



## Speech

by Prof. Mabel Imbuga PhD, EBS

Vice Chancellor

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

During the

18<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony

Thursday July 28, 2011

Graduation Pavilion-JKUAT

The Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology,

Prof. Francis J. Gichaga,

Minister of Higher Education, Science and Technology,

Hon. Prof. Hellen Sambili,

Chairman of University Council,

Council Members,

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher, Science and Technology,

Other Permanent Secretaries,

Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Members of Parliament,

Chancellors of Other Universities,

Fellow Vice Chancellors,



Representatives of the Various Universities and Organizations,

Distinguished Guests,

Alumni,

Parents and Guardians,

Graduands,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I extend my warm welcome to the entire congregation assembled here to celebrate the 18<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.

Mr Chancellor Sir, I am greatly honoured, on behalf of the University community to welcome and congratulate members of the newly gazetted JKUAT council headed by Eng. Julius Riungu on their appointment. We assure you of our commitment and support in your challenging assignment towards the realization of the Vision and Mission of this University. Similarly, I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the former council members headed by Mr. Adan Mohamed for their remarkable service over the last eight years.

### **Graduands**

Mr Chancellor Sir, this year, I am pleased to present to you a total of **4,439** graduands up from **4,278** in 2010, an increase of **3.8%**, for the award of Diploma and conferment of degrees of JKUAT. This growth is attributed to the programmes that have gone full cycle and the ever increasing demand of our market oriented programmes. These comprise:

Faculty of Agriculture,



Faculty of Science,  
School of Human Resource Development,  
School of Mechanical, Manufacturing and Materials Engineering,  
School of Electrical, Electronic and Information Engineering,  
School of Civil, Environmental and Geospatial Engineering,  
School of Architecture and Building Sciences,  
School of Law,  
Institute of Computer Science and Information Technology,  
Institute of Tropical Medicine and Infectious Diseases,  
Institute of Biotechnology Research,  
Institute of Energy and Environmental Technology,

Among these graduands **40 %** are female while **60 %** are male. Notably, gender disparity continues to be a major concern both at this University and nationally. However, the University through its gender office is spearheading the implementation of its gender policy to promote gender mainstreaming.

This year we have 63 international students registered in Master of Science in Research Methods financed by a consortium of 25 regional universities drawn from the Eastern, Central and Southern African region, Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM). The main objective of the RUFORUM project is to train researchers in agriculture for impact oriented research to accelerate the continent's agricultural development. Besides the 63 students, we also have 28 graduands from Kaduna in Nigeria who will also be graduating with a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Entrepreneurship. In addition, the University is presenting pioneer graduands in Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Science in Mining and Mineral Processing Engineering.



## New Programmes

During this Academic Year, the University has mounted **10** new undergraduate and three postgraduate programmes including: Bachelor of Pharmacy, Bachelor of Nursing, and MSc in Plant Health Management. In developing these programmes, the university is guided by the need for relevance and quality to build capacity in order to realize Vision 2030.

I also wish to report that JKUAT is the first public university in the country to have launched a three month certificate course in Business Process Outsourcing this year. Besides this certificate course, JKUAT has also launched a PhD programme in Entrepreneurship in Kaduna, Nigeria. A pioneer group of 28 PhD students are now in their third semester on the programme. Finally, I also wish to report that JKUAT has opened a campus in Arusha after the Tanzania Commission of Universities gave us a letter of interim authority. The Arusha campus started running certificate and diploma programmes in May, 2011. The campus has now admitted 80 degree students through the Joint Admission Committee (JAC) of Tanzania. These new students will report in September 2011.

Ladies and Gentlemen, regarding the key targets in our Strategic Plan 2009-2012 on student intake, the University planned to expand enrolment from 7,000 to 30,000. I am glad to announce that a year to the end of the period, we have surpassed the 22,000 mark. This has been achieved through the opening of strategic campuses in our major towns and across the region including Mombasa, Nakuru, Kisii, Kitale, Kakamega and Arusha. Plans are also underway to establish a centre in Juba, South Sudan. Ladies and Gentlemen, let me assure you that this expansion is underpinned by stringent quality assurance mechanisms.



As part of our strategy to strengthen our academic programmes, the University has initiated the double degree concept intended to broaden the versatility of our graduates. Following this approach, students from Engineering and Science for example, are allowed to take courses in Social sciences and Humanities that are related to the major programmes.

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, the high quality of our programmes continues to attract regional and international recognition. Recently, JKUAT won a highly competitive bid to host the prestigious Pan African University Institute of Science Technology and Innovation (PAUISTI). This is essentially a continental centre of graduate training and research aimed at promoting integration among African states through higher education and research. JKUAT met the stringent requirements for hosting the Institute due to her strong track record in sciences, technology and innovation. The institute is expected to admit the first 100 students in September 2011, 70 at Masters and 30 at Doctorate levels. Curricula in four programmes: Civil Engineering and Construction Management, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Mathematics, Biochemistry and Molecular biology have already been established. The Pan Africa University concept is consistent with JKUAT Vision of becoming a university of Global Excellence in Training, Research and Innovation for Development.

