**Paleoenvironmental Workshop Opening Speech**

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all of the participants in this Palaeoenvironmental Workshop! This training seminar is jointly hosted by the Palynology and Palaeobotany Section of the National Museums of Kenya and the University of York’s Institute for Tropical Ecosystems. We anticipate that this meeting will be a refreshing mix of interactive teaching and hands-on practicals. These activities will develop key skills through the development of ability to critically analyse important records of environmental change crucial to the sustainable management of the landscape. These modules are designed to complement your varied backgrounds and other training and propel your careers in a world where issues related to the environment are extremely complex and involve multiple stakeholder perspectives. We are excited to present this material to an enthusiastic group with a broad range of experience and interests; a group in which we will all benefit from the views brought to the discussions by others. Of course, there will be time for socialising over tea breaks and lunches and discuss the developments of our own individual projects. Rest assured, it will be a valuable and lively few days.

I will now introduce the organizers of the workshop. Rob Marchant has worked in tropical ecosystems for 20 years and has published extensively on tropical ecology, vegetation dynamics, and human-environment interactions. Stephen Rucina earned his PhD from the University of Amsterdam in 2012 working on palaeoecological records from Mt Kenya and from savannah ecosystems. Colin Mustaphi earned his PhD at Carleton University in 2013 studying past wildfire activity and the various environmental factors that control the patterns of fire on the landscape. I am happy to be able to host this event at the National Museums of Kenya and am proud to see such a wide diversity of people engaged in the very relevant fields of natural sciences and the roll of humans on the planet. I hope you enjoy this seminar and establish beneficial skills and new friends to carry into your bright futures!

Thank you