 75 per cent of the world's flowering plants and 30 per cent of food crops.