



**REMARKS**  
**BY**  
**THE VICE CHANCELLOR**  
**JOMO KENYATTA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE**  
**AND TECHNOLOGY (JKUAT),**  
**PROF. MABEL IMBUGA, PhD, EBS,**  
**DURING**  
**THE LAUNCH OF THE LAPTOPS FOR STUDENTS PROJECT**  
**ON**  
**OCTOBER 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2013**  
**AT**  
**JKUAT MAIN CAMPUS**

Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communication Technology,  
Dr. Fred Matiang'i  
Executive Director, Kenya Education Network, Prof. Meoli Kashorda,  
The Chief Operating Officer, Samsung Electronics East Africa Ltd., Mr. Robert Njeru,  
Deputy Vice Chancellors,  
Deans and Directors  
Staff and Students  
Other Invited guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen.

Today marks a special occasion in the life of our University calendar when we officially usher in the digital age by introducing laptops to all First Year students joining our Institution. This is happening because of the new dispensation in the Country's digital focus that, as a University known for its prowess in the field of technology, and one that has continued to *Set Trends in Higher Education, Research and Innovation*, has embraced and would continue to set the pace in all spheres of its training objective.

It must be noted that access to quality higher education remains a core plank of the Kenya Vision 2030, which was why the integration of ICT was deemed critical in creating digital age teaching and learning that could facilitate the development of skills for the information age.

You may also be interested to know, our chief guest, that JKUAT leads the way in spearheading training in the fields of science, agriculture, engineering, technology and enterprise development. However, this leadership did not come to us over night. It was as a result of hard work, self-sacrifice and focus in whatever we have wanted to achieve, a reason why our Institution has become a brand name not only in the country, but the region and the world as a whole.

Its strength in ICT training for instance, sees it graduate over 2000 students every year ending up being the only University currently providing the greatest percentage of ICT human resource in the Country.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University's success stories have not just been confined to the classrooms only. It has been extended to its keenness to develop its network infrastructure too. In the 2012/2013 financial year for example, JKUAT upgraded its campus network infrastructure by over 400% spending close to Ksh. 80 Million. Following this heavy investment, and to realize its full potential, the University currently aims at improving its bandwidth capacity by over 100% in the current financial year with the aim of attaining the recommended bandwidth of 10 Mbps/1000 students.

It is for this reason that JKUAT focuses on producing skilled human resource, whether for self-employment, job and wealth creation or for the employment in the respective industries. In doing this, it seeks to harness the power of ICT in:

- a) Increasing access to higher education,
- b) Delinking access to computer resources to physical lab spaces,
- c) Bridging time and geographical gaps by facilitating each student to access ICT resources beyond classroom hours and right in the hostel/home,

- d) Making maximum use of the huge investment in ICT with respect to bandwidth and wireless internet services on our campuses, and
- e) Providing ICT integrated programs as a forerunner to the accomplishment of the vision of the Government of Kenya.

Ladies and gentlemen, in accomplishing all these, the University has not been working in isolation. It has always acknowledged the roles played by its partners. This is where we wish to recognize, and pay glowing tribute to the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology which has continuously supported the University in its quest to provide high-class ICT capacity development.

Similarly, the Kenya Education Network (KENET) has remained the most influential institution in the adoption of ICT for improved access to higher education in Kenya. Its continued provision to JKUAT with bandwidth and shared services, network support services as well as being a champion for effective management of ICTs in higher education has truly enhanced our growth. By doing this, KENET has risen to be the most respected National Research and Education Network (NREN) in East Africa.

Our Chief Guest, the coming together of JKUAT and Samsung Electronics E.A. Limited in this historic venture we are about to launch today is by no means a pointer to greater happenings. Indeed the partnership exemplifies that two great institutions can work together to provide effective solutions to university students at affordable prices. We, as a University applaud the partnership we are about to cement as we launch the laptops for students service that will signify the commencement of a great journey to the transformation of campus life for our students and the production of digital age human resources.

We also acknowledge all other partners present and look forward to working with each one of them to improve the lives and times of the citizens of Kenya and the global community.

Lest we forget, JKUAT has not been left out in complementing Kenya's Vision 2030, and has keenly been pursuing three items that are at the very core of the Country's focus. These are;

- a) ICT integration in the whole education sector with the goal of creating digital age learning and producing skilled human resources,
- b) Job and wealth creation through utilization of our engineering and technology graduates for local assembling of ICT equipment, and
- c) Building capacity for local assembling of electronics and eventually enabling the country to conduct fully-fledged manufacturing as part of industrial growth.

The greatest impediment in this endeavor, however, is the VAT Act that came into effect on the day of registration of the first year students. The students, having already paid, would have to pay an extra 16% as VAT on the laptops. This is a great burden and we expect that the National Treasury will grant the University's request for a waiver. We also beseech our beloved students, guardians, sponsors and partners to bear with the situation as we wait for a decision on the request for VAT waiver for the project from the Government. It is our humble plea that you will be able to intercede on our behalf on this request.

In being part and parcel of the Country's Vision 2030, the University found it fit to come up with an incubating company in the form of the JKUAT Nairobi Industrial and Technology Park intended to nurture innovators so that upon maturity, they could come up with start-ups businesses that would create employment for the masses in the country. I am pleased to inform you that this Technology Park has already been operationalized.

The Technology Park will host the local assembling of laptops as one of its mandates. In this regard, we expect to work closely with the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology to support the local assembling of ICT devices and eventually grow to manufacturing devices and other innovations for local and international consumption.

Finally, our chief guest, accept our sincere thanks for accepting to grace this occasion, albeit after a very short notice. This is a clear indication of how passionate you are towards ICT.

It is now my pleasure to invite you to officially give your address and launch the programme.

Thank you.