



Remarks by
Prof Mabel Imbuga, PhD., EBS,
Vice Chancellor, JKUAT
during
the second JKUAT Tech Expo,
Thursday, October 13, 2011
At the Assembly Hall,

The Chief Guest, Dr. Bitange Ndemo, Permanent Secretary for Information and Communication

Deputy Vice Chancellors

Campus Principals

Deans of Faculties

Students and innovators,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you today as we gather to sample the various products of our students' creativity. I also take this opportunity to welcome all our stakeholders to the second annual JKUAT Tech Expo organized basically to showcase student activities as well as provide us an opportunity to interact with them.

In line with this year's theme: "harnessing technology to accelerate the pace of achieving Vision 2030," the role of ICT in driving Kenya's development agenda has never been

relevant. As a country, we are unfortunate not to have mineral and oil resources, but our human capital has an equally great potential to transform our society. The projects we have seen today are just but a glimpse into what we are capable of as a people.

And with a combined effort among the students, the administration and industry players, this edition can build on the very successful inaugural Tech Expo held last year to create an even bigger and better showcase of the vast talents available within the student community.

This event's brings together students, not just from JKUAT, with a view to providing a stage from where participants can present their solutions addressing areas they have identified as wanting, to learn from one another and to give them the exposure they need in the ICT industry.

Never before has such an initiative been more pertinent to them and to the country as it is now. The ICT sector is billed as a key driver for Vision 2030. Konza Technology City is thus a pillar in this respect “where Africa’s silicon savannah begins”. Konza, 60km from the heart of Nairobi on the Nairobi—Mombasa highway, is set to be one of the most successful cities in Africa, competing economically and culturally with the best cities in the world. These youngsters are the people to drive this envisaged technological revolution. From what we have seen, we have every reason to be confident that they will live up to the nation’s expectations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The University is keen to work closely with the industry to provide human capital and as well explore possible partnerships to advance our products and technologies for use by the consumers. It is with this in mind that we established a University-Industry Liaison Office to among other functions steer the promotion of technology transfer and commercialization of the University inventions while at the same time maintaining a channel through which companies, research organizations and government could readily access knowledge generated by JKUAT researchers. I call upon students to make use of

this office in order to take their nascent, but very impressive, innovations to the next level.

It is not impossible for a student to be an entrepreneur and even an employer while still in college. Indeed, I am aware of a number of our students who are at the same time are successful entrepreneurs. One such student, a 21 year old Isaac Osiemo, a second year BSc student in Information Technology who runs a software development and web solutions company ‘Semisoft’ that is making inroads in the world of business. The student who is an exhibitor here is also the person behind the development *Msema Kweli* application software now used to monitor the country’s Constituency Development Fund. This is the only way we can address the problem of youth unemployment and poverty in our country. Thus, I challenge you to turn these ideas into entrepreneurial ventures.

The areas of focus are critical to the country’s wellbeing, hence the potential of mass application of these innovations in the fields of agriculture, software design, multimedia, embedded systems, and engineering and architecture.

Finally, I take this opportunity to express gratitude to the various companies that have come forward to support this very worth cause of promoting youth agenda. I am particularly encouraged by the immense contribution made by the *ICT Board of Kenya, Cellulant, Nokia, Sumsung, Pesapal, Google, Data logic and Dealfish* just to name a few. Obviously without their quick response, this function will have been impossible to stage. I take the opportunity to urge other companies and people of goodwill to come forward to support this kind of venture. It is in supporting such cause that the country will be able to realize and fast track the industrialization process to realize Vision 2030.

I thank you most sincerely for listening to me.

It is now my pleasure to welcome Dr. Bitange Ndemo, Permanent Secretary for Information and Communication who is our Guest of Honour to give his address.

Thank you