



Welcoming Statement  
by  
Prof. Mabel Imbuga PhD, EBS  
Vice Chancellor  
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during  
the African Union Consultative Meeting  
on the Modalities for launching  
Regional Institute of the Pan African University  
for East and Central Africa  
for Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation  
Wednesday March 2, 2011 at AICAD

Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology  
Permanent Secretary for Higher Education, Science and Technology  
Officials from the African Union Commission  
JICA Representatives  
DAAD Representatives  
World Bank Representatives  
CERNX Representatives  
Commission Secretary, Commission for Higher Education  
Fellow Vice Chancellors  
Secretary, National Council for Science and Technology  
Secretary, Higher Education Loans Board  
Distinguished Guests  
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great privilege and honour for me to welcome you to JKUAT for this historic consultative meeting of stakeholders charged with the responsibility of coming up with modalities that would lead to the operationalization of the Pan African University here at the JKUAT. From the onset, allow me to salute all those institutions and individuals who were involved in the complex process of identifying a university in the East and Central Africa to host the proposed regional institute that would focus on Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation. You would obviously agree with me that it is not an easy task to emerge tops in such highly competitive process involving numerous universities of repute. I therefore wish to acknowledge the confidence and honour the African Union has bestowed on us at JKUAT and pledge on behalf of the University Council, Senate, staff and students to work tirelessly to meet the targets set out for this project.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to assure you that the anticipated African Union agenda that JKUAT would be implementing is not a completely new concept to us at JKUAT. The very foundation of this institution in 1981 as a middle level college through a technical agreement cooperation between the governments of Japan and Kenya planted the initial international mission that JKUAT has come to fulfill. Clearly, the generous funding from JICA to this institution for a period of 23 years was instrumental in motivating staff to actively participate in innovative research that remains the hallmark of JKUAT.

With the transformation of the college into an autonomous university in 1994, JKUAT in collaboration with JICA mooted and established a number of unique technology transfer projects that soon gained importance in East and Central Africa region. One such successful technology transfer programme that we jointly launched with JICA in 1993 was the Regional Group Training in which up to 450 participants drawn from 14 countries in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa region were assembled here in JKUAT for a month long specific training on applied

technologies for a ten year period aimed at enhancing the regions' economies. The programme notably tackled a number of challenges mainly in food analysis and post harvest losses, water analysis, and electronic engineering. The programme had a major impact in the promotion of modern technology in the participating countries.

Similarly, JKUAT has been instrumental in forging collaborations with regional universities and research institutions. One such collaboration that had tangible outcome was sealed between JKUAT and Rwanda's Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) in the 1990s in which JKUAT offered its laboratories for use by students of KIST for their practical training in a number of programmes in agriculture and engineering. Indeed JKUAT was instrumental in assisting KIST to develop its curriculum in a number of programmes in engineering and food sciences that eventually saw the elevation of KIST to a university status.

In Nigeria's Kaduna Polytechnic, we have been running our Master of Science programme in Entrepreneurship for the last two years in an arrangement aimed at building the capacity of the Polytechnic's staff. Indeed, I returned from Nigeria last week where I launched a PhD programme in the same discipline.

Similarly, our dons continue to excel in the enterprise of applied research where JKUAT has reported a number of accomplishments crucial in fostering regional economic development. Indeed, this is not the first time JKUAT is making contact with the Africa Union. One of our leading scholars has been recognized by AU twice for her pioneering and forwarding looking research in one of Africa's important but forgotten area of indigenous vegetables. Prof. Mary Abukutsa Onyango of the Department of Horticulture was in April 2009 a guest of the AU where she was decorated for scooping the first prize of the inaugural *Young Professionals and Women in Science competition*. In 2010, Prof. Onyango was

back in Addis Ababa, this time round for winning the *Earth and Life Sciences* award for her research contribution to indigenous vegetables.

Last August, our own scientist at the Department of Zoology pioneered the development and assembly of a trap that is likely to play a central role in the control of Bont ticks in pasture known to cause a number of animal diseases not only in Kenya but in the entire sub-Saharan Africa. Indeed other JKUAT researchers have made advances in initiating more innovations ranging from engineering tools, to chemicals, and food products with most of them operating under registered trademarks.

I want to take this opportunity to assure the people of Africa through the African Union Commission that JKUAT will remain active in the promotion of science and innovation. This would be in line with our vision: *a university of global excellence in Training, Research, and Innovation for Development*. The African Union nomination of JKUAT to be the host of Pan African University's Institute of Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation will certainly boost our resolve to train leaders to urgently spearhead Africa's development. This new initiative truly mark's the beginning of a major milestone in a continent where development remains a mirage despite the numerous availability of natural resources that have been responsible for the rapid development of the North. The borders that define the state in Africa should be urgently relaxed—through initiatives like these--to allow the development of the continent for this is the only panacea to mitigate against the effects of globalization.

I now take this opportunity to take you through a power point presentation on the objectives of this workshop.

Thank you