

Condolence Message for Bethwell A. Ogot

It was with deep sorrow that I learned of the passing of one of Africa's foremost scholars, historians and Kenya's first Professor of History, Prof. Bethwell Allan Ogot.

Prof. Ogot will be eternally remembered for his immense contribution to African history, research methods and theory. His work, especially on the global stage, particularly in education, will have a lasting impact. His academic journey, both at Makerere and the University of Nairobi, was instrumental in the creation of the Institute of Development Studies and the Institute of African Studies, at a time when history and development studies were seen as lesser academic disciplines.

His time as Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academics and Dean of the School of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Nairobi stands as a testament to his leadership and the many achievements realised during his tenure. Prof. Ogot's contributions were not confined to Africa; his influence was felt globally, notably as the President of the International Scientific Committee for UNESCO's *General History of Africa*, which culminated in the publication of a comprehensive nine-volume history of Africa. He also served as a member of UNESCO's International Commission for the History of Humanity.

As we celebrate his life, we remember the pivotal roles he played, alongside scholars such as Prof. David Some, Prof. Mibey and Bob Wishitemi, in the founding of academic institutions like Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Narok University, Karatina University, Kabianga University, Rongo University College and Odera Akang'o Colleges, which

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continue to shape the minds of students today. His tenure as Chancellor of Moi University was also marked by great success.

Prof. Ogot's contributions were not limited to academia. He played a vital role in the political sphere, particularly at the East African Legislative Assembly, where he represented Kenya with great dedication following his appointment by President Mzee Jomo Kenyatta.

Kenya, the Luo community and the people of Gem have lost an outstanding scholar and historian, whose legacy will be difficult to match. However, we take comfort in the many books and papers he authored, which will continue to inspire intellectual discourse among scholars, researchers and future generations.

As you take your final bow, Prof. Ogot, we salute your remarkable body of work, which has contributed immensely to Africa's intellectual independence and the study of human history. Your legacy will remain an enduring force for generations to come.

I had the privilege of visiting Prof. Ogot a few months ago at his home in Yala, where we engaged in rich discussions about the state of academia in Kenya today and the political challenges related to underdevelopment, which continued to concern him deeply. During our meeting, he graciously presented me with copies of his latest publications, *Dholuo-English Dictionary* and *Odera Akang'o*. I insisted on purchasing the books out of respect for his intellectual labour, and he, though reluctantly, honoured my gesture.

Fare thee well, Wuod Gem ...

* **Professor Peter Anyang' Nyong'o** is the Governor of Kisumu County, Kenya, and a distinguished scholar, author, and veteran politician whose career spans academia, public service, democratic governance, and national development.