REMARKS BY THE CHIEF GUEST PROF. ENOS H.N. NJERU, PRINCIPAL, COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE WORKSHOP ON MODULE DEVELOPMENT AT 9.00 A.M. ON MONDAY, 28TH APRIL, 2014 AT SILVER SPRINGS HOTEL.

The Communication Advisor, UNESCO Regional Office, Jaco Du Toit
The Deputy Executive of the Media Council, Victor Bwire
The Executive Director Kenya Correspondents’ Association, Janak Oloo

Distinguished guests and delegates

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning

It gives me a great pleasure to be here this morning, and to officiate the opening of this workshop organised by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication which is part of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The College is the largest in the University, as it constitutes 62% of the total student population of the University.

I would like to particularly recognise the UNESCO Regional Office, represented here by the Communication Advisor, Jaco Du Toit. UNESCO was instrumental in the establishment of the School of Journalism and Mass Communication and continues to actively support its growth, which has been rapid and phenomenal over the last ten (10) years. As you may already be aware, the School of Journalism and Mass Communication has been one of the leading centres for journalism and communication training in Africa as recognised by UNESCO in branding it as one of the top 12 potential centres of excellence. We also acknowledge with great appreciation the partnership with the Media Council of Kenya, the Kenya Correspondents Association, the Association of Media Women in Kenya and Multi-Media University of Kenya.

A special word of welcome on behalf of the University and College goes delegates from outside the country. It is my hope that you shall enjoy the hospitality of the Kenyan people, while you are here, and the interaction with local delegates from our University and partners.

Distinguished Guests,

At a conference held in March 2008, with the support of the Ford Foundation, stakeholders recommended that a Centre of Excellence be developed to host short course training workshops on in-depth and comprehensive research and training on specialised themes. The Centre is being developed in collaboration with the Media
Council of Kenya, the Ministry of Information and Communications and the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication.

The media is increasingly playing a critical role in our society, and it is fundamentally important that we continually engage with issues that inform its performance. One of the challenges that can potentially impact on the practice of media is the lack of capacity in reporting on specialised areas such as on elections and on conflict and peace, which are the focus of this workshop. This presents a challenge at the level of training in terms of meeting this need to improve capacity in specialised content, and in the quality of reporting.

It is crucial as Universities and training institutions that we continuously examine the curricular and reference texts and materials that we utilise in our training. One of the prevailing constraints that still exist in most African universities is the lack of quality reference material that is anchored on local situations, circumstances and events. I am happy to note that delegates at this workshop shall be examining a framework for the development and online publication of a training module on Reporting on Elections and on two modules; conflict sensitive reporting and reporting on elections. The two course modules shall serve as a basis for the development of course units in the curricular of journalism departments in the region, and in particular in the countries represented at this workshop today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This workshop contributes to the implementation of the Vision and Mission of the University, namely, the commitment to scholarly excellence to the Kenyan and Global community through the creation, presentation, integration, transmission and utilisation of knowledge for enhanced development and therefore the betterment of human life. It presents the opportunity for inter-disciplinary collaboration on development of intellectual material and for the integration of a regional perspective. It provides a platform for intellectual interaction, a place where it is possible to interrogate issues, and exchange ideas and knowledge relating to reporting on elections and conflict. In addition, a network shall be created that will help advance research, and scholarly activities. It is a space meant to promote relationships and create effective networks among media scholars, practitioners, policy-makers, civil society and other media and journalism actors in the region.

As I conclude, let me assure you of the College’s commitment in supporting the School in similar activities as we seek to strengthen existing partnerships and form new ones to enable us to harness the synergies required to definitively uplift the standards of journalism and communication training, to world-class standards.

I would like to appreciate the efforts of all those who have contributed towards the realisation of this workshop. I also recognise the efforts of those who have formulated the framework for the training module and for the course models.

With those few remarks, I would like to declare this workshop officially open, and I wish you the best in your deliberations. THANK YOU.