UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

WELCOME ADDRESS BY PROFESSOR GEORGE A.O. MAGOHA, VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE IIEP (UNESCO)/UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI POLICY FORUM ON GOVERNANCE REFORMS IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN AFRICA ON MAY 16, 2013
Professor Crispus Makau Kiamba, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology

Professor N.V. Varghese, the representative of IIEP-UNESCO, the funder and joint-organizer of this forum

All protocols duly observed

Ladies and Gentlemen
It gives me great pleasure and honour to make this welcoming address on the occasion of the official opening of the IIEP-UNESCO/University of Nairobi Policy Forum on Governance Reforms in Higher Education in Africa. I would like to very warmly welcome you to Kenya and to the University of Nairobi for this very important policy forum.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are well aware that higher education in Africa has been facing one crisis after another in the last decade or so, especially from a funding perspective. In Kenyan universities, the
crisis has been characterised by dwindling Exchequer funding, increased pressure to increase student enrolment by the Government and the public, clamour by Unions for increased staff salaries, pressure to enhance quality of service delivery, inadequate quality manpower, and generally increased exposure to market forces in the way universities operate.

As the President of the Association of African Universities (AAU), I have seen how universities have been handling these crises. Some have coped very
well while others have had their share of challenges. How a university copes depends on a number of key factors, including the quality of leadership at the Council and Management, the quality of the vision and strategic direction, the existence of appropriate systems and culture to ensure efficiency and effectiveness, and the extent to which the national higher education environment is enabling among other factors.

Of emphasis, University management and their councils have had to be innovative and work
incredibly hard to cope and survive. This has given members of these top governance organs of universities a wide set of skills and experiences in management. In the University of Nairobi, I can confidently state that we are now used to handling these crises and are ready to take the University to the next level, especially with the latest reforms in university education, which hopefully, the Permanent Secretary will highlight in his address.

I am informed that the main objective of the policy forum is to provide an opportunity for researchers
and national and institutional managers to discuss the findings of the studies and to draw policy implications. I am also informed that the forum is an assembly of senior national and institutional policymakers, professionals and researchers and the aim is to exchange views and evolve a common understanding on the nature and effect of governance reforms in the region. The participants have come from the IIEP research teams, representatives from the ministries of education from those countries where the studies were carried out, representatives of ministries from other countries in the region, and renowned academics
from the universities of the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I expect this forum to interrogate the higher education governance reforms that have taken place in the region and draw out lessons for further policy reform and for better management of our universities. I am honoured and privileged to host this important forum. I am also delighted that one of the papers is about the implementation of performance contracting in our university by people who are knowledgeable about this reform. I would like to encourage more forums
like this to deliberate on specific higher education reforms informed by thorough research undertaken by our African scholars and bringing together both academics and practitioners.

I would like to thank IIEP-UNESCO for funding the research that will be reported in this forum and also for funding the policy forum. I have no doubt that with the assembly of great scholars and practitioners gathered here, useful recommendations will come out of the deliberations.
With these remarks,

Thank you.