

Speech by the Chairman National Cohesion and Values Committee

All Protocols observed. Ladies and gentlemen, esteemed faculty members, respected stakeholders, and our vibrant freshmen,

Welcome to Meru University of Science and Technology, a place where knowledge converges with values and aspirations. I am Dr. Amos Chege Kirongo, Chairman of the National Cohesion and Values Committee, Coordinator of Innovations, and a Lecturer in Computer Science. Today, we embark on a journey that interweaves education, values, and governance – a journey that is bound to shape not only our academic pursuits but also our collective impact on the nation.

Our gathering today signifies the convergence of our shared commitment to national unity and governance based on principles of cohesion and values. As we step into this academic year, let us remember that our actions within Meru University have the power to influence the larger narrative of our nation.

The 2022 Annual President's Report on National Values and Principles of Governance, crafted under the visionary leadership of His Excellency the President, Hon. Dr. William Samoei Ruto, serves as a blueprint for our nation's progress. Each commitment within the report reflects our collective ambition to create a society that thrives on shared values and principles.

Let's delve into these commitments and the role we play:

1. Supporting the Five Pillars of the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda: As we nurture our academic pursuits, let us be conscious of their alignment with the pillars of agriculture, entrepreneurship, housing, digital innovation, and healthcare. By engaging with these sectors, we contribute to values of inclusivity and social justice, empowering all Kenyans.

As faculty and students, we can contribute to these measures by conducting research, developing innovative solutions, and actively participating in initiatives that promote these pillars. For example, students in the agricultural sciences can engage in sustainable farming practices, while those in entrepreneurship can develop business ideas that support the growth of micro small and medium enterprises.

2. Leveraging Digitization and Automation: As a university that embraces technology, we can play a crucial role in this endeavor. Our faculty and students can develop digital solutions, create online platforms, and promote the use of technology to streamline government services. By doing so, we contribute to the efficiency and accessibility of public services.

3. Enhancing Adherence to Article 10 of the Constitution: As members of the academic community, we have the responsibility to educate ourselves and others about the importance of national values and principles. We can organize workshops, seminars, and awareness campaigns to promote civic

education and instill a sense of responsibility and patriotism among our students and staff.

4. Promoting Accountability and Openness: Our journey towards responsible governance starts with accountability. As faculty and students, we can lead by example by conducting our activities with integrity, honesty, and accountability. We can also advocate for transparency in decision-making processes and promote ethical practices within our institution.

5. Supporting Devolution: We are not just a university; we are a microcosm of our nation. By working collaboratively across faculties and levels, we exemplify the principles of collaboration and unity that underpin devolution. Devolution plays a crucial role in promoting equitable development and empowering local communities. As an institution located in a devolved county, we can actively engage with local governments, participate in community development projects, and support initiatives that promote collaboration between the national and county governments.

6. Environmental Protection and Climate Change Mitigation: Environmental conservation is a global concern, and as a university, we have a responsibility to contribute to sustainable development. We can promote sustainable practices on campus, conduct research on climate change adaptation and mitigation, and actively participate in environmental conservation initiatives.

As we align ourselves with these commitments, let's be guided by Meru University of Science and Technology's core values: Competitiveness, Integrity, Professionalism, Quality, and Innovation. These values, synonymous with Kenya's principles of good governance, integrity, and transparency, will define our academic journey.

The Executive Office of the President of Kenya, through the Directorate of National Cohesion and Values and our very own Meru University Committee on Cohesion and Values pave the way for our actions. Their mandates resonate with our goal to make values the central theme in every facet of our lives, from education to governance and is grounded in articles 4 and 10 of the Constitution, which focus on national values and principles of governance.

Article 10(2) of the Constitution outlines the 17 national values and principles of governance, which include: Patriotism, National Unity, Sharing and Devolution of Power, Democracy and Participation of People, The Rule of Law, Human Dignity, Equity, Social Justice, Inclusiveness, Equality, Human Rights, Non-Discrimination, Protection of the Marginalized, Good Governance, Integrity, Transparency and Accountability, and Sustainable Development.

