SPEECH FOR CHIEF JUSTICE ON RECLAIMING KENYA: YOUTH VOICES ON ROADMAP TO RECONCILIATION, HEALING AND NATIONAL COHESION FORUM TO BE HELD AT UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI MAIN CAMPUS ON THURSDAY 19TH JULY 2018

- Principal Secretaries Present
- Commissioners
- The Chancellors of the Public and Private Universities
- The Vice Chancellors of the Public and Private Universities,
- The Development Partners;
- The UNESCO/UNITWIN Chair
- Government officers
• Members of Staff from the Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs and from the University of Nairobi;

• The Youth

• Students

• Distinguished guests;

• Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Morning,

It gives me great pleasure and honor to be given this esteemed opportunity to address you on the need for the youth to reclaim Kenya through expressing their Voices on Roadmap to Reconciliation, Healing and National Cohesion. Let me start by thanking the Vice Chancellor for inviting me to this forum, whose timing is pertinent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we are all aware, the socio-cultural, political and economic situation in Kenya has experienced tremendous challenges during the past years mainly attributed to the electioneering period. The General Elections which are preceded by vibrant, yet divisive political campaigns, often leave the country divided and wounded. The General Election of 2017 was no
different. Despite the efforts organized by both the Government and Non-Governmental Organizations, the Country still witnessed ethnic tensions, destruction of properties, physical injuries, and loss of lives. Ethnic hatred, mistrust, fear and political animosity ensued leaving behind a divided Nation. Regrettably, one of the main players in the execution of these disruptive acts has been the youth.

The efforts of the President and former Prime Minister to bring the country together are commendable and need to be augmented. The proposed “Youth Forum” is an attempt to tap into the young people’s energy and vibrancy to push reconciliation, healing and cohesion to the fore.
In developing processes of articulation for healing and subsequent cohesion, an examination of the existing links between Kenya’s history and the inbuilt structures of social and political power, exclusion and marginalization need to be revisited.

It is noteworthy that the youth population is rapidly growing and the majority faces major challenges in the realms of higher education, employment, health and sustainable livelihoods. This makes them vulnerable to being used to participate in various acts of violence and disruption.

Therefore by positioning Kenya’s youth at the center of discussions on justice, healing, reconciliation, sustainable peace, security and cohesion, they will become the architects of trajectories offering lasting
solutions to social vulnerabilities perpetuating insecurity and disunity

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware, there are challenges in negotiating the ever-evolving cultures, value systems, and ideologies in an era of modernity and globalization. In national politics, job creation and entrepreneurial skills for youth have become the platform for election politics, patronage, and for solving the ‘youth crisis’ and violence. The youth themselves have the potential to question political and other leadership processes that often make them vulnerable to political patronage and violence. Youth can hold and should hold leaders to account for governance and human rights abuses; and ensure that government fulfils its mandate in ensuring human security and dignity which are
pathways to healing, reconciliation, creating a sustainable culture of peace and security, and hence national cohesion.

I acknowledge with much gratitude the initiative that has been undertaken by the University of Nairobi to give a platform for the youth to air their voices and reclaim their Country. This is momentous and has come at the right time.

Most of the students at the universities are youth. The universities prepare students to become change agents in their families, communities and at the workplace. Thus taking advantage of such existing massive mobilization skills within the students fraternity across the country to preach the message of peace and security is a commendable effort.
Finally I believe, Universities with support from organizations like UNESCO and other organizations can play a central role in building the capacities of young people and communities with important skills, tools and resources for promoting peace and security. By sensitizing to claim youth to citizenship rights to demand justice and dignity from governance structures that are constitutionally mandated to limited the “threats to freedom” in the Kenyan society, the youth are becoming partners in the responsibility towards a peaceful, cohesive country whose foundation is a unified set of values. This is the national ethos, we must strive to develop.

I therefore, urge everyone present here to rise to the occasion and seize the moment as the forum presents
an opportunity like no other. Our success will be gauged on the extent to which we collectively bring a united force and ideas and walk together in this journey of making Kenya a peaceful and prosperous nation.

Thank you and May God bless you.