Betty J. **Kiplagat** LLM '06

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Betty Kiplagat LLM '06 calls Nairóbi, Kenya, her home, but both her education and her work have taken her around the globe.

Kiplagat earned a bachelor of law degree with honors in 1995 from Wolverhampton University, Midlands, UK, and a diploma in law in 1998 from the Kenya School of Law, Nairóbi. Following graduation, she worked for several years as a legal officer at the Royale Health Club, and before that as an associate with Macharia Njeru Advocates in Nairóbi.

"The main reason I enrolled at Pierce Law in 2005 was my need to learn more about intellectual property as my job entails advising scientists on these issues," says Kiplagat who serves as administrative legal officer for the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI).

KARI undertakes research programs in food crops, horticultural and industrial crops, livestock and range management, land and water management, vaccine development and production and socio-economics. In undertaking its research activities, KARI also collaborates with numerous organizations both in developed and developing countries, and recognizes the increasing importance of the private sector in advancing its mandate.

Kiplagat is responsible for the interpretation of the national and international laws and treaties as they relate to intellectual property rights and plant breeders rights in Kenya.

"Through the legal office, KARI has developed a draft intellectual property policy that will guide the Institute on matters relating to the protection and acquisition of intellectual property," says Kiplagat. "The policy also provides for collection of royalties for licensed IPs and plant varieties, and through this initiative, the Institute has started earning income from its intellectual property."

"The role of KARI is to further ensure that the technology developed is appropriate for the climate and conditions of the country. The technology is developed as a 'public good,' but since it cannot be transferred directly to the farmers by KARI, the Institute has entered into license agreements with the respective merchants so as to collect royalties that will be ploughed back into research," explains Kiplagat.

"I am also responsible for interpreting the Science and Technology (Amendment) Act, Seeds and Plant Varieties Act, Intellectual Property Act and advising on their legal implications," explains Kiplagat.

She recently represented Kenya during the COP-MOP meeting of the Cartagena Protocol held in Bonn, Germany.



According to Kiplagat, "These conferences bring together experts on the Cartagena Protocol. We follow the rules of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), an international agreement that provides guidelines for further action on a particular issue."

"I am currently involved in the drafting of the biosafety law of my country," explains Kiplagat. "This involves training the Parliamentarians, the media and other stakeholders on the importance of biosafety legislation for the country. Most of the knowledge on biosafety has been acquired through workshops." In addition, Kiplagat serves as a task force member for the establishment of an Agricultural Research Trust Fund to provide competitive grants for research in the agricultural sector.

"I hope that the legacy I leave for my country is that management of intellectual property can be beneficial for the development of the research and development sector of Kenya. This is mainly due to the fact that most of our development partners from both the north and the south will be able to transfer their technology without the fear of their intellectual property being misappropriated," explains Kiplagat. "It is my hope that the developers of intellectual property in Kenya will also benefit from the royalties collected by their respective institutions, something that is not yet happening."

Kiplagat enjoys reading, traveling and socializing.