UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

SPEECH BY PROF PETER M. F. MBITHI, VICE-CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI AT THE IDIS/ API STAKEHOLDERS’ SYMPOSIUM ON “COUNTERING TERRORISM: IN SEARCH OF A GRAND AFRICAN STRATEGY”, ON THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2015, AT THE MULTIPURPOSE HALL, 8-4-4 BUILDING, MAIN CAMPUS
Our Guest speaker, Dr. Ambassador Monica Juma, Secretary to the Cabinet
Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and High Commissioners
Representatives of United Nations agencies and regional organizations
Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
Members of University Senate
Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to this symposium on “Countering Terrorism: In search of a Grand Strategy”. As the Vice Chancellor of the largest University in this region, I wish to assure you
that the University of Nairobi is fully involved in the efforts geared towards countering terrorism. We wish to assure this esteemed audience that the University of Nairobi is a respectable centre of excellence renowned for its commitment to the development of this nation and the realization of Kenya’s Vision 2030.

This institution is dedicated to offering relevant market-driven quality education that meets international standards. Our alumni include a host of key distinguished individuals in this country.
We have produced Cabinet Secretaries, ambassadors, heads of government parastatals, prominent industrialists, principal secretaries, and many other highly skilled professionals in various fields. For instance, Wangari Maathai, the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace is a proud part of our large and distinguished alumni.
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Terrorism has become a major security concern of this century. Terror groups such as the Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al Qaeda, and Al Shabaab in East Africa continue to pose real threats to national and international security. Development initiatives in such sectors as transport, tourism, education, and agriculture have been adversely affected. Generally, the increasing insecurity in the region and the world has led to the diversion of resources from development programmes to countering terrorism.
As a leading university in the region, we want to assure this esteemed audience that we are taking measures to ensure security and safety of our students and staff. We are not only doing this through enhancing security surveillance mechanisms but also through intensified sensitization of our staff and students at all unit levels of the university. We have had a series of sensitization programmes in the university in order to educate the university community on the need to avoid radicalization.
In addition, within our traditional mandate of training, teaching, and research, we are continuing to use the tools and skills we have as the stakeholders, to contribute to national and international efforts to counter this security issue.

We also use forums such as this symposium organized by the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies (IDIS) jointly with the Africa Policy Institute (API), to create a platform for dialogue and discussion of this important issue.
The University of Nairobi is ready to make its expertise, information data banks, and facilities available and at the disposal of government and other stakeholders in the efforts to counter terrorism. A significant proportion of our curriculum is geared towards capacity building and empowering our graduates to play key roles in various development activities contributing to national and regional security.
Ladies and gentlemen, we wish to submit that any successful efforts to counter terrorism require a multi-stakeholder approach involving various state and non-state actors including academic experts, representatives from key foreign missions, regional institutions in Africa, UN agencies, civil society, think-tanks, religious leaders/scholars and media personalities. Using that kind of approach, we can come up with a practical and effective counter terrorism grand strategy. We hope, through dialogue and discussions in this symposium, that such a strategy will emerge.
Ladies and gentlemen, going forward, let us work together and in doing so, we are sure to overcome this global security challenge.