




**Welcoming remarks by  
Prof. Mabel Imbuga, PhD. EBS  
Vice Chancellor  
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology  
during  
the official opening session of the  
2011 International Federation of Landscape Architecture Africa Symposium on  
Landscape Architecture Education and Practice  
Tuesday, October 4, 2011  
At the Safari Park Hotel, Nairobi**



**Hon. Njeru Githae, Minister for Nairobi Metropolitan Development**

**Mr. Philip Sika, Permanent Secretary for Nairobi Metropolitan Development**

**Architect Desiree Martínez, President, International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA).**

**Arch. Stephen Oundo, Chairman, Architectural Association of Kenya**

**Distinguished Lead Speakers**

**Conference Participants**

**Invited Guests,**


**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a pleasure to join you this evening on this special occasion where professionals in various fields of the Natural and Built Environment, led by Landscape Architects, converge to deliberate on issues affecting Landscape Architecture Education and Practice in Africa. On behalf of the entire Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) community, I take this early opportunity to extend a warm welcome to all participants to Kenya and to JKUAT. *Karibuni!*

It is indeed a great honour for us in JKUAT to host the symposium that is being held in Africa for the first time. Mr. Minister, as a University, we are proud to co- host this Symposium in association with the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) and Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK).


The choice of the conference organisers to choose JKUAT to host this symposium is a clear demonstration of the high regard the international fraternity of landscape architecture have for JKUAT. It is a gesture that we welcome since it fosters our Vision in which JKUAT endeavours to be **A University of global excellence in training, research and innovation for development.**

Indeed, this workshop comes after we have just concluded two other international conferences. The first such conference on Applied Geoinformatics for Society and Environment ended a month ago. It brought together up to 120 researchers in geographical Information system, remote sensing, and photogrammetry drawn from 19 countries of Africa, Europe, North America and Asia. In the second conference, JKUAT hosted the Third Instrumentation Workshop held in August in which 17 scholars of chemistry drawn from seven sub-Saharan Africa countries were trained on the modern use of Gas Chromatography & Mass Spectrometry.



Furthermore, JKUAT is now firmly at the forefront of playing a more proactive role in Africa's integration agenda. This was actualized last January when JKUAT won a highly competitive bid to host the Pan African University's Institute of Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation. The Institute that is essentially a continental centre of graduate training and research aimed at promoting interstate relations among African countries is expected to admit its inaugural students next year.

Today's event is yet another milestone in our endeavour to endear ourselves to the global agenda in the built industry and landscape architecture that has become an important academic discipline in developing countries like Kenya where planning for shelter largely remains a backwater affair. This explains why JKUAT has a well established School of Architecture and Building Sciences (SABS) which has continued to be instrumental in the provision of training of the various professionals critical in serving in the Built Environment. The School has also been proactive in spearheading research and in providing subsidized consultancy services to the community.