As students and staff of Meru University, we can contribute to these national values in various ways. Here are some examples:

1. **Patriotism:** Participating in national events, respecting national symbols, and promoting a sense of love and loyalty towards our country. For example, organizing events to celebrate national holidays and engaging in community service projects that promote national pride.

2. **National Unity:** Fostering a sense of togetherness and inclusivity among students from different backgrounds and cultures. This can be achieved through organizing cultural exchange programs, promoting dialogue and understanding, and actively participating in activities that promote unity.

3. **Sharing and Devolution of Power:** Advocating for equitable distribution of resources within the university and supporting initiatives that promote decentralization of authority. This can include participating in student governance structures and advocating for fair representation and resource allocation.

4. **Democracy and Participation of People:** Exercising our democratic rights, engaging in constructive dialogue, and actively participating in student leadership and governance processes. This can involve running for student leadership positions, participating in student organizations, and engaging in discussions on issues that affect the university community.

5. **The Rule of Law:** Respecting and upholding the laws of the land, both within the university and in the wider society. This includes adhering to university policies and regulations, promoting a culture of lawfulness, and advocating for justice and fairness.

6. **Human Dignity:** Respecting the rights and dignity of every individual within the university community. This can involve promoting inclusivity, combating

discrimination and prejudice, and creating a safe and respectful environment for all.

7. **Equity:** Striving for fairness and equal opportunities for all students, regardless of their background or circumstances. This can include advocating for equal access to educational resources, supporting initiatives that address educational inequalities, and promoting a culture of inclusivity.

8. **Social Justice:** Advocating for a just society within and beyond the university. This can involve participating in social justice initiatives, raising awareness about social issues, and supporting marginalized groups.

9. **Inclusiveness:** Embracing diversity and creating an inclusive environment where all students feel valued and respected. This can involve organizing cultural events, promoting dialogue and understanding among different groups, and actively challenging stereotypes and biases.

10. **Equality:** Promoting gender equality and advocating for equal rights and opportunities for all. This can involve supporting gender equality initiatives, challenging gender-based discrimination, and promoting gender-sensitive policies and practices.

11. **Human Rights:** Respecting and promoting human rights within the university community. This can involve organizing human rights awareness campaigns, advocating for the rights of marginalized groups, and supporting initiatives that protect and promote human rights.

12. **Non-Discrimination:** Rejecting all forms of discrimination and treating all individuals equally. This can involve challenging discriminatory practices, promoting inclusivity, and advocating for equal treatment and opportunities for all.

13. **Protection of the Marginalized:** Advocating for the rights and well-being of marginalized groups within the university and in society. This can involve supporting initiatives that address the needs of marginalized communities, raising awareness about their challenges, and promoting inclusive policies and practices.

14. **Good Governance:** Promoting transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership within the university. This can involve advocating for transparent decision-making processes, holding leaders accountable, and actively participating in governance structures.

15. **Integrity:** Upholding honesty, moral principles, and ethical conduct in all our actions. This includes promoting academic integrity, maintaining professional ethics, and fostering a culture of honesty and trust.

16. **Transparency and Accountability:** Ensuring openness and responsibility in public affairs within the university. This can involve advocating for transparency in financial matters, promoting accountability in resource management, and actively participating in oversight mechanisms.

17. **Sustainable Development:** Promoting sustainable practices within the university and advocating for environmental conservation. This can involve supporting initiatives that promote energy efficiency, waste reduction, and sustainable resource management, as well as raising awareness about climate change and its impact.

By actively mainstreaming the President's commitments, embracing and promoting these national values, and principles of governance, we can

contribute to the overall development and progress of our institution, our community, and our nation.

In conclusion, our academic journey at Meru University is a stepping stone towards a Kenya grounded in values and principles. As we embrace these ideals, we simultaneously shape our individual futures and contribute to our nation's progress.

Thank you for being part of this vibrant academic community, where learning is not just about acquiring knowledge but also about contributing to a brighter Kenya. Asante sana!

Dr. Amos Chege Kirongo, PhD.

Chairman National Cohesion and Values Committee

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