KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

Speech

By

PROF. OLIVE MUGENDA, PhD, MBA, EBS, CBS
VICE-CHANCELLOR, KENYATTA UNIVERISITY

LAUNCH OF THE SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT
MONDAY, 22ND FEBRUARY 2016
Chief Guest, Prof. Mohammed A. Swazuri-Chairman, National Land Commission;
PS Ministry of Land and Housing, Arch. Mariam El Maawy;
Members of Council;
Members of Management;
Invited Guests;
Staff;
Students;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good Morning.
I welcome you all to this auspicious occasion of the launch of the School of Architecture and the Built Environment. Allow me in a special way to welcome Prof. Mohammed Swazuri to Kenyatta University and this event. Sir, we very grateful that you honoured our invitation to attend our function today. Allow me also to acknowledge the presence of the many guests who are here today.

As an institution that is committed to offering relevant academic programmes to the societal human capital needs, we are privileged to
witness yet another milestone of the launch of the School of Architecture and the Built Environment.

The establishment of this school is part of the University’s response to the increasing challenges affecting the rapid urbanization process in the country. I am sure that most of us are aware of the deteriorating quality of dwelling spaces and services in most urban areas arising from poor urban management practices. These challenges call for the training of qualified manpower that has expertise on the wise use and management of land resources in urban, sub-urban and rural areas that aim at reducing the environmental footprint of the urbanization process.

Our Chief Guest, it is notable that though the real estate sector is one of the fastest growing urban segment with an estimated gross domestic product (GDP) contribution of 10.6% it faces serious challenges. These challenges have led to the development of an informal and poorly documented system of management which not only discourages local and foreign private investments in the property markets but also denies the exchequer revenues in terms of uncollected taxes. With more trained professionals in land and real estate management, the immense potential of the sector can be realized.
The demand for well trained professionals in the building sciences is very high not only in our country but the region as well. Currently, there is notable lack of professionals in the design, planning and management of the built environment leading to a marked decline in standards within the planning, land management and building sectors. Existing Schools of Architecture in public and private institutions in Kenya have hardly met the ever growing demand for professionals in the sector.

One clear indicator of the scarcity of skilled professionals in land management, planning, architecture and real estate management are the constant instances of house demolitions, buildings collapsing, double allocations of land and sub-standard housing that are common across the country. It is also a fact that an acute shortage of trained professionals has led to the decline of building standards. Few if any County and Urban authorities in Kenya have adequate professionals in planning, architecture, construction and real estate management among their technical staff. This is against a backdrop of an ever rising demand for these professionals in the current devolved system of government adopted in Kenya.

Our Chief Guest, in the recently adopted United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN-SDGs), goal no. 9 identifies development of
quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure as one of the anchors of economic development and human well being. Goal no 11. of the same SDGs seeks to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. This is because more than half of the world population, 3.5 billion people, lives in cities today. There is therefore an urgent need to develop cities that are inclusive and sustainable. There is also need to develop capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.

Our Chief Guest, the new School that we are launching today will contribute to the pursuit of these goals through training and research for the realization of sustainable human settlements. It will also go a long way in meeting the goals of Kenya’s Vision 2030 development blueprint that has projected that about 60% of all Kenyan’s will be living in urban areas by the year 2030.

The process of the establishment of the School began three years ago with a needs assessment survey that identified the need for the school among stakeholders. This led to the establishment of a coordination office to spearhead the preparation of curricula and build the necessary capacity in terms of staffing, physical infrastructure and technical support. A stakeholders’ workshop was conducted in July, 2015 and brought together professionals in academia and research to
discuss the curricula. Comments on all aspects of the curricula were incorporated into the programmes and the final curricula shared with relevant professional bodies. The University Senate has now approved the establishment of the school.

The School of Architecture and the Built Environment is guided by specific needs for skills development in the field of architecture, planning, real estates and construction management. The school will seek to contribute positively to the training of specialized manpower who will gradually remodel and find solutions to the challenges that currently affect the built environment sector both locally and globally. The University has acquired state of the art equipment to facilitate teaching and research in the school. It is my hope that staff and students will make good use of the equipment to further advance the body of knowledge in architecture and build environment.

It is now my pleasure to invite the Chief Guest, Prof. Mohammed Swazuri, Chairman, National Land Commission to make remarks and launch the School of Architecture and the Built Environment. Thank you.