



**Statement by  
Prof. Mabel Imbuga, PhD, EBS  
Vice Chancellor  
Jomo Kenyatta University of  
Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT)  
during  
JKUSO Inauguration Ceremony  
Friday, October 21, 2011  
JKUAT Assembly Hall**

Deputy Vice Chancellors,  
Campus Principals  
Deans of Faculties  
Directors, Chairmen of Departments  
The New Student Leaders,  
Out going Students Leaders  
Staff, Students  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great delight and joy to join you this morning to witness and preside over the inauguration and swearing in ceremony of our newly elected student leaders- the Jomo Kenyatta University Students Organization (JKUSO).

Let me first take this opportunity to congratulate the new student leaders for their victory in the just concluded JKUSO elections. Winning an election is a demonstration of the faith the students fraternity have in you. In turn, I urge you to reciprocate by serving your fellow companions guided by the virtues of humility and integrity. I also take this opportunity to commend the outgoing team of JKUSO officials for the contribution they have made to the welfare of the entire students community during their term of service. I believe this will continue to be reflected in your conduct in the wider society.

Today's inauguration of the new JKUSO Council marks the first time in a long time in the history of JKUSO that a first year student has been elected into the JKUSO governing body. This is a good development that shows that student elections are clearly becoming issue based without much regard of one's academic year. This is a welcome move that will definitely ensure students elected the right representatives to articulate their agenda. However, I still note with concern the low number of female representation at the JKUSO Council. I am informed that it is only two women students who made it to the Council of nine members here at the main campus in Juja. While this is a great improvement from last year where women representation had to be made through nomination, much more need to be done to bring on board more women into the JKUSO elective positions. I call upon women students to come forward and offer themselves for elective posts. You should shake off the traditional gender bias that has always tilted fortunes against women in society. This is something that should be eliminated particularly in a University which is a community of thinkers who should be guided by rationality.

As you may be now aware, Kenya's supreme law makes discrimination on gender basis illegal. The document stipulates a mandatory minimum representation of at least a third

of either gender balance representation in all elective positions. This rule as well applies to employment opportunities. JKUSO is not spared on this either.

I am pleased to note that though highly vigorous and evidently well financed, the just concluded elections were conducted in a peaceful atmosphere which is quite commendable. In the past, we as University Management had raised concerns about the source of extravagance JKUSO election funding but we are now glad that this year, electioneering was conducted using modern means of communication mainly the social media including Face book, Tweeter and many more. I was particularly impressed that this year's elections too employed the use of the social media which for the first time brought up candidates to discuss their agenda with their electorate in the American presidential Television debate style. This is a commendable initiative that again demonstrates that democracy is taking route in student's politics.

Furthermore, I am also pleased to note that we never found any external hand attempting to influence the just concluded elections. As you may know this is a vice that has plagued other public universities where student politics has often degenerated and highly influenced by major national party politics which as you know is often dangerous and divisive.

As you embark on your assignments, remember that there will be enormous challenges and temptations ahead and I wish to urge you to work together to unite the entire student population. This is good as it will guarantee that JKUAT operates as a single family with the ultimate goal to ensure ours is among the world's greatest and most successful university. It is also good for Kenya's overall national unity. In the words of author

**Harold R. McAlindon** I urge you to seek your own new path to guide you instead of following an already existing footpath. It is a question of thinking outside the box.

As leaders, you have the ability to get your comrades to willingly follow you. To achieve this you need to continuously build your leadership capacity by always seeking to enhance your various leadership attributes which include good communication skills, honesty, and visionary outlook. Successful leaders too are people who are good at selecting a good team, and always living with the conviction that action speaks louder than words and will always endeavor to motivate people around them. Consistency and the ability to stand against criticism is an important attribute of effective leaders.

As a University, we are proud that we are rated highly among the public universities and this is largely attributed to the kind of student leadership that we have continued to uphold. As new student leaders therefore, I expect you to make your contribution to add more value and credibility to JKUAT. This is why the University will continue to train all new student leaders to ensure that they provide the right leadership in accordance with JKUAT Vision and Mission. This will help you to make informed and visionary decisions from time to time.

Finally, I urge you as leaders to aspire for high levels of responsibility, performance, integrity, vision and magnanimity. I urge you to try as much as possible to articulate these same values to the rest of your colleagues. I encourage you to be always at the forefront in encouraging fellow students to rise above their personal interests for the common good of the student community and that of JKUAT because you are the image of the university. Therefore respond positively as leaders especially when confronted

with your comrades' grievances. Let us always look at our problems together, as this would enable us to utilize our resources productively.

Once again receive my best wishes as you embark on your leadership tasks. Work hard and please set standards for others to follow. Utilize every opportunity available to add value to yourselves and to your fellow students, to the youth, to the society and to the entire humanity.

I thank you for listening to me.