

Mount Kenya



University

ADDRESS

BY

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VICE-CHANCELLOR

AT

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY 8TH GRADUATION
CEREMONY

ON

FRIDAY, 7TH AUGUST 2015

AT

MKU HAPPY VALLEY GROUNDS, THIKA

1.0 Salutation

- ❖ Prof. Victoria Wells Wulsin, the Chancellor,
- ❖ Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology,
- ❖ Prof. Richard Sikora, Chief Guest,
- ❖ Dr. Simon N. Gicharu, Chairman, and members of the Mount Kenya Board of Trustees,
- ❖ Prof. Chacha Nyaigoti, the Pro-Chancellor,
- ❖ Prof. Grace N. Njoroge, Chairman, University Council and members of the University Council,
- ❖ Honorable County and National Leaders present,
- ❖ Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners present,

- ❖ Vice-Chancellors and Representatives from other universities present,
- ❖ Religious Leaders present,
- ❖ All Distinguished invited Guests,
- ❖ Members of the 8th Congregation,
- ❖ Graduands,
- ❖ Parents and guardians,
- ❖ Staff,
- ❖ Students,

2.0 Opening Remarks

Madam Chancellor, Our Chief Guest, Ladies and gentlemen;

On behalf of the University fraternity, I warmly welcome you to our 8th Graduation Ceremony. During today's ceremony, we will witness the awarding and conferring of various academic certificates to nine thousand, five hundred and eighty one (9581) graduands in the following categories:

- ✓ Doctor of Philosophy - Four (4)
- ✓ Masters - Five hundred and fifteen (515)
- ✓ Bachelors - Five thousand three hundred and thirty (5330)
- ✓ Postgraduate Diplomas- Fifty one (51)
- ✓ Postgraduate Certificate- One (1)
- ✓ Diplomas - Two thousand eight Hundred and sixty (2884), and
- ✓ Certificates - Seven hundred and ninety Six (796)

May I take this opportunity to recognize and appreciate all Mount Kenya University staff, parents, guardians and sponsors among others who have contributed to the success of the nine thousand, five hundred and eighty one (9581) graduands. Allow me to quote Barbara Cage's words from her publication entitled "Great Teachers Make a Difference". According to Barbara Cage, **"A great teacher makes a difference in each child's life, and affects each family and the future of us all."**

3.0 Mount Kenya University in Perspective

Ladies and gentlemen;

We remember the past with gratitude and satisfaction. In 1996, Dr. Simon N. Gicharu, the founder and sponsor of Mount Kenya University mooted the idea of establishing a university with a unique academic tradition.

His dream was to create a dynamic learning institution founded on strong principles of innovation and invention.

He, therefore, envisaged a university that would be a premier institution of higher learning and would accomplish the following six key objectives:

- (i) Impart knowledge, skills and values.
- (ii) Enhance competencies and skills that promote generation of knowledge that can be utilized in the process of socio-economic development.
- (iii) Promote social equality.
- (iv) Impart values and attitudes that lead to character transformation.
- (v) Promote creative thinking that leads to innovations, and
- (vi) Make the disadvantaged of today the advantaged of tomorrow.

4.0 Strategic Planning

Ladies and gentlemen, to realize the six aforestated objectives and achieve the dream of establishing a premier institution of higher learning, we embarked on implementing the university ten year Strategic Plan in June, 2008. We achieved most of the Strategic Plan performance targets by 2013. Consequently, a review of the ten year Strategic Plan was done resulting in a five year strategic plan that we are currently implementing.

