UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI DURING THE PUBLIC LECTURE ORGANISED BY AIESEC ON “YOUTH SHAPING AFRICA” HELD IN 8.4.4. MULTIPURPOSE HALL ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8, 2016 AT 9.30 A.M.
The Honorary Council, AIESEC University of Nairobi

Our Keynote Speakers

UON Board of Advisors,

AIESECers,

Students,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning
I am delighted to welcome you to the University of Nairobi and to this public lecture organized by our AIESEC students.

This group of students has done an exemplary job in organizing and running the IESEC week here at the University. Indeed, I am proud to see a young breed of leaders passionate about building their careers whilst still at the University.
Ladies and gentlemen, leadership is the fundamental solution to the world’s problems, especially in Africa. And whereas true, this has been constantly downplayed from various quarters, hence prompting the President of the Republic of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, to utter the bold statement; “Africa is not poor, it is poorly managed”.

It is in light of this context that most students have taken the initiative to develop leadership qualities and attributes in them by joining various student
organizations such as C4DLab, YALDA, KMUN and AIESEC right here at the University of Nairobi.

AIESEC, a platform for young people to explore and develop their leadership potential such that after going through an experience with AIESEC, the youth are better equipped to make a positive impact in any sphere they may choose.
Ladies and gentlemen, at the international level, AIESEC has been in existence for 68 years. However, since its establishment in Kenya 48 years ago, AIESEC has recorded an outstanding number of inspiring leadership stories.

The aforementioned stories have clearly been showcased by leaders such as the 42nd President of the United States of America, Bill Clinton, amongst other prominent leaders.
On the African soil, these stories have been written by the lives of phenomenal leaders such as Ghanaian diplomat and seventh Secretary General to the United Nations, Koffi Annan.

And as evidence that these stories are also scribbled within the boundaries of our country, we have outstanding leaders such as former Attorney General, Amos Wako, Polycarp Igathe and the Patron, Julius Kipng’etich (here present).
Ladies and Gentlemen, in order to foster the understanding of peace and its importance in leadership (more so amongst the youth), AIESEC provides a well-defined leadership development model and simultaneously facilitates exchange programs.

In today’s context, ‘Peace’ does not necessarily mean only avoiding war.
Peace can symbolize a world that does not have conflicts that may arise from cultural, religious, or other aspects of differences in humanity. Peace can also symbolize being in harmony with yourself.

AIESEC strives to build a world where people can work towards their own understanding of peace, while respecting and understanding the views of others.
Ladies and gentlemen, AIESEC UoN has made great strides in shaping Africa’s agenda. In a bid to define the direction that their society will take and the mandate of the youth, AIESEC UoN participated in a survey dubbed YouthSpeak which is a global insight survey run by youth for youth.

While emphasizing on the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals, the organization was able to collect over 3,500 responses that were then used as insights to organize a YouthSpeak forum set to be held
on July 14, 2016 at the United Nations Headquarters, Gigiri.

In addition to that, while walking the talk, the organization has taken strategic partnerships to implement the SDGs. This is a clear case of the youth shaping Africa.
As can be observed, institutions of higher learning in the country have the obligation of providing a favorable environment for organizations such as AIESEC to thrive. Our students and our youth can only go far if they are supported.

Therefore, international opportunities should be created and converted into platforms for our youth to engage their counterparts across the geographical boundaries.
This should work in a situation where they are supported to identify the right and prudent ones whilst easily discerning them from the resource draining opportunities with no impact to show on the African soil.

The dissatisfaction and unsettling feeling of the current state of our continent can be addressed through marshalling of the conscience of an informed mass to act and take responsibility. Our youth, as seen in AIESEC, have proved that they are ready and willing to do this.
The world is transcending to different form functionality globally, and we as Kenya cannot grow alone. We need to shape our continent.

With those remarks, I wish to thank AIESEC for providing a platform for this brilliant initiative to take place.
It is also my pleasure to welcome our Keynote Speakers, Dr. Julius Kipng’etich who will give a presentation on “The Africa We Want” and Mr. Wallace Kantai who will talk on Regional Co-operation.

Thank you.

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