

Statement

By Prof. Mabel Imbuga PhD,EBS

Vice Chancellor

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

During the Commissioning of ECO House Project

Kiriaini Mixed Secondary School

Saturday October 7, 2011

Kiriaini

Local Government Permanent Secretary Prof. Karega Mutuhi,

Area M.P

Education Officials

Officials of the Provincial Administration

School Principal

Principal College of Engineering and Technology, Prof. Walter Oyawa

Chairman, Board of Governors

School Sponsors, Parents

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great privilege for me to join you to witness the completion of a house at the school using the JKUAT ECO Housing technology initiated by our engineering researchers. I am also informed that a fundraising session has been planned to support the school computer laboratory. From the onset, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to Prof. Karega Mutahi and the people of Kiriaini for embracing modern local technology that is available in our universities.

It is through the initiative of Prof. Mutahi who approached us in JKUAT that we were able to supply two block making machines in July 2009 that have been used in the construction of this building. Indeed we at JKUAT were motivated to engage in the development of the block making machine as a contribution to the suffering of thousands of victims of the 2007 post election violence. Some of the pictures that we saw on the local media-the suffering children and mothers living in deplorable and inhuman conditions compelled us to develop the equipment.

In coming up with the development of the blocking machine project, we had also in mind the idea of the many idle youth who remain unemployed. It is a source of employment to the youth. The machine also empowers the youth to make affordable building materials and thus enhances their wealth creation circumstances. Furthermore, the equipment too reduces the cost of building construction by over 50% percent, a situation likely to enable majority of low income Kenyans to own decent housing.

Obviously you will agree with me that what we are witnessing here today is a clear demonstration of the fruits investment in research can achieve in enhancing the quality of life of Kenyans. I am also Mr. PS pleased to inform you that the University had factored in a training component to this project that has enabled a number of youths from this area to benefit in terms of modern construction skills.

Structures made from this technology use minimum amount of cement, a fact that brings the use of one of the most costly construction materials- cement by 90 %. In conventional construction procedures, the ratio of cement mix to sand is 1: 3 while our technology employs the ratio of 1: 10. Furthermore, this technology has also eliminated the conventional use of mortar for joints since our blocks interlock, a fact that tremendously reduces the cost of construction. The interlock as well enables faster construction progression by allowing unlimited number of block courses to be erected and built in a day. This is in sharp contrast to the conventional method that allows a maximum of three courses to build in a day.

Ladies and gentlemen, this technology has proved to be one of our most successful research undertakings in JKUAT because of the impact it has had in transforming lives of many Kenyans. I want to confirm here that the project has had a major impact and has been embraced by all the people in our country's regions. In central Kenya region alone for example, the machine is in use in Kiriaini, Gatanga, Muranga, Kutus, Nyeri, Kiambu, Kagio, Karatina and Kerugoya.

This is a contribution that we at JKUAT are proud of since it will be crucial in driving Vision 2030 which aims at transforming lives of Kenyans through improved incomes and better living standards. We shall continue to be proactive in this kind of enterprise. However we encourage community groups to frequently visit us to learn and access other technologies that we have developed and are readily available at JKUAT for your empowerment. We have for instance fabricated a number of other machines including a fruit pulper used to produce juice from raw fruit. We also have a plant mill machine that is used to crush dry plants seeds, balks, roots, leaves and such like for food or for

medicinal use. We have numerous other machines mainly in food and chemical products that could empower you. Our door is open for those of you who will knock.

Finally, I sincerely congratulate you for successfully implementing our project through the construction of this house.

I thank you for listening to me.