### **Collaboration and Linkages**

In pursuit of our strategic objectives of benchmarking our programmes and leveraging of our resources, JKUAT continues to seek collaboration with reputable local and international institutions of higher learning, research and industry. In October 2010, the University signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chinese Academy of Sciences to establish a botanical garden for teaching and research. This will also serve as a major income generating unit.



We have also made inroads in North America by signing of Memoranda of Understanding with three leading Canadian universities including University of Western Ontario, University of Prince Edward Island and St. Vincent University. The collaborative agreement will facilitate bilateral exchanges between faculty, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, research and other academic activities. The agreement provides various models of conducting graduate studies including sandwich and core supervision for double degree programmes. For example, with the University of Western Ontario, JKUAT is working on a project aimed at strengthening higher education relations in Africa that will see industry involvement in programme development and research.

Kenya is experiencing an energy crisis that has adversely affected the entire economy. This has spurred the University to focus its attention on the use of renewable energy as an alternative. Early this year, the University sealed a four-year multimillion tripartite project with JICA and UNIDO to scale up the use of renewable energy as a means of empowering the country's rural community's access to modern energy supply.

In the second renewable energy project, JKUAT teamed up with the East African Tea Trade Association (EATTA) and Greening the Tea in East Africa (GTIEA) to train civil engineers in East and Southern Africa region. The technologies will enable civil engineers from the participating tea growing countries to design small hydro power facilities using available renewable small waterfalls to provide electrical energy for use in tea factories.



## Research

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the current international trend provides for universities to progress from teaching to research universities. JKUAT recognizes that the Government of Kenya is embracing a knowledge based economy in which universities form key elements of innovation systems both as human capital providers and seedbed of academic capitalism. Although for the last 18 years, JKUAT has heavily leaned towards its teaching mandate, the University has now matured to play a central role in research and as a result has approved the establishment of four directorates under its Research, Production and Extension Division.

Ladies and gentlemen, in pursuit of its research mandate, the University currently has a total of 52 research and innovation projects at various stages of completion, drawing an annual budget of Kshs. 102 million. These research projects focus on food security, human and animal health, conservation of the environment and the application of technology and innovation.

For instance, the research project on rice breeding is geared towards increasing both the production and varieties of rice available in Kenya. The utilization of cashew nut shell waste as a source of raw material for the production of several industrial products will contribute significantly towards a cleaner and sustainable environment and the creation of employment. The innovation projects funded include concrete mixing and transfer technology, development of anti-ageing cosmetic products and bio-aromatic perfumes derived from animal and plant sources.



Mr. Chancellor Sir, to augment the limited financial resources at its disposal, the University continues to seek external funding. To date, the University has benefitted from a total of Kshs. 74million funding of several projects from the National Council of Science and Technology. These include projects on improved African Indigenous Vegetables for enhanced food security Kshs. 12 million, and the improvement of rice production capacity Kshs. 14 million. In addition, the European Union funded the development of protein enhanced baby food products based on beans, at a cost of Kshs. 30 million.

### **Outreach**

Ladies and gentlemen, the University recognizes the need to disseminate the results and achievements of its research and innovation projects. In this regard, the University has partnered with other stakeholders including the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation to implement the Mkulima TV and Farmers Voice Radio programmes. The objective of these programmes is to deliver agricultural information in the form and language that is familiar to the youth and rural small scale farmers at the community level across Kenya.

### **Performance Contracting**

The University is on the seventh cycle in the implementation of the Performance Contracting. In the sixth cycle the University made considerable improvement of over 100%, by moving from position 22 in 2008/2009 to position 8 in 2009/2010 among the 165 state corporations. The Performance Contract based on a holistic evaluation process has resulted into a number of achievements in JKUAT.





## **University Policies**

During this Academic Year, a number of policies have been developed and implemented. The policies on Communication, Fees, Debt Collection, Transport and bio-safety are some of the latest policy documents launched. The Communication policy has particularly come at an appropriate time when communication practices remain a backwater affair in many organizations despite its importance.

## **Emerging Concerns**

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you know, the University is part and parcel of the global community where new sub-culture is emerging. Nevertheless, I urge our young people to guard against unbridled consumerism. The University is particularly aware and concerned about the rising cases of peer pressure to adopt some of the practices which are out of tune with societal expectations. I urge the graduands and the continuing students who are the cream of this country to remain steadfast in their individual mission in the university and safeguard their moral standing.

## **Congratulations to Graduands**

Mr. Chancellor Sir, may I now turn to the graduands. I am confident that you graduands have been fully equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to turn around our economy through the quality education you have received at JKUAT. As you move out to the job market and a challenging world, we urge you to uphold ethical and acceptable behaviour in our society. Remember enormous national and family resources have been expended on your education. This kind gesture must be reciprocated by offering committed service to all who require your services.



Let me congratulate you on this achievement and wish you success in your future endeavours. I also urge you to strive to keep abreast with the ever evolving issues in your areas of specialization, and beyond.

In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to the various players who have contributed to your success. In particular, let me thank the parents, guardians, University staff, the Government and our development partners for their unfailing support.

Thank you and God bless you all.

