



**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH DURING TREE
PLANTING CEREMONY AT THE
UNIVERSITY
MAY 29TH 2014
PROF. TERESA AKENGA**

The Director, NEMA (North Rift Region)

County Executive (Environment)

County Director (Kenya Forest Services)

County Director (NEMA)

University Administrators

Members of Staff

Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

Today, as a symbolic gesture we are having a tree planting ceremony here in the University. Fortunately, the movement towards a deeper commitment to environmental protection through planting new trees and taking care of the existing ones, is rapidly increasing all over the world. At the global level, trees and forests are closely linked with weather patterns and also the maintenance of a crucial balance in nature. Hence, the 'task of environment protection' is a universal responsibility of all of us. I think that is extremely important for

all of us to not only take a keen interest in the cause of environmental protection, but also to implement this ideal in action by planting new trees. In this way, we will be making an important gesture to the country and the world in demonstrating our global concern and at the same time making our own little but significant, contribution to the cause.

The destruction of forests and other woodlands is on a steady increase and at the moment, our forest cover stands at less than 5% against the recommended 10% of the land mass. Today, Kenyan

forests are being threatened by rapidly increasing human population which has led to increased human activities and encroachment of forestland. This has resulted in rapid environmental degradation hence reducing our existing natural resource base to meet current and future societal needs. For instance, forest areas guarantee Kenya's essential water supplies, and are vital in regulating rainfall and stream flow, which on the other hand are important for agricultural production and power generation. However, the destruction of forests,

coupled with excessive settlement and other human activities all lead to one result; uncontrolled severe soil erosion, high sediment load and subsequent siltation of hydroelectric dams and, decreased river flow.

Deforestation also has a devastating effect on water catchments. This by all means is a great loss to the nation as the soil lost is no longer of any meaningful value for agricultural production.

I ask the people to respect trees and attach great significance to the environment. The slogan, "EACH

KENYAN SHOULD PLANT A TREE" which is common among the people is a good slogan. The people should do their best to plant more trees on such days. Both the people and officials in particular should prevent the hands which try to destroy the environment. They should not allow our forests, grasslands and the environment in cities and suburban areas to be destroyed.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a well-acknowledged fact that this country is experiencing rapid disappearance forest cover. And if this trend is not

reversed, we are bound to witness a reduction in food production and our environment will be less habitable because maintenance and improvement of forests and other vegetation types ensure a favorable ecosystem that supports and sustains life.

I would like to again emphasize that it is extremely important to plant new trees and protect the ones already growing around you. THANK YOU