

**REMARKS BY THE RT. HON. RAILA A. ODINGA, PRIME MINISTER,
AT AWARD OF CHARTER TO STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY ON
WEDNESDAY 23RD APRIL, 2008**

Your Excellency President Mwai Kibaki,

Hon. Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Dr. Sally Kosgei,

Hon. Minister for Education, Prof. Sam Ongeru,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is with the greatest pleasure, Mr. President, that I welcome you to Langata Constituency and to one of its crown jewels, Strathmore University.

We have seen Strathmore grow steadily from a top-class institution offering 'A' level studies to an outstanding academic institution which has made its mark as one of the most successful private universities in the country and the region.

The university's history reflects the role religious groups such as the Catholic Church - as well as the private sector and our development partners - have played in realizing Kenyans' passionate embrace of quality education. Let me also pay tribute to the sacrifices parents and communities make to ensure that their young people are equipped with the skills they need to transform their own and their country's future. Our

earliest leaders such as Tom Mboya were also visionary in recognizing the role of tertiary education. At a time when there were few institutions offering higher studies, they were creative enough to embark on the famed airlift in partnership with American universities that gave Kenya a head start early on.

Indeed, it is this commitment to education which more than anything else underlies the extraordinary progress our country has made since independence. I am able to talk regularly of Kenya's potential to rapidly become a First World nation because we have a highly skilled work force whose academic training has made it one of the most open and forwarding looking in Africa.

We in Langata, and in particular Kibera, recognize that higher education offers the best chance for our young people to escape the poverty trap. But there is very limited space in university or middle level colleges. Out of the 276,000 candidates who sat for KCSE last year for example, only 16,000 will get places in universities through Government sponsored admissions. About 10,000 more will join middle level colleges.

So the goals of Vision 2030 will not be realized unless we continue to expand access to higher education through building and strengthening institutions such as Strathmore. Today's function therefore gives us a chance to highlight the public private partnership that made Strathmore so

successful and to appeal to private investors to supplement Government input in the sector.

In conclusion let me take this opportunity to congratulate the management, staff and students of Strathmore University for having met the conditions to be fully Chartered by the Commission for Higher Education. Indeed the rise of Strathmore from its humble beginnings to a fully fledged University is nothing less than phenomenal. Congratulations to all of you!

With these remarks, Your Excellency, I invite you to address the congregation.