UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. GEORGE A.O. MAGOHA, ON THE PROSPECTS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN KENYA, DURING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EAST AFRICA AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY ON JUNE 29, 2013
H.E. President, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

Minister for Education and Sports

Officials of Makerere University

Officials from University of Dar-es-Salaam

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen
It is my pleasure to join the East African Community in Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of University of East Africa. The current status of Makerere University, University of Dar-es-Saalam and the University of Nairobi is traced to 50 years ago when the University of East Africa came into existence. That seed of higher education has played a pivotal role in defining the current status of higher education in the three countries.
Introduction

University education in Kenya was planted in 1963 through the University of East Africa and the then Royal Technical College became its constituent college which later grew to become the University of Nairobi.

Since then, higher education in Kenya has witnessed tremendous growth in the last 50 years with current enrolment standing at 361,000 students at all levels. Of this number, 270,000 are enrolled in public Universities and about 90,000 students are enrolled in private universities. In terms of levels of study, 2,839 are pursuing PhD, 33,000 masters, 266,000 bachelors and 57,000 are enrolled in diploma courses.
Kenya has 22 chartered public universities and 14 chartered private universities bringing the total to 36 institutions. The country has several university colleges operating under accreditation arrangement. Most of the students are admitted into social sciences, which are relatively cheaper to run, or as self-sponsored students paying the full cost of their studies. For instance the University of Nairobi has 76 percent of its students taking arts based courses while 24 percent are taking science and technical based courses. This scenario is replicated in other institutions of higher learning.
The biggest challenge is inadequate funding and continued decline of government investment in university education. There is too much pressure on the government to provide Free Primary Education, Free Day Secondary Education and pressure from the unions to increase teachers’ salaries at the expense of capitation to universities. Thus universities are required to widen access to admit more students even with shrinking budgets from the government.

FUTURE PROSPECTS OF UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

Even though Kenya has rapidly expanded its university education, there is great hope for growth and sustainability. The prospects of the universities lie in
such factors as the legal framework and policy frameworks such as access, relevance, quality, governance, cost and finance and partnerships.

**Legal Framework**

All public and private universities are governed by the rule of law. The constitution of Kenya (2010) states that the state shall take measures, including affirmative action on admission into programmes, to ensure that the youth (a) access relevance education and training. In order to entrench the Constitution, Parliament has enacted a law, the Universities Act No. 42 of 2012 and to operationalize the Act, each university whether public or private is required to
make its statutes for internal governance of its affairs. The Universities Act has empowered public universities by creating the following bodies: The University Education, Establishment and Accreditation of Universities, Governance and Management of Universities, Universities Funding Board and The Kenya Universities and Colleges Central placement Service. The objectives of university education and functions of a university are clearly spelt out in these legal instruments.
Policy Framework

The prospect of Kenyan universities lie on the extent to which they implement policy guidelines provided in accordance with the Education Act 2012.

Universities in Kenya have good prospects in terms of expanding access, making access all inclusive and expanding places by establishing new universities, new colleges, and open and distance learning. The prospects lie further on removing mismatch between choices of degrees and student interests and job opportunities in the world of work. There is need to increase the funds for scholarship, loans and bursaries to boost enrolment.
Quality and Relevance

In Kenya, the University curricula are reviewed every five years to adjust them to changes that often take place in the specific discipline. The universities play an important role of incorporating the needs of national development as envisioned in the Vision 2030 and needs of national cohesion and integration, by bringing the youth, adults, men, women and people of different racial, ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups together to learn and live as Kenyans.
University Management

The management of Universities in Kenya follows more less a similar pattern. The Chancellor is the titular head while the Vice Chancellor is the Chief Executive Officer who runs the daily affairs of the university assisted by Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Principals, Deans or Directors of Schools/Faculties and Chairmen or Heads of departments. The Universities are managed by Councils whose chairpersons and members are appointed as per the new University Act 2012 and the statutes.
Cost and financing

Bearing in mind the constraints in the public budget and the inability of many households to raise user fees, measures are being taken to diversify sources of university finance. Some of these are revenue being generated from sale of farm produce, rents from real estate, hiring out university facilities for community activities, funeral parlour facility, tuition fees from self-sponsoring students, fees from short courses, income from research and consultancies, income from investment in equity shares, fixed deposit accounts and endowments.
Links, Partnerships and Collaboration

Universities in Kenya and those in East and Central Africa region need to establish innovative forms of collaboration and links that aim at improving quality of university education through joint research exchange programmes, networking and benchmarking. It should also promote student and staff mobility across institutions of higher learning in countries of the region. Through collaboration, links and networking universities in Kenya and the region have a chance to share knowledge, skills and experiences, particularly in research and consultancy.
In conclusion we wish to emphasize that the prospects of university education in Kenya and the East African region depend largely on three things: the legal framework, the policy regime and the actual operations within the institutions that ensure provision of quality education, research and community service. Legal frameworks create and anchor the universities in strong legal position to perform the functions for which they are created to do. The legal framework which normally includes the Constitution, the Act of Parliament and the Statutes of individual universities legalize their operations including the award of degrees, diplomas and certificates. Policy regimes for these universities clearly indicate in terms of
guidelines their mandates and the environment in which the mandates are exercised.

References


