

Mount Kenya



University

ADDRESS

BY

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VICE-CHANCELLOR

**AT THE
GRADUATE ENTERPRISE ACADEMY
COMMISSIONING CEREMONY**

ON

27TH APRIL, 2017

1.0 Salutation

- ❖ The Chief Guest, Dr. David Thuku, Chief Executive Officer, Family Bank,
- ❖ The Board of Directors Representative, Mr. John Ruigu,
- ❖ The Chairman, University Council, Prof. David K. Serem,
- ❖ The Vice Chairman, University Council, Dr. Vincent Gaitho,
- ❖ Members of Mount Kenya University Senate,
- ❖ All Invited Distinguished Guests,
- ❖ The Graduate Enterprise Academy Trainers,
- ❖ The Graduate Enterprise Academy Cohort II Apprentices being commissioned today,
- ❖ Student representatives,
- ❖ Ladies and Gentlemen,

2.0 Opening Remarks

I take this opportunity on behalf of the University Management to welcome our distinguished guests to this ceremony. I also recognize the presence of the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Deans, Registrars, Directors, Staff, Students and Graduate Enterprise Academy (GEA) Apprentices.

Our chief guest, Dr. David Thuku, thanks for accepting our invitation and creating time to be with us today. Prof. David K. Serem the Chairman, University Council, your presence at this ceremony is a demonstration of the commitment of the University Council to supporting the GEA.

Ladies and gentlemen, unemployment created the opportunity to establish the GEA. Therefore, as much as unemployment is a negative thing, it creates opportunities. Remember the common saying *“When life gives you lemons make lemonade.”* Similarly *“When life gives you unemployment, create employment.”* Unfortunately creating employment is not as easy as making lemonade from lemons. Employment creation requires:

- i. Knowledge
- ii. Skills
- iii. Creativity
- iv. Innovation
- v. Entrepreneurship
- vi. Commitment and
- vii. Making choices

Ladies and gentlemen, a web-article on *“5 ways to Make Better Choices when Opportunities Arise in Business”* stated the following on making choices:

“Sometimes the sheer abundance of choices makes choosing difficult a task. If you ultimately pick on an opportunity you regret, you will likely make excuses as to why you are stuck and unhappy. Don’t give yourself that chance. Take time to decide which opportunities are really good and which ones definitely won’t work. And even in the worst case scenario, remember that nothing is absolute. Life is a giant game of trial and error, so don’t get bogged down in errors.”

Ladies and Gentlemen, you are all very well aware that the need for youth empowerment in Kenya and in Africa can never be underestimated.

According to Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, in the UNESCO 2012 Report, said,

“The global economic downturn is impacting on unemployment. One young person in eight across the world is looking for work. Young populations are large and growing. The well-being and prosperity of young people depend more than ever on the skills that education and training can provide. Failing to meet this need is a waste of human potential and economic power. Youth skills have never been so vital” (Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, in UNESCO 2012 Report, p. i).

Additionally, Olusegun Obasanjo, the former President of Nigeria talked of unemployment as a crisis in Africa saying, *“Everywhere we turn in Africa, the story is the same. Unemployed young people are in huge numbers.”*

Ladies and gentlemen, Mount Kenya University (MKU) is conscious of the fact that unemployment interventions should promote entrepreneurial potential. We also recognize that Universities are facilitators and catalysts of growth of entrepreneurial culture. The GEA is a facilitator and a catalyst of creating an entrepreneurial culture. In addition, the GEA initiative, MKU partnership with Wadhvani Foundation and the University common unit on entrepreneurship are catalyzing the growth of entrepreneurial culture at the University.

In conclusion, I take this opportunity to appreciate the role of the GEA trainers, Sponsors, Family Bank and STIMA Sacco in the implementation of the GEA mission and objectives.

On behalf of MKU, I congratulate all the 14 apprentices on successfully completing the training and wish them all the best in their business endeavors. Please take advantage of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund, Women Enterprise Development Fund and Uwezo Fund.

Thank you and God bless you all.