**Speech by Prof. Francis J. Gichaga, Chancellor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), during the inauguration of Multi Media University College Council, on Wednesday, 28th November 2012.**

**The Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology,**

**The Permanent Secretary**

**The Chairman of the MMU University College Council –Eng Jan Mutai,**

**Members of the University College Council,**

**The Chairman of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology Council, Eng. Julius Riungu,**

**The Vice-Chancellor, JKUAT, Prof. Mabel Imbuga,**

**The management team from JKUAT,**

**Staff of MMU,**

**Students,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me start by congratulating those of you who have been newly appointed to be members of the MMU University College Council. As you know, Multi Media University College is a constituent College of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and I am very pleased to welcome you to the University fold in my capacity as the Chancellor of JKUAT.

It gives me great pleasure to be here today during this occasion of the inauguration of the Multi Media University College Council. The University College must now chart its course in order to effectively contribute to knowledge creation and dissemination to Kenya’s development agenda. This is so because it is imperative that any worthy university curves itself a niche in the global arena. The institution should therefore strive to stamp its authority in its academic mandate by offering programmes that are responsive to traditional and emerging problems. But more importantly, this ceremony buttresses the Government’s confidence in the capacity of this University College to serve the public beyond its initial mandate.

On an occasion like this I like giving a bit of history about Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology in order to assist those who may not know. Way back in the 1970’s the Kenya Government was offered funding by the Japanese Government to build a College which would provide training opportunities in agriculture and technology at diploma and certificate levels. As you may be aware, the late President offered his land, upon which land, Jomo Kenyatta College of Agriculture and Technology (JKCAT) was built. Thereafter, the College was upgraded to be a constituent College of Kenyatta University with the name-Jomo Kenyatta University College of Agriculture and Technology (JKUCAT). And in 1994 the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology became a fully-fledged university with its own Act of Parliament.

The University has grown over the years and now hosts several campus colleges and constituent colleges. You may be interested to know that at the moment we have eight constituent colleges which are operational.

In this respect it is useful to appreciate the characteristics of the mother –JKUAT so that you can acknowledge when it is necessary to consult with the JKUAT Council and Senate. Accordingly, during this inauguration ceremony, I wish to highlight some sections of the JKUAT Act of 1994, some of which you may be familiar with:

* Section 5 on **Constituent Colleges;**
* Section 11 on the **Chancellor**;
* section 15 on the **University Counci**l;
* section 16 on **the functions of the Council**;
* section 20 on **staff of the University**;
* section 21 **on performance of functions in the absence of the office holder**;
* and section 29 on **regulations**.

Having covered those sections of JKUAT Act, we can now look at the Legal notice which established Multi Media University College.

* Section 3 **on establishment of the Multi Media University College**
* Section 4 **on functions and objects**
* Section 5 **on Degrees , Diplomas and other academic awards**
* Section 7 **on membership of the University College**
* Section 8 **on The Principal**
* Section 11 **on the Council**
* Section 12 **on Functions of the Council**
* Section 13 **on the Academic Board**
* Section 14 **on the Management Board**
* Section 17 **on Performance of functions in the absence of the office** **holder**
* Section 20 **on Annual estimates**
* Section 21 **on Accounts and Audit**
* Section 22 **on the Common seal and significance of documents**
* Section23 **on the Statutes**

I have taken you through those few sections of the JKUAT Act and the Legal notice as newly appointed council deliberately, and I hope that you will obtain copies of those documents and others which are used as instruments of running this University College.

Ladies and gentlemen, while JKUAT will actively engage and guide all its constituent colleges, it must be acknowledged that the necessary initiatives that will transform any constituent college solidly rest with the college itself. Accordingly, let me encourage the administration of the Multi Media University College to boldly delve into the uncharted waters and innovate new ways of tackling traditional and emerging issues for the greater benefit of the nation.

In line with the JKUAT vision to achieve Global Excellence in Training, Research and Innovation for Development, I wish to challenge the Multi Media University College Council to live up to these aspirations. I believe that this is possible.

As you know universities are expected to produce human resource in addition to carrying out research and development work for the benefit of society. In this respect, it important to recognize that to-days global trends are towards knowledge based economies, whereby research institutions, including universities, must collaborate with industries and develop working relationships. When such collaborations and partnerships are harnessed, the universities engage in research and development projects which are geared towards assisting the industries and businesses in developing capacity to produce goods more efficiently and in marketing the same. We know that universities in the developed countries have become the engines of innovation pumping out new ideas to enable industries compete in the international market. In this respect therefore, MMU should endeavour to get a significant proportion of our academic staff commissioned to undertake research and consultancy work in our industries.

You will note that as Multi Media University College Council, you constitute the top governing organ of this University College and I wish to take this opportunity to urge you to ensure that the various organs of the University College including the Council Committees, the Management Board, the Academic Board and others are adequately facilitated to enable them discharge their responsibilities unhindered so as to ensure that , as the Council, you discharge your responsibilities efficiently and effectively and that the decisions you make can stand the test of time.

I note that this being a new University College, you are expected to face many challenges which need to be addressed. The development of infrastructure is one such challenge.

At this point, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to state that a university is universal and can be a very complex organization with many leading experts, professionals and intellectuals; some of who will actively support your decisions as Council while others will criticize your actions vehemently. The important point to note in this respect is that intellectuals are able and are expected to analyze your actions and additionally try to fit those actions in the context defined by the provisions in the various instruments of managing the University College. Consequently, the College Council must be very clear that the actions taken are in keeping with the instruments of running the University College, namely, the JKUAT Act, the Legal notice and the Statutes. Since the University College Council meets only a few times in the year, except in special cases, the Council must have effective systems in place to enable monitoring and evaluation of the activities of the management and the various organs of the University College.

I am aware that I have been preaching to the converted, but there is no harm in hammering the key issues that the University College Council must concern itself with. For example, as concerns the issue of financial management, the Council must insist on a full-proof system which provides the top University management and the University College Council with relevant indicators on the income and expenditure relative to the financial plans in line with the strategic plan of the University College. Similarly, the University College Council must have a system of monitoring the recruitment processes for the various cadres of University College staff.

I am aware that we have internal and external auditors who regularly brief the management and of course the College Council; but the point I am belabouring is that the Council must ensure that they receive relevant reports in sufficient details and that the Council has the opportunity to interrogate the briefs and reports effectively.

And now, ladies and gentlemen, as indicated at the beginning of my speech, I came here to-day to inaugurate the Multi Media University College Council. When I checked in the Collins English Dictionary, the word inaugurate means, formally establishing a new leader in office.

**Accordingly, it gives me great pleasure to declare the Council of Multi Media University College officially inaugurated.**

**And with those remarks, ladies and Gentlemen, I wish the University College Council the best in executing its mandate.**

Thank you and may God bless us all.