5.0 A Premier University

Ladies and gentlemen;

We look forward to realizing our founder's objective of establishing a premier university. We do so by answering two questions:

First question: **“What are the characteristics of a premier university?”**

A premier university has the following eight characteristics:

- (a) Academic prestige
- (b) Scholarly excellence
- (c) Intellectual horsepower
- (d) Campus attractiveness
- (e) Satisfaction of students, alumni and stakeholders
- (f) Co-curricular benefits
- (g) Affordability and
- (h) Expected income of graduates

Second question: **“What does it take to establish a premier university?”**

Ladies and gentlemen;

Establishing a premier university takes having talented staff and students, adequate academic resources, effective oversight systems, certified quality assurance systems and synergetic partnerships among others. Mount Kenya University is continuously fulfilling these requirements as evidenced by:

- i. The 2015 Webometric ranking which placed MKU in position 8 out of 63 public and private universities in Kenya.
- ii. Granting of our a Nairobi Campuses full accreditation by the Commission for University (CUE) in June 2015.
- iii. Enlisting of the founder of MKU, Dr. Simon N. Gicharu in 2015 World Entrepreneur of the Year Hall of Fame in recognition of his entrepreneurial prowess and

- iv. Information Communication Technology (ICT) Association of Kenya ranking of MKU as the best user of ICT.

6.0 Academic Programmes

Ladies and gentlemen;

A nation that develops relevant human resource emerges as the strongest nation. We at Mount Kenya University are determined to contribute to development of relevant human resource in pharmacy, medicine, nursing, clinical medicine, law, education, business among others.

To further enhance the MKU contribution to human resource development, the University Senate recently approved the following academic programmes:

- (i) Bachelor of Science in Food Science and Processing Technology
- (ii) Bachelor of Science in Animal Health & Production

- (iii) Bachelor of Science in Nursing (Pediatrics)
- (iv) Bachelor of Arts in Public Administration and Governance
- (v) Master of Science in Statistics
- (vi) Master of Science in Nursing Education
- (vii) Master of Science in Nursing (Leadership & Management)
- (viii) Master of Clinical Medicine, and
- (ix) Master of Science in Human Resource Management

7.0 Competencies

Ladies and gentlemen;

It is widely acknowledged that a mismatch between academic competencies and work environment requirements is an emerging challenge.

Mitigating this emerging challenge requires offering programmes that are relevant and responsive to work environment dynamics. To this end, our academic programmes are designed to promote development of academic competencies, professional skills and soft skills that meet expectations of the society. We support students' aspirations and preferences, and nurture them through the University mentorship, academic advisory, counseling and guidance programmes.

8.0 Quality Assurance

Ladies and gentlemen;

Pursuance to Mount Kenya University commitment to offering world-class education and training that are in tandem with ISO 9001: 2008 Certification, the University continues to comply with relevant policies and quality management systems.

The University continues to commit immense resources to capacity building in Quality Assurance. Requisite measures are in place to ensure high quality in teaching, research, examinations and certification. In order to ensure continued improvement, a system of getting feedback from students through evaluating the effectiveness of teaching, learning and examination processes is used. Performance of staff is also monitored and evaluation done through performance contracting. In keeping with the information technology trends, we have invested heavily in a Management Information System that has made management of information effective. The Directorate of Quality Assurance coordinates all matters related to quality assurance in the University.

9.0 Nurturing Student Talent

Ladies and gentlemen;

Mount Kenya University is in the forefront of nurturing talent. By establishing the Directorate of Film, Creative and Performing Arts, we have opened opportunities for our students to nurture talent. As is popularly said, *“Talent that is not nurtured and utilized does not benefit anybody.”* We plan to establish a Film and Creative Arts Enterprise. The Enterprise will specialize in generation of TV/on-line content, documentaries, and promotional films among others.

10.0 Conclusion

In conclusion,

- To our students - emulate your brothers and sisters who have graduated today

- To our staff – let us continue the great efforts not only of producing competent graduates.
- To our management – Let us not only talk about being a premier university, but walk the talk of being a premier university.
- To our partners – let us enhance our partnerships that are critical for individual and institutional transformation and for sustainable development.
- To our parents, guardians and student sponsors: - MKU recognizes you as great partners in bringing about individual transformation and sustainable development of Mount Kenya University.
- To our graduands - I congratulate you all on qualifying for award of certificates, diplomas and conferment of degrees.

“Remember that we expect you to effectively utilize the competencies, skills and values you have acquired from Mount Kenya University to empower yourselves and make positive contribution to society. As you leave Mount Kenya University, we wish you all the best in your endeavours.”

Thank you and May God Bless You ALL