



**Remarks**

**by**

**Prof. Mabel Imbuga PhD, EBS**

**Vice Chancellor**

**Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology**

**during**

**the Opening Ceremony**

**GC-MS Instrumentation Training Workshop**

**Science Complex Theatre**

**On**

**August 22, 2011**

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am most delighted to receive and warmly welcome scientists drawn from the discipline of Chemistry at the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. We feel highly honored that the Pan Africa Chemistry Network (PACN Kenya) which is an initiative sponsored by the Royal Society of Chemistry (UK) and Syngenta International has selected the Department of Chemistry in our University to host this third instrumentation workshop on Gas Chromatography & Mass Spectrometry.

The choice for JKUAT to host this workshop is a clear demonstration of the high regard the International fraternity of Chemists have for JKUAT. It is a cause that we obviously welcome since it fosters our Vision at JKUAT which is ‘to be a University of global excellence in training, Research, and Innovation for Development.

Indeed, this workshop comes after we have just concluded another international conference -the Applied Geoinformatics for Society and Environment Conference that ended last week and had 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. Furthermore, JKUAT is now firmly at the forefront in 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; Institute of Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation. The institute that is essentially a continental center of graduate training and research aimed at promoting interstate relations among African countries is expected to admit its inaugural students next year.

I am informed that the PACN Kenya Hub which is currently hosted by the Department of Chemistry, University of Nairobi was set up to enable scientists in the field of chemistry from other African countries and from further field to share ideas and best practice in

research and education. The central purpose for this arrangement is to foster innovation and support the emergence of scientific excellence. Their activities entail coordination of conferences, workshops, distribution of books within the African Universities and other scientific activities as well as creating new avenues for research collaborations.

PACN Kenya has held two international conferences on Biodiversity and Sustainable Water in 2008 and 2009 respectively at the University of Nairobi. It has also organized three international workshops on GC-MS; two of them at JKUAT and another one in Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. Today, the network is holding its 3<sup>rd</sup> instrumentation workshop here at JKUAT. These workshops aim at training scientists in the field of chemistry on how to run and interpret spectra generated by the GC-MS instrument. PACN is also supporting the Analytical laboratory of excellence in JKUAT to be used for analysis, training and research within the region.

Africa is less endowed in sufficient scientific knowledge and digital technology that drive the present globalized economy. The challenge to make Africa self sufficient in areas of weakness is so great that we cannot pretend to correct it with one effort as noble as this one. The continued support of such activities will see the realization of development. However the efforts that PACN Kenya is making towards the achievement of industrialization and protection environment will be a yardstick for judging the success of this event today.

The University therefore welcomes this project since it is essential for the achievement of part of our strategic goals of being one of the best university education providers in the continent. We promise our full support to the workshop and the other activities of PACN and pledge open door reception to the project.

JKAUT is ISO 9002:2008 certified. I promise that through the Department of Chemistry, the University will provide more laboratory space for acquisition of more scientific equipment to enable further comprehensive training in the ever expanding scientific field.

The University is also ready to provide staff and student exchange programmes with all the universities represented in this forum. This will ensure establishment of a more stable and comprehensive human resource base.

The University is also looking forward to further training in other instrumentations such as High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), Gas Chromatography (GC) etc. It is this type of approach that is likely to attract and encourage young scientist in the field of chemistry to be proactive in research and innovation. For research is after all the central activity of a modern university.

I wish you fruitful discussions during the workshop.

It is now my pleasure to formally declare the workshop opened.

I thank you most sincerely for listening to me.