SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PROF. G.A.O. MAGOHA DURING THE KENYA – JAPAN EXCHANGE SEMINAR ON OCEAN SCIENCE “COOPERATING TOWARDS A BETTER PLANET EARTH” ON 16TH JANUARY 2006 AT THE JAPANESE EMBASSY
H.E., the Japanese Ambassador, Mr. Satoru Miyamura
Officials from the Office of the President
Representatives from the Ministry of Education
Representatives from the Ministry of Science & Technology
Principal, College of Biological & Physical Sciences
Dean, School of Biological Sciences
Chairman, Department of Geology
Chairman, Department of Meteorology
Academic Staff
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen
I am delighted to be invited to this joint Kenya-Japan Exchange Seminar on Ocean Science organized by the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC) and the University of Nairobi, Marine-Earth Science Initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am very happy with the development of this initiative as it enhances our links with partners and stakeholders in our quest to develop our institution and increase our contributions to the larger society. Indeed the
theme of the seminar “Cooperating Towards a Better Future” captures the direction the University of Nairobi embarked on.

The mission of the University of Nairobi (UoN) Marine-Earth Science initiative is to be a center of excellence in teaching and research for Kenya, East Africa and beyond. The Departments of Geology and Meteorology in the College of Biological and Physical Sciences (CBPS) have been actively involved in teaching and research in the area of Marine-Earth Science for more than four decades.
The many well trained staff and researchers employed in public institutions (Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, Mines and Geology Department, KenGen, Kenya Meteorological Department, Kenya Water Institute, Public Universities and Government Ministries) and private sector is a testimony of the great role the University of Nairobi has played in developing human resources in Marine and Earth Science. This has been achieved through partnerships the University has had with the Government of Kenya, International Agencies and other
Universities/research institutions in the region and abroad.

In recognition of the capacity of scientific, human and institutional resources present at the University of Nairobi, the Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology through the Embassy of Japan in Kenya, approached the Department of Geology to discuss the possibility of a partnership between JAMSTEC and University of Nairobi in studies and research targeting Marine and Earth Sciences.
This was followed by a visit to the College of Biological and Physical Sciences and to the Department of Geology by Dr. Hitoshi Hotta, the Deputy Director General, Centre for Deep Earth Exploration (CDEX), JAMSTEC accompanied by a team from JAMSTEC and the Embassy of Japan in Kenya on 7th December 2006. Dr. Hotta and his team held a meeting with the College management led by the Principal, Prof. Lucy Irungu. This meeting briefly discussed experiences and aspirations of both JAMSTEC and the University of Nairobi.
Ladies and gentlemen, as an initiative towards establishment of formal collaboration and partnership between the University of Nairobi and JAMSTEC, and by extension Kenya and Japan, it was agreed that this seminar be held. This seminar, jointly organized by the Japanese Embassy, Kenya, UoN and JAMSTEC is therefore utilizing the presence of JAMSTEC in Kenya through their state-of-the-art Deep Sea Drilling Vessel ‘CHIKYU’ to formulate collaboration and partnership in Ocean Science research between Kenya and Japan.
In pursuit of knowledge generation in Marine-Earth Science and its application, the University of Nairobi considers this partnership and collaboration as a vital step in enhancing friendship between marine and earth scientists from Kenya and Japan. Such partnership will contribute in building human and other capacities to ensure scientific knowledge in Marine and Earth Sciences is generated and used to solve human development issues. As a leading institution in the region, we have always valued this approach to development of Kenya and the entire Eastern Africa region. This is the reason why the University
has recently initiated efforts to improve and upgrade the Moana Marine Biological station located on the Western Indian Ocean coast 50 km south of the City of Mombasa.

In this endeavour, the University of Nairobi has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute in order to encourage more partnership in the development of Marine and Earth sciences in Kenya.
Ladies and gentlemen, it is anticipated that out of this collaboration there will be several outcomes. These will include, but not restricted to, enhanced joint undergraduate and postgraduate academic programmes and joint research programmes. This will strengthen the development of an international postgraduate course in Marine and Earth Sciences using our capacities at the College of Biological and Physical Sciences and at the Moana Marine Biology Station at the Kenya coast.

The potential of marine resources contribution to human development, in terms of food, energy,
tourism and health is enormous and inadequately understood especially in our primary and secondary education institutions. This is a challenge to Universities and collaborators to develop appropriate strategies to ensure that Marine and Earth Sciences are understood early in life so that such knowledge has a greater impact in societal development.

I would like to conclude by expressing great appreciation to JAMSTEC, the Embassy of Japan in Kenya in initiating this process and look forward to its future development for the benefit of the two
countries. I wish to assure you that the University of Nairobi will support and nurture this initiative to maturity.

Thank you