



**Statement**

**by**

**Prof. Mabel Imbuga PhD; E.B.S.**

**Vice Chancellor**

**Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology**

**during the official opening ceremony**

**Gender Coordinators Workshop**

**African Institute for Capacity development (AICAD)**

**Friday, February 4, 2011**

**Deputy Vice Chancellors**

**Dr. G. Wango of the Ministry of Education Gender Mainstreaming**

**Prof. Catherine Ndungu of Kenyatta University**

**Ms. Mazrui of Kenyatta University**

**Prof. Rosebella Maranga, Director, JKUAT Gender Services**

**Facilitators**

**Invited Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is with great pleasure that I join you this morning at the start of the sensitization workshop that has brought together coordinators engaged in the promotion of gender equity in our university. It is my firm belief that today's event that has attracted 25 gender facilitators based at our various campuses, faculties and institutes will provide you with an opportunity to assess the progress that you are making in popularizing the need to narrow down the gender biases in our university.

For the workshop to achieve its desired objectives, I am informed that most of the sessions that you would be taken through would mainly be geared at sensitizing you on the elements of our gender policy that we launched last year. You would also be taken through the area of disability mainstreaming that is now receiving a lot of attention in public policy circles. As implementers of the JKUAT Gender Policy, it is my believe that you are by now well versed with the contents of the document that broadly seeks to

ensure gender issues are mainstreamed in all our activities here at the university. One way of meeting this objective is through your active participation in gender awareness campaigns to educate the JKUAT community on the importance of working towards the attainment of gender equity.

You are aware of the huge gender gap that exists here at the university in favor of men who form the bulk of our staff and students particularly in our technological disciplines. The College of Engineering and Technology for example with 10 programmes has a total of slightly less than 2, 000 students and only 270 of them representing 14 percent are girls while the School of Architecture and Building Sciences with three programmes is host to 637 students including 143 girls representing 14 percent. The other two faculties of Agriculture and Science have 462 and 1,163 students that include 30 and 26 percent female students while the Institute of Computer Science and Information Technology host's 576 students and only 84 of them representing 15 percent are girls.

Equally, gender disparity for staff is no better since majority of staffers in teaching and research domain are men. With a total of close to 600 teaching staff, only 20 percent are women. It is therefore not surprising that a keen audit of the composition of most of our committees clearly shows a clear gender bias in favour of men. It is therefore my wish that you remain proactive in an attempt to breach the glaring gap. As coordinators in charge of gender mainstreaming, I urge you to conduct gender audits within your work stations with the aim of developing concrete data base that we could use as a university to come up with possible interventions. Remember that there is a public policy declaration emphasizing the need for state institutions to move towards attaining the stated minimum compliance gender level of 30 %. This means that for every activity that we undertake, we should always aspire to close the gap by moving towards the minimum gender target. It is thus common knowledge that gender inequality is an undesirable attribute that tends to

lock out a large part of the population from making their contribution in the development agenda, a situation that could be a major factor in retarding our national economic growth.

At the national level, there is the National Policy on Gender and Development which proposes tangible steps including putting in place institutional mechanisms for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of gender concerns. There is also the gender policy in education whose framework provides for the planning and implementation of gender responsive education, research and training. The policy addresses disparities in enrollment, retention and transition rates and persisting negative socio-cultural practices and attitudes, which inhibit the realization of equity.

As a University, I acknowledge that we continue to face many other gender related challenges that are also known to hinder academic excellence and staff performance. Some of them includes sexual harassment, gender based violence, unwanted pregnancies, drug abuse, HIV/AIDS. Other than creating awareness, there is urgent need for you to develop tangible interventions to tackle the challenges. I am particularly urging the gender office to develop a policy on sexual harassment that could be used to guide the university in dealing with the unfortunate and dangerous behavior.

At the same time the university is striving to make sure the government policy on persons with disability is adhered to at the university. We have to develop our activities by ensuring we factor in those within our community who are disabled and therefore likely to be disadvantaged. We have to develop our infrastructure such as lecture theatres, laboratories with this segment of our society in mind. This is the only way to ensure that we

capture everybody including those with special disabilities to ensure they participate in our activities. Indeed, I have asked the Director, Gender and Mentoring Center to sensitize the university community as a step towards realizing disability mainstreaming at the university. As coordinators you have a major role to play in the mainstreaming of disability within your locations. It is a role that we must tackle with passion and enthusiasm. As you go about implementing this noble task, be assured of Management's total support. After all it is also a duty that could as well grant one eternal life.

It is now my pleasant duty to declare this workshop officially open.

Thank you.