



Address

by

Prof. Mabel O. Imbuga PhD

Vice Chancellor,

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

to

JKUAT Karen Campus

First Year Students

Tuesday, July 12, 2011

**Deputy Vice Chancellors
Principal, Karen Campus
Campus Principals,
Deans of Faculties
Campus Director,
Staff and Students,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good Morning to all of you

Welcome to Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology community (JKUAT) and to the Karen Campus, in particular. It is both an honour and a privilege for me to be here this morning to welcome you to the JKUAT community. I also thank you for choosing JKUAT Karen Campus. We are happy and privileged to have you here.

This year, we have a total of 520 first year students who have earned a place to study at this campus. The students are distributed in 13 undergraduate and diploma programmes. You are now part of the JKUAT Karen campus student community that has impressively grown from a mere 18 students in 2006 to the present population of 2250 students. I must add that you are indeed part of the larger JKUAT student fraternity numbering 23, 000 located at our main campus in Juja and other campuses spread around the country.

As you may be aware, you are the first among your 'O' Level peers to join a public university. This is because of the fact that JKUAT is the only public university that has made it possible for the 2009 'O' level group under the Joint Admissions Board to step into a public university. Equally and under our Alternative Degree Programme, we are the only state university that has opened its doors to a number of students including yourselves who sat for their 'O' levels last year. Your colleagues admitted to other public universities are to join their various programmes when you are almost done with your first academic year. The status has traditionally given our alumni advantage in the job market. The framework too has become advantageous to our students making it easier for them to secure scholarships for higher studies on the basis that it is *the earlier bird that catches the worm*.

It is my duty and pleasure to encourage you to start your academic career by making sure you get your priorities right. It is quite clear that you are the very best of our country's brains but remember that very good students can easily deteriorate if they lose focus and this is not rare. To continue excelling in university work, it is absolutely necessary for you to maintain high discipline particularly from some of the enticing excesses of life. Alcohol, drug abuse and worthless sexual desires are some of the most dangerous vices that have ruined careers of potentially promising youngsters like you. As in recent past weeks, we have read stories in the newspapers about young promising students who partake in alcohol and partying and end up dead. It is therefore my strong conviction that you should at all times evaluate your actions to ensure that you distance yourself from these bad practices.

To achieve such noble goals requires elements of leadership and it's here in JKUAT that you will be able to develop some of your leadership skills. While there are various types of leadership such as civic, organizational, political, intellectual, and military, they all demand the same skills. First is the ability to develop among a group of people a sense of purpose and a vision for a better future. Second is the ability to communicate that vision and inspire the group to pursue it. Third is the ability to facilitate the group's attainment of its vision, mission or purpose.

These are skills that you need in order to succeed and your training here has been designed to prepare you as professionals with the capacity to face challenges of the ever changing world. After your careers here, we expect you to be fulfilled persons exemplifying genuine caring and citizenship with the ability to accept diversity, and relate effectively to persons of all backgrounds.

As Vice Chancellor, I wish to inform you that we are proud of our alumni in all fields of our training. Feedback that we continue to get from outside is quite encouraging, as most of our former students mainly engage in research, innovation and leadership activities wherever they are. Furthermore, our alumni remain the most preferred in the labour market. This is the community you are now joining and I urge you to be awake to the fact that you too are destined for unique opportunities as your predecessors.

JKUAT presence has also been felt at the regional and global level particularly in the realms of research and technology transfer. It is this distinction and tradition that last January saw , JKUAT break new grounds likely to enhance our international standing when we won a highly competitive bid to host a Pan African University, Institute of Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation. This is a continental centre of graduate training and research aimed at promoting integration among African states through higher education and research. The centre is expected to open its doors to the first 100 pioneering students drawn from various countries of Africa in September. The new status has effectively brought in JKUAT to actively participate in the process of Pan Africanism, a concept conceived over two centuries ago outside Africa to sensitise the

world about the plight of the black race that had been abused through slave trade, colonialism and neo-colonialism. As our new students, you are potential beneficiaries of this project particularly if you excel in your studies.

I am sure the Principal has already addressed you and informed you of the challenges that you are likely to face during your stay here. She must have told you how your predecessors undertook their studies through a lot of sacrifices without adequate facilities such as library, cafeteria, and lighting to name but a few. From the time we acquired this campus in 2006, we have continued to provide funds to expand and improve services in order to make your life comfortable. Indeed, my administration recently approved the establishment of a committee which was now working around the clock to come up with a master plan to guide future development of the campus. The committee will address future development needs of this campus. The master plan will address some of the security and safety challenges that students face. We are particularly concerned with the road leading to the campus that lacks lighting, a situation that poses a security risk to the students. The road too is dangerous because of the speeding vehicles and therefore requires the construction of bumps as a remedy to the danger. As you can see, these are capital projects that require professional and comprehensive attention but nevertheless, I wish to assure you that University Management is giving the projects top priority.

I am however pleased to note that the law programme has gone full cycle and the first 40 pioneering students will graduate during our 18th graduation ceremony to be held at our Juja main campus, in two weeks time. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to the group and their teachers for the achievement. It is an achievement they have earned through sheer hard work and I encourage you to emulate them and those who have come before you. At this juncture, I wish to caution you against any indulgences in examinations malpractices since it would lead to your automatic expulsion from the University. You must work and earn your marks.

In conclusion allow me to give you a word of advice on the social front. As Vice Chancellor and mother, I expect you to conduct yourselves with high standard of integrity

and self-discipline. I urge you to carry yourselves in public places with great humility and dignity as mature and responsible students of JKUAT. Avoid incidences of drunkenness, drug abuse, sexual immorality and other related antisocial behaviour because of their potential to ruin your whole life and future. When confronted with the said antisocial threats, make use of the university health centre facilities which entail Voluntary Counseling and Testing Centre (VCT) and Counseling Services.

It is now my very great pleasure to officially welcome the 2011/ 2012 first year's class to JKUAT Karen Campus.

I thank you most sincerely for your attention.