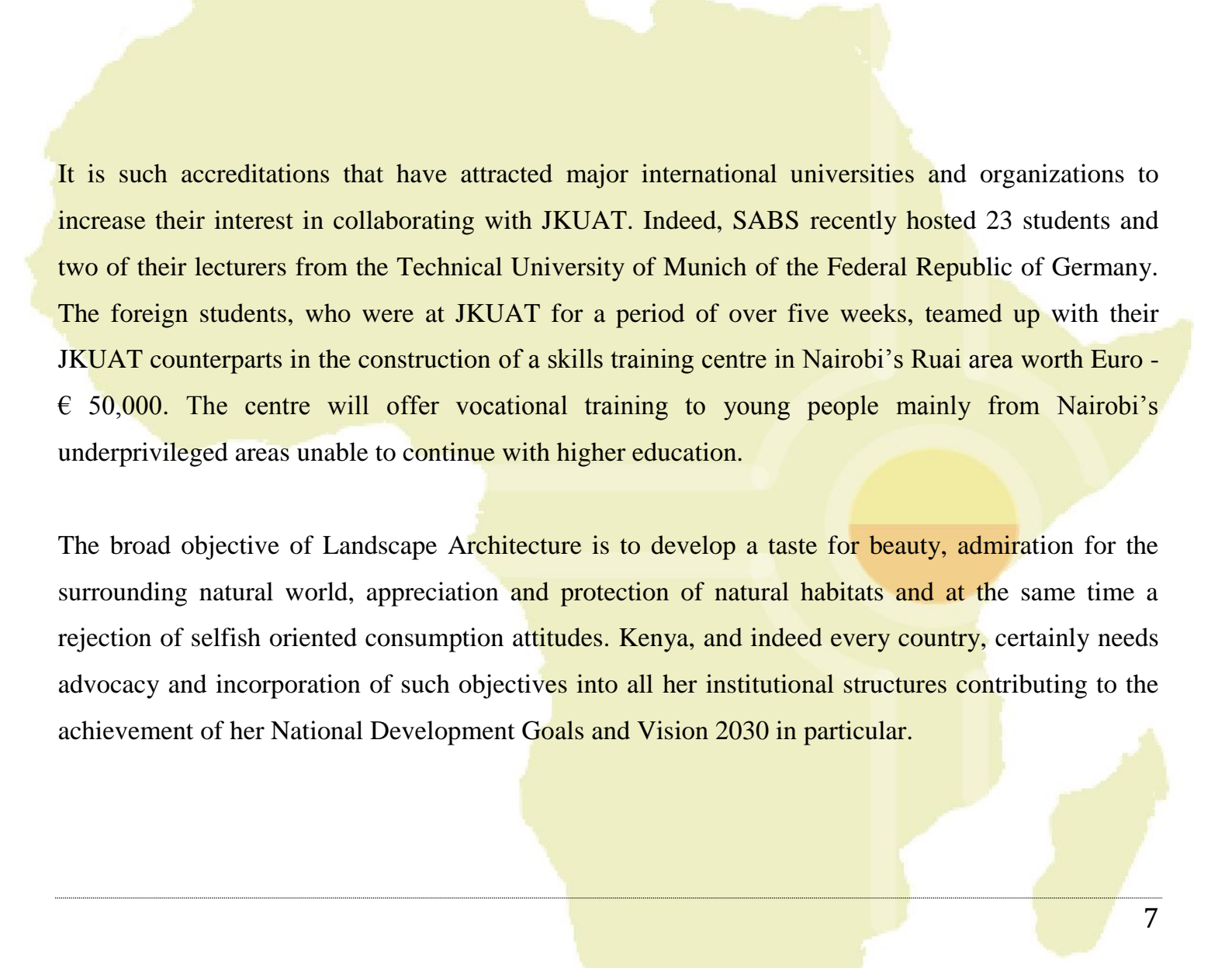


Of immediate relevance is the role the Department of Landscape Architecture has been playing in the promotion of professionalism within our immediate neighbourhood. I am pleased to inform you that the Department has been working closely with the Thika Municipal Council in preparing a land zoning plan for Juja Division. The Plan has since been forwarded to the Minister for approval.

In addition, the School has been proactive in the planning and implementation of the Juja University City pilot project that aims to transform Juja Township that hosts JKUAT into a University City. In coming up with this project, JKUAT is motivated by the desire to provide an environmentally friendly city that can only be achieved through professional planning. In this project, JKUAT has already come up with designs to address key facilities such as roads with proper drainage, pavement for pedestrians, street lighting and landscaping. The project, which is at the infancy stage, also attempts to provide solutions likely to promote sustainable water and energy conservation processes and best practices in waste management.

