UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY PROF. GEORGE A.O. MAGOHA, VICE-CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI DURING THE LAUNCH OF CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE SOCIETIES IN MAKUENI COUNTY HELD ON AUGUST 13, 2014 IN WOTE TOWN
• Hon. Chief Justice, Dr. Willy Mutunga
• Hon. Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Fred Matiang’i
• The County Commissioner
• Your Excellency, the Governor, Prof. Kivutha Kibwana
• Your Excellency, Deputy Governor, Hon. Adelina Mwau
• Representatives of National Government
• Distinguished guests
• Ladies and Gentlemen
On behalf of the University of Nairobi, I wish to thank the people of Makueni for their warm welcome of the University community. I also wish to thank the County Government of Makueni for having hosted the Elimika Team for the last eight months.

Ladies and Gentlemen, The Constitution is a document which is rich in content, but it needs to be translated into the "real life experiences" of the people of Kenya. Indeed, the documentary, which was aired at the beginning of today's event, demonstrates, clear that a lot of effort went into the
writing and preparation of the Constitution. Therefore, it is our duty to breathe life into the document, to make it a "Living Experience" for Kenyans; this is the role of the Elimika Project.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University of Nairobi has taken the bold step to reach out to and work with counties to ensure that good governance, people's participation and the rights of individuals are embedded in the activities of our daily lives. Indeed, to the County of Makueni, which is part of the Arid
and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL), the Constitution means "Water for sustainable livelihoods".

Ladies and gentlemen, in the first phase of the Elimika project, the team contracted five counties. Already, research has been finalized in Makueni, Kwale, Nairobi and Homa Bay counties while research is on-going in Turkana county.

The research findings, presented today, will guide us on the type of interventions and modalities required. Indeed, there are areas where the University is purely
a "silent partner" but we shall play our roles to meet the Elimika strategy. Such roles, include providing "interns" to work with the County Representatives, participating in the mobilization of communities through the University of Nairobi's Free Travelling Theatre and communicating the implementation of the Constitution through music, are part of the strategies of the Elimika initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen, during the Elimika Launch held in December 2013, the University committed to pushing the Constitution Implementation Agenda.
Today, as we embark on our partnership with different Counties, we renew our commitment. This will be driven by informed scientific research, the search for new technologies that are affordable and sustainable for the counties, and engraving the Constitutional culture on our people. We invite you all to join us in this great initiative.

Ladies and Gentlemen, devolution is key in the implementation of the Constitution. In order to achieve more equitable and faster socio-economic, political development in this Nation, it is imperative
that we implement devolution to the letter. Your role, in this regard is to protect, guide counties, ensure equitable distribution of resources, provide oversight on the utilization of these resources, ensure that socio-economic development takes root, is well monitored and that people’s participation is actualized. It is for this reason that your presence here today is an indication of your commitment to contribute to today’s discussion; shaping the capacity building envisaged through “Elimika Uwajibike”.
Ladies and gentlemen, I was preserving the best for last. I would like to appreciate the financial support of the Ford Foundation, without whose support we would not be here today. This project, is therefore timely, and I am sure that we appreciate this support because what initially kicked off as a small project of 12 team members about 12 months ago has doubled in terms of the researchers on board and it has attracted several other partners with the budget equally multiplying.
As I conclude, allow me once again, to thank you for accepting our invitation, let us be frank in our discussions on how best we can support the counties in understanding the Constitution, and the linkages between the Constitution, wealth creation and development.

Thank you and welcome.