SPEECH BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR PROF. PETER M. F. MBITHI, DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 2ND AFRICA FOR RESEARCH IN COMPARATIVE EDUCATION (AFRICE) INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON JUNE 18, 2015 AT 9.15 A.M. AT THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND EXTERNAL STUDIES, KENYA SCIENCE CAMPUS
• Dr. Carlos Alberto Torres, President, World Council for Comparative Education Societies (WCCES)
• Dr. Willbroad Dze-Ngwa, President, Africa for Research in Comparative Education (AFRICE)
• Dr. Daniel K. Gakunga, Vice President, Africa for Research in Comparative Education (AFRICE) and 2nd AFRICE Conference Convener
• Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs (AA), Deputy Vice Chancellor Student Affairs (SA), Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration and Finance (A&F) and Deputy Vice Chancellor Research, Production and Extension (RPE)
• Principals of Colleges and Deans and Directors of Schools, Centers and Institutes of University Present
• Dr. Heidi Biseith, Treasurer of World Council of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES)
• Prof. Ali Abdi, University of British Columbia
• Distinguished Guests
• Ladies and Gentlemen
It gives me great pleasure and honour to make this welcoming address on the occasion of the official opening of the 2nd Africa for Research in Comparative Education (2nd AFRICE) International Conference. I would like to start by very warmly welcoming you to Kenya and to the University of Nairobi for this very important conference. Karibuni sana

I understand that this conference is held every two years in different countries of Africa and that the 1st conference was held at the University of Yaoundé 1, Cameroon in February, 2013. It is therefore, quite gratifying that the University of Nairobi was chosen to host the second AFRICE conference this year 2015.
Ladies and Gentlemen, I have also been informed that the main objective of this conference, whose theme is “Education in Africa: Reflections Beyond 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)-Comparative Perspectives” is to contribute to the debate on Comparative Education in Africa and to build capacity for the delivery of quality research in Comparative Education in Africa. With so many world renowned educationists and scholars present here today, I have no doubt that you will be able to achieve your stated objectives.
This conference provides an opportunity for you as experts, researchers, practitioners and students in education to share knowledge and experiences and to deliberate on pertinent African educational and development issues. Given the enormous potential of education to change and improve the living standards of our people, it goes without saying that if we can overcome the challenges of providing quality education to all, especially in the post 2015 MDGs era, then we will improve our living standards, we will also thereby realize the development goals now envisaged in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with effect from 2016. As part of strategy for this, many more qualified researchers in education need to be trained. This can only be achieved by introducing other innovative ways
in education research that will adopt the comparative perspective and enhance the capacity of educational researchers. I am happy to note that this conference on research in comparative education proposes to do just that.

I am also pleased to note that the objectives of the conference are in tandem with the Vision and Mission of the University of Nairobi, of extending the frontiers of knowledge and transforming the lives of Kenyans while at the same time serving society with distinction. In line with this, the University has committed to encourage research in all academic disciplines. The University has also launched several flagship programmes aimed at helping the government achieve
its development master plan, the Kenya Vision 2030, which will tie well in to the global development agenda envisioned in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set to be achieved by 2030. One crucial establishment in the University is the position of the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Research, Production and Extension (RPE). This is a clear indication of the University’s commitment to encourage and support collaborative research activities at the university with other likeminded partners.
Ladies and Gentlemen, Let me remind you that in addition to this being an opportunity to share your knowledge and understanding of education in Africa with peers, it is also a chance to develop exciting and worthwhile new partnerships and networks amongst yourselves and your institutions. It is my hope that you will be able to do so.

Last but not least, I would like to thank the Conference Organizing committee which was co-chaired by Dr, Willbroad Dze-Ngwa of the University of Yaoundé 1 Cameroon, and Prof. Isaac Jumba, Principal College of Education and External Studies, University of Nairobi. I also wish to thank the sponsors whose support has
made this conference a reality. These include members of AFRICE and University of Nairobi.

With those few remarks, I wish to thank you for listening to me. And now it is my pleasure and honour to declare the 2nd AFRICE International Conference officially opened.

Thank you very much and God bless you all.

PETER M.F. MBITHI, PhD, EBS
VICE CHANCELLOR
AND
PROFESSOR OF VETERINARY SURGERY