



**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

**SPEECH**

**BY**

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VICE- CHANCELLOR**

**ESRI ARCGIS**

**17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2013**

- ✚ **Managing Director, Esri Eastern Africa – Mr. Willy Simons;**
- ✚ **Education Manager, GIS Solutions for Education Esri  
Incorporation – Prof. Michael Gould;**
- ✚ **Deputy Vice-Chancellors;**
- ✚ **Staff;**
- ✚ **Invited Guests**

### **Good Morning.**

I extend a warm welcome to all of you, we are glad to have you here at Kenyatta University. Allow me to take you back to the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2013, this day marked a new era of research and teaching at Kenyatta University. The university became the first in East and Central Africa and in the IGAD Member States to install and activate the use of Esri ArcGIS Server License throughout the University. I am proud to say that, all staff and students at Kenyatta University can now access and use Esri ArcGIS products for research and teaching everywhere on campus.

The launch of ArcGIS was a culmination of a series of events since Esri first announced the **“Esri 100 African Universities Program”** in November 2011 during a Geospatial Conference held in Abuja, Nigeria where Esri USA, offered to support 100 Universities in Africa by developing stronger relationships with research institutions and by providing University Site Licenses worth USD 10 million. The objective

of ESRI was to help accelerate geospatial education and research opportunities in Africa.

Kenyatta University seized the opportunity and applied for the grant in May 2012, it was successful and the ESRI ArcGIS Server License was awarded to Kenyatta University in July 2012 following a visit by Prof. Michael Gould, the ESRI Education Manager on May 28<sup>th</sup> 2012 who is with us here today. We were also privileged to be visited by Esri's Director of International Operations, Dr. Dean Angelides in August 2012. I also note the presence of Joseph Kerski a well-known researcher and publisher in *Geospatial Science*. Welcome To Kenyatta University. We sincerely thank Esri, and please convey our gratitude to Your President, Jack Dangermond for the support. We look forward to closer working relationship with Esri.

The University has put in place adequate infrastructure and has provided the necessary network access and computing resources to enable staff and students access the ArcGIS software for their geospatial research especially for application in environment, agriculture, forestry, water resources management, health management, urban planning, natural resources management, infrastructure and transport planning, among many other areas of research whose realization will greatly contribute to the Social Pillar of Kenya's Vision2030. With this geospatial tool we hope to see

students and staff engaged in research aimed at solving most of national and world problems which have been elaborated in the UNEP Global Environmental Outlook report, GEO (2000) that casts the following as most notable global challenges:

- Current and prospective demands on the water cycle
- Reduction of fertility and the agricultural potential of land due to degradation
- Irreversible forest destruction destroying cultures; Loss and extinction of species thus reducing biodiversity
- Depletion of coastal and marine resources and fisheries from over exploitation
- Global warming from greenhouse gas emissions
- Urban air pollution, impairing human health

Indeed there are many concerns that need urgent attention if we are to live in a sustained environment.

With the ESRI Master License, researchers will also be able to access Esri's online publications in all areas of research. Indeed the Kenyatta University Post Modern Library is already linked to the online materials via URL <http://www.esri.com/esri-news/publications/ebooks> which contains over 60 e-books on geospatial science.

I am informed that a catalog of data consisting of Landsat satellite imagery covering the whole country and vector files of various data

sets from the country courtesy of Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources Development (RCMRD) have been uploaded to the database for use in research. I hope to see the Kenya data and other world data sets in the server database increased and improved to support teaching and research in the many course units taught at all our universities. We expect the university to use the Geographical Information System resources to participate in effective and efficient development, provision, and interoperability of geospatial data and services and to work in collaboration with local partnerships to provide communities with the geographic information necessary to solve a range of problems facing them. We also expect you through research to demonstrate how Geographical Information Systems can improve service delivery and make planning easier for our county governments.

Esri Eastern Africa together with Kenyatta University and other partners have organized this first Esri Eastern Africa Education User Conference (EA EdUC) a forum through which the participants assembled here will showcase their abilities in applying geospatial knowledge. The Pre-conference workshop on Geographical Information Systems (GIS) for the University Manager and the hand-on training of teaching and technical staff from across the public universities in Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Uganda is a clear indication on the importance the universities have placed on geospatial technology. We

will continue to relay and collaborate with ESRI to strengthen this resolve and we hope to continue getting your technical support.

May I take this opportunity to thank the Conference Organizing committee for bringing all of you together and I hope you will have fruitful discussions

With those few remarks I declare the conference opened

**Thank you.**