UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

WELCOME REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI, DURING THE PUBLIC LECTURE ON “CHALLENGES OF DEVELOPMENT: BUILDING BRIDGES TO COMBAT EXTREMISM”, DELIVERED BY H.E. MATTEO RENZI, PRIME MINISTER OF ITALY ON WEDNESDAY JULY 15, 2015 AT 10.00 A.M. IN TAIFA HALL, MAIN CAMPUS
I take this opportunity to most warmly welcome Your Excellence, Mr. Matteo Renzi, Prime Minister of Italy to the University of Nairobi. It is indeed a great honour to the University for You to have elected to give your first public talk in Kenya at the University.

The University of Nairobi is the oldest and largest University in Kenya. It was started as the Royal Technical College of East Africa in 1956, operating under the University of London. In 1961, the Royal Technical College was transformed into the second University College of East Africa, under the name “Royal College Nairobi” and in 1964 the Royal College Nairobi was renamed “University College of Nairobi” operating under the University of East Africa.
The University of East Africa (comprising Makerere in Uganda, Dar es salaam in Tanzania and the University College of Nairobi) was dissolved with effect from July 1, 1970 and the three countries set up their national universities. This saw the birth of the University of Nairobi, set up by an Act of Parliament. The University was formally inaugurated by the Chancellor, His Excellency the Late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, then President of the Republic of Kenya on December 10, 1970. Following decentralization of the University in 1984, under the University of Nairobi Act (1985), six colleges were established within the University as follows:

- College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences
• College of Architecture and Engineering
• College of Biological and Physical Sciences
• College of Education and External Studies
• College of Health Sciences
• College of Humanities and Social Sciences

The University is currently spread over eight (8) campuses in Nairobi, plus two satellite Campuses in Mombasa and Kisumu cities. The University also runs regional Extra-Mural Centres in most counties covering virtually all of the former provinces. The University has grown tremendously especially in the last fifteen years especially with the
introduction of module II (self sponsored degree programmes).

Currently the University has approximately 80,000 students and 6,500 members of staff.

Being part of the Kenyan society, the University has felt the effects of violent extremism, either as a corporate body or through individual staff and students.

The University is therefore keen to play its rightful role and contribute towards the noble idea of countering extremism and terrorism. It is towards this end that the University recently held a symposium on the topic: "Countering

Through collaboration with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the University held another symposium on June 17, 2015 with the topic “Get to know refugees, their roles in the host country”. And on June 29, 2015 in this very venue the University hosted a panel of experts from various countries and other stakeholders, to discuss the topic “Countering Violent Extremism”. Those three symposia/fora were on the same topic under discussion today, the difference being only in the approach.
It is very important that all of us play a role in supporting the process of managing this challenge confronting our country and the region.

With those remarks, I once again welcome you to the University of Nairobi.

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