

Remarks

WCP Book Launch

“Trade Discourse in Kenya: Some Topical Issues Vol. II”

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Observe Protocol

Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to welcome all of you here today, to the launch of the book; ***Trade Discourse in Kenya: Some Topical Issues Vol. II*** which is a culmination of research undertaken by the WTO Chair Programme team members comprising of Mr. Jasper Okelo, Prof. Tabitha Kiriti-

Nganga, Dr. Daniel Abala, Dr. Wilfred Nyangena, Dr. Mary Mbithi, Dr. Samuel Nyandemo, Mr. Walter Ochoro and their associates.

I am also aware that the book ***Trade Discourse in Kenya: Some Topical Issues Vol. I*** edited by Prof. Tabitha Kiritu-Nganga and Mr. Jasper Okelo, published by the University of Nairobi Press in 2012 was also as a result of research undertaken by the same team. I am particularly pleased that the team chose to publish with the University of Nairobi Press.

Ladies and gentlemen, the higher education sector is quickly evolving from the ivory towers they have been known to be to entities that continually and consistently interact and interface with other players in the knowledge discourse. This growing triadic relationship between university-industry-government in the Knowledge Society (Triple Helix Research Group, 2012) holds the potential of economic development in the knowledge economy and new formats for the production, transfer and utilization of knowledge.

One way of spurring partnership between universities, policy makers and industry is by establishing thriving research/endowment chairs at the institutions of higher learning. These research chairs are established in recognition of major

financial commitment made by individual(s), corporate or by government/development agencies or departments towards a specific area of study. Research chairs initiatives therefore, are not only designed to attract and retain excellence in research within Institutions of higher learning, but also to strengthen links between such institutions and industry.

It is against this background that the WTO Chair was established at the University of Nairobi and has been collaborating with various international organizations and universities since its inception, not only to grow research and the utilization of knowledge, but to spur national development through the links, thus strengthened.

The UoN started collaborating with the WTO in 2001 when the WTO requested the then dept of Economics to coordinate the regional trade policy course for English speaking African countries for three years. This course led to the establishment of the Masters program in Economics of Multilateral Trading systems.

In 2010, the WTO honored UoN with the WTO Chair in the East African region which has been hosted at the School of Economics to date.

The WTO Chair was established with the main objective of facilitating continuous interaction between the University and other national and international think-tanks.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am particularly proud of the WTO Chair Programme team and the School of Economics, because, from where I stand, the WTO Chair Programme has achieved what it was established for.

I am aware that the WCP team has developed policy briefs for government ministries and other stakeholders, disseminated research findings through workshops, seminars and conferences; locally and regionally, and has published research findings in journal articles.

The University of Nairobi hosts 2 other research/endowment chairs; the UNESCO/UNITWIN Chair which was established in 1997, hosted in the Department of Sociology and the Barclays Endowment Chair which was established in 2010 and is hosted in the Department of Finance and Accounting at the School of Business.

To my knowledge all the three Chairs have benefitted the University of Nairobi immensely in terms of curriculum development and teaching, funded research, dissemination of

findings (through conferences, workshops, roundtable discussions), staff exchanges, community engagements among others.

The performance of these three Research/Endowment chairs at the University of Nairobi should serve as an encouragement to us all to seek the establishment of more of such Chairs.

To the WCP team, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on this addition to the published works and on your contribution to knowledge. A lot more is expected of you. To the leadership and faculty of the School of Economics, let me thank you for providing an environment that has enabled the WCP team to undertake their work diligently and continually producing expected results.

Finally, I wish to thank you all for being with us during this launch.

Thank you.