

**Remarks by Hon. Fred Matiangi, Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Education to participants at the Technical and Advisory Meeting on October 26, 2016**

I want to thank you for inviting me.

On behalf of the Government of Kenya, I would like to thank the World Bank sincerely for the support that is going to the ACE II programme. The support of the Bank and other development partners has contributed greatly to the development sector in our country and I believe in the other countries. The World Bank remains a valuable partner in the work that we do and is now coming to the higher education sector through the ACE II. The studies that the World Bank has done including the one on university education in Kenya has been valuable in the ongoing discourse and conversations in what we need to do in higher education in our country and in the region as we move ahead to support research and development of university education in the region.

I want to specifically focus on ACE II. On our part of government we are looking for a way to expand the ACE II project with some of our own resources. We want to follow in the footsteps of the good example of Nigeria and see if we can bring in one or two universities so that in addition to the three centers, we can have one or two more. I want the manner in which we are going to implement ACE II to become a basis and a benchmark for the other activities that we would like to do as we go forward. We shouldn't look at this as a project per se. I want to see how we can build on this because we have so many young universities that are setting up research and faculty facilities that could benefit a lot from what is going on in the ACE II program.

I want to urge colleagues from governments who are here with us. I know we are guilty of this. We must do whatever it takes to walk away from bureaucracy and how bureaucracy affects implementation of this project. The time we lose is not going to be recovered. I don't know what's going to help us to wake up from the madness of dancing around with paperwork and documents and delaying important things. You have some seven or eight people who must sign some document, some five people who must be amused and impressed. This is primitive. I want to urge colleagues who are here from government, we are the single most hindrance to growth of research and development in the universities in the region. We don't even draw any particular results from it. This bureaucracy is affecting us, it is hurting us. The government cannot collapse because we have allowed ACE II project to start immediately. All of this is a bureaucratic dance. I want to urge especially those from government, please, let's think development, progress, facilitation. Government is not supposed to be a hurdle, it is supposed to be a facilitating entity.

Those of you who are university managers, let's be adventurous and see how we can best support this program by looking for resources through income generating activities or even from government funding.

What has affected World Bank projects across the continent is this: The transparency of the World Bank has become a hindrance. We are used to projects where we get opportunities for rain seeking. World Bank projects are not that type. The rate of absorption tends to be lower because the incentive of us interfering with them is low. This is good for us. It's good for our institutions of higher learning, it's good for the brain trust we want to build. There is no way we will expand university education in the region without investing in research, without managing research effectively. In Kenya we are looking at projections of 1,000 PhDs every year to be able to meet the challenges of expansion that we have in the country. If we don't take this opportunity and move fast to maximize it so that the World Bank can be encouraged to increase support, how shall we grow our university education? I want to urge you, brothers and sisters, we have to deal with the ineptitude and the problem of bureaucracy and how it's affecting the work that we are supposed to do. So, World Bank, we promise on our part to do the best. Let's seize this opportunity, let's not be a hurdle to universities. We should be the ones running around to move those papers quickly to ensure that this project begins.

Lastly, if you look around the room the number of our sisters is small. We could do with more. I want to encourage universities, let's find ways of involving more female students, female faculty and ensure that they come on board. One way that we can actually demonstrate is by making a deliberate effort to ensure that women come on board. We should walk away from the temptation to make our work look like a men's club. I have proved the time I have been at the headquarters of our ministry of education that women in the education sector make better managers.

I would like to confirm to the World Bank, Kenya's support to this project. We are already looking for ways to expand it and I would like to urge colleagues in governments to expand it in their respective countries and see how to put more money in research. I also undertake to do my part to reduce the bureaucratic dance so that we support this project fully.

Education is a critical contributor to regional integration. The more we spend our effort in this the more likely education will play the role in enhancing regional integration and developing the human resource capacity of our region, strengthening our education environment and improving our development.

Thank you.