

Remarks by Dr. Sajitha Bashir, Practice Manager for Eastern Africa, Education Global Practice, World Bank at the ACE II Project Launch on October 26, 2016.

The ACE II is an important project. We don't have any other regional project in education. We have regional projects in power, infrastructure, and while people see the need in those areas they don't see the need in education. This is for us a special project.

It is an honour and privilege to be with you on this occasion. You have all arrived here after a stiff competition and you have qualified to be in the race. The real race is yet to begin. Project launch in World Bank speak has special terminology. This is a time when preparation is supposed to have been completed and the project is effective – but in this case not all countries are effective – and you are ready to start.

If you are managing a center of higher education in contexts like ours - difficult, resource constrained, many stakeholders - you have to deal with the bureaucracy, it is a more difficult task. We see this as a broader effort to build technical scientific capability for Africa's socio-economic transformation because without this level of highly specialized professional skills, without that critical mass, we don't think that Africa can transform itself.

We urge you to see the project in that light. Treat the project as an applied research project because you are bound to encounter difficulties. None of these are problems that cannot be solved. Every problem can be solved and should be solved if we achieve the results that you have laid out in your proposal. We urge you take that problem solving approach. Your best ambassadors will be your students, those are the ones that should absorb the problem solving attitude.

It is my great honour to wish you luck and success in this project.