UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

SPEECH BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI DURING THE INCUBATION POLICY STAKEHOLDER FORUM AT SERENA HOTEL ON FEBRUARY 4, 2015
• Principal Secretaries
• Representatives of key stakeholders (CAK, KIPI, NACOSTI, CUE, KIRDI)
• Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Production and Extension
• Deputy Vice-Chancellors
• College Principals
• Members of Staff
• Distinguished guests
• Ladies and Gentlemen
It is my great pleasure to join you this morning during the discussions on the draft Incubation policy with our stakeholders. I also take this opportunity to welcome all our stakeholders who have found time out of their busy schedules to join us in developing this draft policy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, most of us are aware that the Kenya Vision 2030 aims at transforming Kenya into a newly industrializing middle income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment. This Vision also recognises the role of science, technology and innovation (ST&I) in a modern economy, in which new knowledge plays a central role in wealth creation, social welfare and
international competitiveness through effective exploitation of knowledge, an effective innovation system and flourishing entrepreneurship, among others. Indeed, the Vision places ST&I as one of the foundations of the development transformation that it envisions. Specifically, the Vision proposes intensified application of science, technology and innovation to raise productivity and efficiency levels across the three pillars and recognises the critical role played by research and development (R&D) in accelerating economic development.

This vision is embodied in a number of national policies such as the ST&I Act (2013), the Industrialization policy framework, the ICT master plan
among others, all aiming to build critical capacity in science, technology and innovation that will transform Kenya into a newly industrialized country (NIC) through the utilization of knowledge as the driving force.

Likewise, the role of universities as defined in the Universities Act No. 42 of 2012, Article 3(1) as; “(a) to promote socio-economic development in line with the country’s development agenda; (b) to achieve manpower development and skills acquisition; (c) the discovery, storage and dissemination of knowledge; and (d) to encourage research, innovation and application of innovation to development”.
Ladies and Gentlemen, the Universities Act (2012) therefore demands that universities should play a more active role in national development over and above their traditional teaching and research roles. To achieve this mission, their interaction with private sector and policy makers has become more crucial than ever.

At the University of Nairobi, we have cascaded these national policies in the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan that recognizes that research, innovation and technology transfer have great potential for wealth creation and contribution to sustainable national development with a key outcome of increased innovations and impact of
research output, hence sustainable national economic growth.

For us to fulfill the this role in national development, as envisaged by the national policy documents cited above, discharge its roles outlined in the Universities Act (2012) and achieve the commercialization of technological innovations strategies and outcomes of its 2013-2018 strategic plan, the University has developed this Incubation Policy to guide the establishment and sustainable operation of incubation centres in the institution.

We recognize that the mechanisms of implementing this ‘third mission’ of universities of interfacing with community and stakeholders must include demand
driven research that is relevant to the national development agenda and development of new products which can be commercialized. The proposed incubation policy seeks to provide this direction.

Ladies and Gentlemen the overall goal of the Incubation Policy is to nurture new enterprises that have innovative products and services for local, regional and global markets and grow/develop them into sustainable and competitive businesses that contribute to the realization of Kenya Vision 2030 as well as the mission of the University of Nairobi.

Through the provisions of this policy, the University will create incubation centres in different academic disciplines. The University also commits to provide
new enterprises with infrastructure services, various forms of business assistance services and funding in order to nurture them and grow them into sustainable and competitive businesses.

We will also monitor the development of the business enterprises against set and agreed business targets as well as monitor the incubation graduates to ensure that enterprises thus incubated are contributing to national development.

As I conclude my remarks, I would like to reiterate the University’s commitment to collaborate with both
public and private sector partners in the implementation of this policy. I wish you fruitful discussions.

Thank you