UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI DURING THE INAUGURAL OIL AND GAS PUBLIC LECTURE HELD ON FRIDAY, JULY 1, 2016 AT TAIFA HALL AT 9.00 A M.
• The Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, Hon. Charles Keter

• Dr. Eng. Joseph Njoroge – PS, State Department of Energy

• Mr. Andrew Kamau – PS, State Department Of Petroleum

• Eng. James N. Mwangi – Chairman, Energy and Extractives Sector Board, KEPSA

• Mr. Joe Sang - Managing Director, Kenya Pipeline Company
• Mr. Powell Maimba – Chairman, Petroleum Institute of East Africa

• Mr. Daniel Kiptoo- Petroleum Legal Advisor, MoEP

• Chief Executives

• Business Fraternity

• Staff of KPC and the University of Nairobi

• Students

• Members of the fourth Estate

• Ladies and Gentlemen
Good morning!

I take this special moment, on behalf of the University of Nairobi, to warmly welcome you to this inaugural public lecture series on Oil and Gas in our region.

We are pleased to partner with the Kenya Pipeline Company to host this first public lecture series on oil and gas sector to demystify the myths on the sector by engaging the academicians and the industry players.
News of recent discoveries of oil and gas in the region has created a disproportionate level of excitement and expectations that if not properly managed might lead to confusion, wrong investments decisions, lost opportunities and public despair.

We do not want Kenya and indeed eastern Africa to add to the many statistics of lost opportunities and despair in the management of oil and gas wealth.
The solid partnership between the two giants; the University Of Nairobi and The Kenya Pipeline Company is a strategic collaboration geared to provide research based information and data to guide this lucrative sector for the benefit of our people and country.

Although petroleum exploration in East Africa predates independence, it is only recently that commercially viable oil was found in Turkana County. This coupled with the findings in Uganda and Tanzania as well as the admission of South Sudan to the EAC marks a golden era for the exploitation of Oil and Gas in East Africa.
I hasten to warn that we might not reap the enormous benefits in the sector unless we address the real and the imaginary challenges that are synonymous with oil and gas sector in Africa.

From the onset there is an evident lack of capacity in terms of skills and knowledge to convert the opportunities into real wealth for the benefit of our people. The universities must rise to the accession to train skilled manpower and produce research outcomes that are critical to the sustainable development of the sector.
To achieve that the university must look outside for strategic partnerships and collaborations that will assist the it to consistently refocus and retool its curriculum to the demands of the industry.

There is an acute demand for graduates equipped with hands-on practical skills, robust research and efficient knowledge management systems in the region.

It is against this background that the University has embarked on a journey to identify partners in the oil and gas industry from successful countries like Norway,
France, India, USA and Australia to support activities in this area.

The University has also entered into collaboration with key local partners in the oil and gas industry such as the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum, Kenya Pipeline Company Ltd, National Oil Corporation, Tullow and Total ELF among others.

We have recently courted partner universities in France, Norway, India, USA and Australia with a view to enhancing and updating our curriculum, exchange of
students and faculty and the training of MSc and PhD students.

I am grateful to the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum for giving us seed capital to establish Petroleum Engineering courses at the University of Nairobi to train over 200 students in oil & gas and energy related courses both locally and internationally.

I am also pleased to report that the first batches of students have been admitted to this degree program and have completed their first year of study.
The Petroleum Engineering program at the University of Nairobi is primarily concerned with the economic extraction of oil and gas from the earth.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the following industry partners for partnering with us in training young Kenyans in taking the leadership in Oil and Gas:

- National Oil Corporation of Kenya (NOCK) for the donation of lab equipment worth Kshs 100 million;
• Total Elf for donation of US$ 50,000 for training four Postgraduate students;

• Schlumberger International for donation of US$ 6 million towards geology software;

• And Tullow Oil for the promissory note to furnish our laboratories.

I call upon others industry players to follow suit and partner with us in developing a Centre of Excellence in Oil and Gas and related Energy studies by investing in postgraduate training, research and
innovation, students internships and attachments, incubations and commercialisation of intellectual outputs.

I am happy to announce that we have entered into an agreement with the French agency for Development (AFD) to construct a new and modern Engineering and Science Complex.

Upon completion, this complex will house some units of the existing schools of Engineering and Physical Science as well as new planned course in Chemical &
Industrial Engineering, Nuclear Engineering, Energy studies including, Geothermal, Solar and Wind as well as Leather and Textiles Technology.

The Science Complex is envisaged to be Africa’s Centre of Excellence in Engineering, Science, Technology and Innovation and is anticipated to provide holistic higher education in engineering, science, technology and innovation that will accelerate the attainment of vision 2030.
In conclusion, I wish to congratulate our partner, the Kenya Pipeline Company, for recently setting up an Oil and Gas Centre of Excellence at Morendat, Naivasha. This initiative is meant to cut down costs incurred in hiring foreign experts to work on the country’s oil and gas infrastructure in the region.

The University of Nairobi will be honoured to partner with KPC in this area and together provide the leadership and knowledge required to turn dreams into opportunities.
With those few remarks, I wish to thank all the stakeholders present for their support.

Thank you.

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