UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY PROF. PETER M. F. MBITHI, VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI DURING THE LAUNCHING OF A CERTIFICATE COURSE IN PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE AND CULTURE SYLLABUS HELD ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 29, 2019 AT 4.00 P.M. AT UoN TOWERS - LEVEL 4 - LT 405
• Your Excellency, Amb. Luisa Fragosa, Charge D’Affairs, Diplomatic Mission of Portugal in Nairobi

• Your Excellency, Amb. Sianga Samuel Abilio, Ambassador of Angola in Nairobi

• Your Excellency, Amb. Martins Kumanga, Deputy Ambassador of Mozambique in Nairobi

• Your Excellency, Amb. Andre’ Pacheco, Consellor of Embassy of Brazil in Nairobi,
• Members of the University community

• Invited guests,

• Ladies and Gentlemen
I greet you this afternoon: Hamjambo!

Boa tarde (Good afternoon)

It is a great honour to have you here to grace this auspicious occasion for the launch of a Certificate Course in Portuguese Language and Culture Programme. I take this opportunity to welcome you all to the University of Nairobi. Let me start appreciating the wonderful presentation by our guest Maria João Lopo de Carvalho who is a renowned
Portuguese writer. I thank your government for making the University of Nairobi the place of choice to teach Portuguese in Kenya.

Portuguese language came to Kenya many years back with the arrival of Vasco da Gama in 1498. This is a name that is fondly remembered by Kenyans and will always remain in Kenyan history.
The language he came with was unfortunately overtaken by other foreign languages. Fortunately, God has given us another opportunity to have it learnt formally at the University of Nairobi.

This University has a Department of Linguistics and Languages whose mandate is to ensure that both Kenyan and foreign languages are promoted through teaching and research.
As we speak, the department has a number of language and language related programmes from certificate course to PhD level. Some of these programmes are Korean Studies, Chinese Studies, German Studies, Arabic Studies, Language and Communication and, lastly, Linguistics where our students have the opportunity to study and carry out research on the structure of languages.
Students are generally allowed to do research on diverse languages though they mostly choose their mother tongues and this is a cause of concern for us. I encourage many students to take up foreign languages.

The Department has therefore already welcomed Portuguese language on board. The Certificate Course in Portuguese Language and Culture is a programme that we are proud to launch following senate approval.
We are grateful to the Camoes Institute and the Embassy of Portugal in Nairobi for sending the first Portuguese language teacher, Madam Anna, to our University. She has worked hard in developing the Portuguese Language and Culture syllabus and is also engaged in teaching Portuguese at the Centre for Translation and Interpretation in our University. I commend here for the good work.
We are happy and ready to collaborate with Portugal through the Cameos Institute and also with the other Portuguese speaking countries especially the ones represented here today in promoting Portuguese culture and language.

To our students, this is your opportunity to sample and experience the Portuguese language and culture right here at UoN.
Find time to learn diverse foreign languages that are offered here so that you become a global citizen. It will enhance your competitiveness.

Thank you.

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