UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NAIROBI INNOVATION WEEK, 2017 HELD ON WEDNESDAY, MARCH 8, 2017 AT 9.00 A.M. IN THE MANU CHANDARIA AUDITORIUM, 6TH FLOOR, UoN TOWERS
CABINET SECRETARIES PRESENT,

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI,

OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERS FOR THE NAIROBI

INNOVATION WEEK,

SPONSORS,

MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

EXHIBITORS,

INVITED GUESTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
I take this opportunity to appreciate everyone for coming to this 3rd Nairobi Innovation Week. I take the chance also to recognize the support of our Strategic Partners as follows:

1. Ministry of Industry, Trade and Cooperatives
2. Ministry of ICT
3. Ministry of Education
4. Finnish Embassy
5. UNICEF
I also recognize our various sponsors, among them the following:

1. Barclays Bank of Kenya
2. Kenya Commercial Bank
3. Safaricom
4. Kenya National Research Fund
5. Kenya Revenue Authority
6. Konza Technopolis
7. UON Alumni Office
8. Kenya Climate Innovation Center
9. Israel Embassy
Lastly, let me acknowledge our other partners as indicated hereunder:

1. ICT Authority
2. Embassy of Israel
3. Uber
4. KENET
5. Aalto University
6. Strathmore University
7. DEMO Africa
8. IBiz Africa
9. Metta
10. NIC Bank
11. Chase Bank
12. Samsung
13. IBM
14. UNES

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Nairobi Innovation Week is now in its 3rd year. We are proud of the progress we have made in building a strong brand that we can all relate to. We have a 10 year roadmap, working with several local and international partners, to build a world class
Innovation forum here in Kenya. We have seen tremendous results of our efforts so far.

We have seen research products get launched, startups scale and policy environment improve as a result of this initiative. The following four objectives are driving our efforts:

- To champion relevant policy discussions on innovation within institutions and country;
- To showcase and recognize innovations by researchers, startups and organizations;
• To promote practical skills necessary to create innovations that truly impact on people and societies; and
• To provide a support mechanism for innovations that have been developed to gain traction and scale.

Innovation is about creating change that adds value. We want to work with as many partners as possible to boldly face the challenges that we face. As University of Nairobi, we are committed to provide the thought leadership and coordination to have as many partners
work together to solve specific challenges. We are therefore inviting partners to join our “Strategic Partners” category of Nairobi Innovation Week. Strategic partners are contributing not only by funding the Innovation Week but more importantly by supporting to build in kind, and by attracting the partners and other resources into the innovation week.

This year’s Innovation week that started on Monday also has side events that have been running in different venues, including bootcamps, workshops, seminars, master classes and hackathons. Today we officially
launch the week including the exhibitions that are taking place outside. Later today, we will have a forum on “Africa Youth Entrepreneurship: Agribusiness Incubation Network Forum” at the Auditorium, and a concert at Taifa Hall, which you wouldn’t want to miss.

Tomorrow we will have several panel discussions and for the first time a whole day symposium on “Financial Innovation and Accountability in Entrepreneurial Public Universities”. The Innovation Week will be concluded with a pitching day for selected and prepared startups on Friday.
There is something for everyone and I am extending this invitation to all of you to participate throughout the week.

We would like everyone to appreciate that we are running a year long Innovation Week Theme. The theme for this year “Innovating to solve pressing local and global challenges” does not end this Friday the 10th. It will end at the Nairobi Innovation Week 2018.

We therefore have work to do the entire year, innovating to solve challenges. As a University, we have
identified specific projects and programmes that we are focusing on that are aligned to the Sustainable Development Goals. We are revising curricula and launching new academic programs. We have also started initiatives like the Bicycle Sharing initiative to transform urban mobility and reduce the over-reliance on motorized transport. We have built new partnerships to enhance our commercialization of research, among other initiatives.

Finally, I would like to use this opportunity to announce that the Nairobi Innovation Week, 2018 will
be held between the 5th and 9th of March, 2018. A theme for this week and year will be announced in due course.

Thank you very much and have an Innovative day.

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