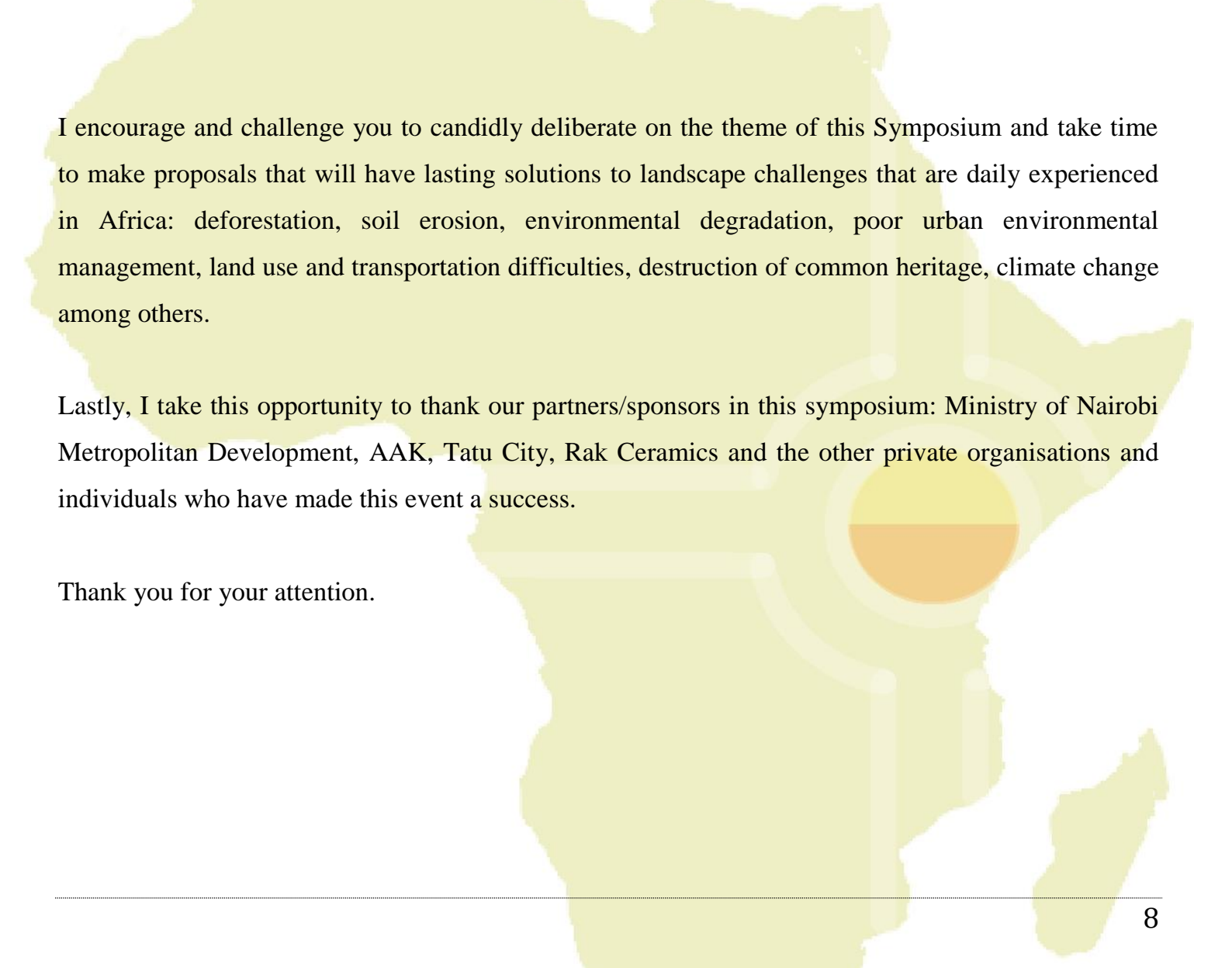
Moreover, JKUAT has acquired a piece of land within its neighbourhood of Kalimoni that will be used as an industrial park. The park, to be designed by our experts, will be used in showcasing our innovations as part of our strategy to inculcate a culture of industrialization among our people, majority of whom rely on the exploitative *Jua Kali* sector. Already, we have assisted in opening a soap production plant at Juja Farm Youth Polytechnic, where six community registered welfare groups are producing soap for sale. In future, such groups will be accommodated in the proposed industrial park.

Likewise, the University promotes Professional Consultancy as one of its core values. The SABS' Project Office is the channel with which staff from different disciplines in the School provides consultancy services. As a tradition, we also continue to benchmark our academic programmes to make them globally relevant by subjecting them to competitive accreditation by both local and international regulatory bodies. Our programmes for example in SABS have been accredited by relevant bodies such as the Commonwealth Association of Architects and the Board of Registration of Architects and Quantity Surveyors of Kenya. In our College of Engineering and Technology, traditional engineering programmes are accredited by the Engineering Registration Board of Kenya. A similar process is being followed to ensure all newly developed engineering programmes are accredited.



It is such accreditations that have attracted major international universities and organizations to increase their interest in collaborating with JKUAT. Indeed, SABS recently hosted 23 students and two of their lecturers from the Technical University of Munich of the Federal Republic of Germany. The foreign students, who were at JKUAT for a period of over five weeks, teamed up with their JKUAT counterparts in the construction of a skills training centre in Nairobi's Ruai area worth Euro - € 50,000. The centre will offer vocational training to young people mainly from Nairobi's underprivileged areas unable to continue with higher education.

The broad objective of Landscape Architecture is to develop a taste for beauty, admiration for the surrounding natural world, appreciation and protection of natural habitats and at the same time a rejection of selfish oriented consumption attitudes. Kenya, and indeed every country, certainly needs advocacy and incorporation of such objectives into all her institutional structures contributing to the achievement of her National Development Goals and Vision 2030 in particular.



I encourage and challenge you to candidly deliberate on the theme of this Symposium and take time to make proposals that will have lasting solutions to landscape challenges that are daily experienced in Africa: deforestation, soil erosion, environmental degradation, poor urban environmental management, land use and transportation difficulties, destruction of common heritage, climate change among others.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to thank our partners/sponsors in this symposium: Ministry of Nairobi Metropolitan Development, AAK, Tatu City, Rak Ceramics and the other private organisations and individuals who have made this event a success.

Thank you for your attention.