



Statement
by
Prof. Mabel Imbuga PhD, EBS
Vice Chancellor -JKUAT
during the
Commissioning of Engineering Workshops Ceremony
Kimathi University College of Technology
Kimathi University Main campus - Nyeri
Friday April 15, 2011

Prof. Francis Gichaga, Chancellor of JKUAT

Mr. Waibochi, Council Chairman

Prof. Engineer Ndirangu Kioni, Principal, KUCT

Council Members

Deputy Principals

Deans and Directors

Chairmen of Departments

Staff and Students

Ladies, Gentlemen,

I feel greatly honoured on behalf of the entire JKUAT and Kimathi University College of Technology fraternity to welcome you to the Kimathi University College of Technology to the official commission ceremony of the engineering workshop constructed to meet

modern engineering training needs. From the onset, I take the opportunity to warmly congratulate the Government of Kenya for availing resources that have seen the development of this project. This initiative clearly demonstrates the keen interest the state has in the youth in our public universities who are expected to take a central role in steering Kenya's development agenda.

Mr Chancellor, the question of Kenya's economic development has remained a major government preoccupation since independence 50 years ago. Numerous and fairly ambitious development blue prints starting with the landmark, Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1966 to the current Vision 2030 have been developed to guide post colonial Kenya. One common factor to be found in these documents is their emphasis on the centrality of education in national development. The massive airlifts of Kenyans

to the United States and to the former Soviet Union for higher education shortly after our independence were a direct consequence of the said Sessional Paper. Majority of these airlift beneficiaries were instrumental in laying the early social, economic and political foundations that has continued to guide the country to this moment.

Furthermore, the huge budgetary allocations that the government commits to the education sector underscore the central role that education occupies in national development. It is a fact that is self evident that industrialised countries remain ahead because of their huge investment budgets in training and research.

What we are therefore witnessing here today is quite commendable since the new facility will go a long way in

enhancing the training of our young engineers to the highest level possible. It is through such kind of purposeful training that we can be able to empower our youth to take up their rightful role in steering the Vision 2030 development agenda.

Mr. Chancellor, we at JKUAT feel greatly honoured and encouraged to be the ones mentoring this University College. Indeed, we have been assisting this institution to quickly grow towards attaining full university autonomy. I wish to inform you Mr. Chancellor that all the engineering programmes on offer here under the Joint Admission Board belong to JKUAT. Moreover, engineering students from this institution receive their practical training at JKUAT as part of our mentoring duty.

It is my hope that as this University College grows towards full university autonomy; it will need to develop its own academic

programmes in line with its Vision, Mission, and Strategic Plan in order for the institution to acquire its own identity. Mr. Chancellor, we at JKUAT are again willing and pledge to support the initiative through for instance assisting the Kimathi University College to develop own curriculum. Our deans at JKUAT are available to offer the necessary support to this institution to come up with its own academic curriculums crucial for its autonomy. We have done this to this University College before and we are determined to continue to assist.

Mr. Chancellor, our deans in collaboration with their counterparts here at Kimathi have assisted to develop up to five academic programmes now exclusively owned by this institution. I am pleased Mr. Chancellor to announce that the 43rd JKUAT Senate sitting on the twenty second day of February 2011 approved all

the five undergraduate programmes that include, BSc in Food Science and Technology, BSc in Geospatial and Information Science, BSc in Geomatic Engineering Geospatial Information Systems , BSc Nursing and BSc in Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality Management.

As you can see, Kimathi University College is following the footsteps of JKUAT in terms of the academic programme on offer that is Technology laden. However, offering these particular programmes come with many challenges. One of the key challenges facing our local universities offering technological programmes and engineering disciplines in particular is the restrictive and sometimes punitive conditions imposed by the statutory Engineers Registration Board of Kenya; requirements for approval of new and modern engineering programmes. The only

contradiction Mr. Chancellor is that the new programmes have become extremely popular in the job market against the traditional engineering programmes that the Board has devotedly stuck to. It is a dilemma that we are grappling with.

As a university however, we are aware of the problems associated with the emergence of new developments that are often resisted by the status quo. In this regard, we shall not tire in constantly engaging the Board in an attempt to encourage them to recognize the new developments in engineering. However, as our Chancellor and top engineering scholar, we appeal to you to use your immense influence to encourage the Board to review its stance. For all sectors of this country, including that of training of engineers are all working towards one goal - to ensure Kenya

attains the status of a newly industrialized country by the year 2030.

I thank you most sincerely for listening to me.