



## **Speech by High Commissioner-designate John Feakes at the Opening of Australian Higher Education Fair, 5 March 2015**

- Delighted to be here today. Like to warmly welcome all the representatives of Australian education institutions, careers counsellors, parents and most importantly, students and prospective students.
- Like to thank
  - the Oshwal Academy - Chairman Mr Rajul Ramesh Malde and Education Director Mr Peter Barton in particular - for hosting this event
  - and Mahul Shah, Australian Education Consultants, for his organisation.
- Very pleased that 16 institutions from across Australia will be represented this year.

### *Importance of education*

- I'd like to congratulate you for being here, for your commitment to education.
- Education provides critical skills and tools to give people the means to provide for themselves and their children
  - research shows that each year of schooling translates into a 10% rise in a person's income
  - and this figure is even higher for women and girls.
- Beyond this, education is a key vehicle for unlocking an individual's potential for growth
  - it has been described as "the rope that can carry us to greatness" and "What sculpture is to a block of marble, education is to the human soul."

### *Study in Australia*

- I'd like to encourage you to consider studying in Australia.
- Australia is the world's 13<sup>th</sup> largest economy and a member of the G20

- we have a strong democracy, strong institutions, and high standards.
- . We've been welcoming an increasing number of international students
  - there are around 1,500 Kenyan students studying in Australia
  - and more than 2.5 million former international students from 93 countries have gone on to make a difference after studying in Australia.

### *Quality of Australian education*

- . We believe this is a testament to the quality of an Australian education
- . Did you know that 8 of 100 top universities in the world are Australian?
  - there are 43 universities in Australia, which means almost 20% are in the top 100 in the world
  - in overall rankings of national higher education systems, Australia is 8<sup>th</sup> in the world, above Germany, the Netherlands and Japan.
- . Demonstrating the excellence of an Australian education, did you know that
  - Australia has produced 15 Nobel prize laureates
  - and Australian discoveries and innovations include penicillin, IVF, ultrasound, Wi-Fi, the Bionic Ear, cervical cancer vaccine and Black Box Flight Recorders.
- . In addition to universities, vocational and technical education institutions offer a range of practical, work-related qualifications
  - these qualifications are internationally recognised, with standards strictly regulated by government
  - and offer the opportunity to experience on the job training and industry placements in Australia's highly competitive economy.
- . Australian institutions offer a wide range of courses
- . Of particular relevance to Kenya and Africa are
  - Australia's expertise in mining and agriculture – which have been drivers of our economic growth
  - Australia's sophisticated financial sector and well respected courses in business and accounting
  - our courses in engineering and health sciences, which rank among the world's best by discipline

- and hospitality training, with major hotels, internationally ranked restaurants and venues and a tourism sector worth \$35 billion p.a.
- . Australia is keen to maximise opportunities for cooperation with Africa across the Indian Ocean
  - Australia’s investment in Africa is increasing, in mining, oil and gas, aquaculture and dry land farming
  - for example, there are now over 200 Australian mining companies operating across Africa with investments worth more than USD 40 billion.

### *Why choose Australia?*

- . Beyond the education, we invite you to broaden your view of the world and experience the Australian lifestyle.
- . Australia is built on a diversity of peoples from across the world
  - we are a country of the rapidly growing Asia Pacific region
  - and we believe history and geography combine to give us a unique perspective that embraces both the north and the south.
- . We believe studying in Australia will be rewarding and enjoyable experience
  - with cosmopolitan cities such as Perth, Sydney and Melbourne  
: in fact Australia has 5 of the 30 best cities in the world for students
  - beautiful beaches, rainforest, reefs and unique flora and fauna
  - and a friendly and safe environment.
- . With student satisfaction rates of 87%, Australia has become the third most popular place to study in the English-speaking world, after the US and UK
  - and with a weaker Australian dollar, it’s becoming even more affordable!

### *Aid program*

- . More broadly, Australia is keen to deepen development, diplomatic and people to people ties with Kenya and Africa.
- . We understand the importance of education, and that investing in human capital lays the foundations of a stronger nation.

- . Education raises income, reduces poverty, improves health and promotes gender quality
  - it also shapes society and governance, encouraging transparency, good governance and stability.
  
- . Recognising this, Australia provides \$200 million a year in international scholarships to support human resource development
  - in Kenya, Australia has provided over 350 scholarships.
  
- . And this cooperation has a long history
  - since 1960, Australia has supported over 500 students from Africa to study in Australia, who have gone on to achieve great things as leaders, scientists, businesspeople and educators in their own countries and elsewhere.

### *Conclusion*

- . So I encourage you to explore what Australia has to offer in terms of higher education
  - and take steps to shape your future.