

Mount Kenya



University

ADDRESS

BY

CHIEF GUEST

**SICILY K. KARIUKI (MRS.), CBS
CABINET SECRETARY FOR MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE,
YOUTH AND GENDER AFFAIRS**

ON

CREATING AN INNOVATIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

AT

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY 10TH GRADUATION CEREMONY

ON

FRIDAY, 15TH JULY, 2016

AT

MKU, HAPPY VALLEY GROUNDS, THIKA

1

1.0 Salutation

- Guest Professor John J Struthers, University of West of Scotland,
- Prof. Victoria Wulsin, Chancellor, Mount Kenya University,
- Dr. Simon N. Gicharu, the Founder of Mount Kenya University (MKU) and Chairman, Board of Directors,
- Madam Jane Nyutu, Co-Founder of Mount Kenya University,
- Members of the University Board of Directors,
- Prof. Grace N. Njoroge, Chairman and Members of the University Council,
- Honorable Cabinet Secretaries present,
- Honorable Principal Secretaries present,
- Honorable Members of Parliament present,

- Your Excellences, Ambassadors and High Commissioners present,
- Honorable National and County Government leaders present,
- Prof. Stanley W. Waudu, Vice-Chancellor,
- Members of Management Board and Senate,
- Members of the Staff,
- Graduands and Students,
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen.

2.0 Opening Remarks

- It is a great pleasure to be at Mount Kenya University (MKU) on this occasion of the University 10th graduation ceremony. I highly appreciate the invitation to participate in the ceremony as the Chief Guest.
- Graduation Ceremonies provide an opportunity to recognize academic achievements, the measure of having attained competencies and skills required for socio-economic development.
- I congratulate Mount Kenya University for expanding access to higher education. Indeed, I congratulate Dr. Simon N. Gicharu, the founder and sponsor of Mount Kenya University on responding to the need to increase access to higher education and for focusing on developing human capacity in science, technology and entrepreneurship.

- I am gratified that in spite of the heavy investment requirements in science and technology, MKU visionary leadership is committed to investing in science and technology, the heartbeat of any knowledge-based economy.
- I am aware that Mount Kenya University was the first private University to offer Bachelor of Pharmacy programme in Kenya. We have a shortage of Pharmacists. Therefore, efforts to produce qualified Pharmacists are commendable. I am also aware that Mount Kenya University is investing heavily in developing infrastructure to support training of engineers. Again these efforts are commendable.
- The establishment of the Mount Kenya University Graduate Enterprise Academic whose mandate is to identify and nurture entrepreneurial talents is also commendable.

3.0 Innovative Work Environment

- The sessional paper no. 2 of 1982 on Science and Technology for Development recognized scientific knowledge as a fundamental tool for economic transformation and made a provision to spend 1% of the National Gross Domestic Product on Science, Technology and Innovation.
- Innovation, a critical component of the process of socio-economic development, requires work environments that support creative and innovative thinking.

- The word **“innovate”** comes from the Latin word **“Innovare”** which means “to renew or to make a new”. Thus although there are varied perceptions on the meaning of the word **“innovation”**, Several authorities concede that, innovation **“is the ability to develop new products, services processes and environments.”**
- Therefore, in order to remain focused on the organizational vision and survive over time and space (temporal-spatial growth of the organization) Amy Filbin (2015) of Thrival School gives the following 7 compulsory steps which can also be viewed as principals for creating an innovative work environment in an organization as follows:

Principal / Step 1: Change of mindset by both the management and employees and think not only outside the box but as if there was no box at all!!!! (In other words, the entire team from top management to the lowest cadre must all embrace a compulsory diversity of thoughts as opposed to a pipe / tunnel mindset).

Principal / Step 2: Learning something new every day.

Using the words of William Pollard and John Dewey everybody in an organization should develop a plan for further education, everyone must ensure that he / she learns something new everyday in order to maintain an elastic brain. Learning and innovation go hand-in-hand. New knowledge is needed every day to enhance performance by all within an organization.

+ Principal / Step 3: Make time to stop and reflect.

This can be done physically, mentally or visually. Yes, create time each day from the busy schedules; when you stop, question and contemplate.....this renews your energy and work perspectives. An innovative work environment must provide for this necessity.

+ Principal / Step 4: Appreciate Failure but learn from it, and Repeat the action correctly.

Though our society condemns failure, we should appreciate that failure is a vital process of innovation. Remember, several astonishing innovations came after hundreds of failures. Learning from our past mistakes is a vital organizational strategy.

+ Principal / Step 5: Eliminate Age- gaps driven stereotypes

There is a need to cherish the benefit of a combined contribution at a work place by the youth who are more techno - savvy and the old who are more experienced. The mix of generations at work-place is likely to lead to a greater success.

+ Principal / Step 6: Do not equate the organization's past to the future

Innovative work-places do not equate their past success or failure to their future. Rather, every idea is re-tested and re-evaluated constantly to ensure relevance in time and space.

+ Principal / Step 7: Capture innovation

All aspects of innovation experienced on daily basis must be recorded and possibly institutionalized.

- **Relevance of the above 7 steps to Mount Kenya University.**
 - i. It is justifiable for an organization which is as large as Mount Kenya University (MKU) to conduct organizational re-structuring from time to time. This requires taking stock of performance, and making adjustments in order to re-new, re-innovate, rejuvenate, re-energize for a better performance through time and space.

- ii. The continued training of staff by the Human Resource Directorate so as to learn new approaches of performance is also justifiable.

- iii. Diversity of opinion of thinking is also encouraged fueled by a combined effort of youthful tech-savvy youth and experienced older employees.

4.0 Conclusion

- To the graduands, as you move out of MKU and join the various organizations in various capacities, remember these principals as they are critical for your success at your work places.
- Finally, I commend the Mount Kenya University Board of Directors, Council, Senate, Management Board and Staff for their commitment. Indeed, it is a result of their commitment and guidance that the graduands are celebrating academic achievement today.

Thank you. God Bless you.