SPEECH BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. GEORGE A.O. MAGOHA DURING THE LAUNCH OF KOREAN STUDIES, ON FEBRUARY 14, 2014 AT THE EDUCATION BUILDING ED213 AT 9.00 A.M.
Ambassador of Korea, His Excellency, Chan-Woo Kim
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)
Other Representatives from the Korean Embassy
Principal, CHSS
Dean, Faculty of Arts
Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts
Directors
Chairmen of Departments
Members of Staff
Students
Distinguished guests
Ladies and Gentlemen
Ladies and gentlemen, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the University of Nairobi and to this auspicious occasion, where we mark three key events. Today, we officially launch Korean Studies at the University of Nairobi. Indeed, this is a flagship programme that is going to propel our country Kenya towards the achievement of Vision 2030. In addition, we officially launch the Korean Studies Website which will give us a global web presence, enabling us to share with the rest of the world the development of Korean Studies at the University of Nairobi. Today, we will also present awards to the first ten winners of the 2013 Essay Competition.

Ladies and gentlemen, the realization of the Korean studies being launched today is a journey that dates back to July 2013, when the University of Nairobi Senate approved the Bachelor of Arts in Korean Studies and Certificate in Korean Studies Programmes. Many stakeholders were involved in seeing to the
successful development of the Korean Studies syllabi. The two major groups of stakeholders were from the University of Nairobi and the Korean Embassy led by the outgoing Ambassador, H. E. Chan-Woo Kim. Today, I want to thank these two groups, especially H. E. Chan-Woo Kim for working tirelessly with us towards achieving this goal. I also want to thank the Academy of Korean Studies for funding the Korean Studies Project which in turn organised the team that took part in preparing the Korean Studies syllabi at the University of Nairobi.

Ladies and gentlemen, September 2013 marked another milestone for the Korean Studies programme; the University admitted the first group of students. While some enrolled for a B.A. in Korean Studies, others enrolled for a Certificate course in Korean Language, Literature and Culture. These students are currently in their second semester. I note with appreciation
that the programme, has a population of 15 students. We hope to see a sharp rise in enrolment in the May 2014 in-take.

It is my great pleasure to inform you that students in the Korean Studies programmes are taught by professionals from both Korea and Kenya. The professionals from Korea are Prof. Yong Yoon from the School of Economics and Prof. Yuhjin Park from the Department of Linguistics and Languages. These two are supported jointly by the Korea Foundation and the University of Nairobi. The professionals from Kenya are employees of the University of Nairobi, namely Dr. Gilbert Wafula, Department of History and Archaeology and Dr. Masumi Odari, Department of Literature. We thank all of them for their continued hard work and dedication to the programme.
Ladies and gentlemen, Korean Studies has also witnessed increased activity in exchange of staff and students between the University of Nairobi and Korean institutions of higher learning. I am delighted to report that apart from our undergraduate students who have been to Korea on short term exchange programmes, three of our students are pursuing their M. A. Degrees in Korean Universities. We also have students from Korea doing their M. A. and B. A. degrees at the University of Nairobi.

Indeed, the University of Nairobi has in place mutual relationships with various Korean Institutions. In 2013 alone, the University of Nairobi signed MoUs with three Korean Institutions, namely: Korea University, Sookmyung Women’s University and Korea Foundation. Talks are underway to expand our network with premier universities in Korea.
Ladies and gentlemen, several activities geared towards advertising and promoting Korean Studies at the University have been held. These activities have been jointly organised by the University, the Korean Studies Office, the Korean Embassy and individuals. They include Essay Competitions 2011 and 2012, the Korean Galore, Africans Sing Korean Soul and Korean Studies seminar. We thank all the institutions and individuals involved in one way or another.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Essay Competition 2013, saw 162 students participate. I wish to congratulate all the participants for their efforts. It is encouraging to see young people show interest in Korean Studies. I am informed that the essays were of good quality with insights on different issues shared with an academic flair to the arguments. Today, we reward the top ten students for their good work. Congratulations.
Once again, let me take this opportunity to thank students and staff from the University of Nairobi who are with us today. I wish to thank and express my profound gratitude to our guests from the Korean Embassy and Korean community in Kenya.

Thank you.