



ADDRESS

BY

Prof. David K. Serem

CHAIRMAN, UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

**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 Vice-Chairman, University Council, Dr. Vincent Gaitho,
- ❖ The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Stanley W. Waudu
- ❖ 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 wish to re-echo the Vice Chancellor's word that, the need for youth empowerment in Kenya and in Africa in general can never be underestimated. This is because, we are all aware that the presence of the large numbers of unemployed or underemployed youth in Africa is on record to have led to civil uprising where such unfortunate activities may destabilize countries and undermine efforts to build more stable, prosperous societies. For instance, it is well documented that youth unemployment was closely related to the Arab Springs in 2011, the South Africa's Xenophobia crisis in 2008 and the current radicalization phenomenon which is almost running out of hand in Kenya.

According to some statistics presented by Mutuma Mathiu (2017), 80% of the Kenyan population is under 35 years of age. He also disclosed that, the challenge of graduate unemployment in Kenya can only be fathomed after comprehending the numbers of graduates released by Kenyan Universities every year as provided by the Commission for University Education (CUE) in 2016. This report showed that between 2012 and 2015 (3 years period) more than 120,000 persons graduated from Kenyan Universities and the country has no guaranteed employment for these graduates leave alone the vast majority of youths that drop out at earlier levels of education including before completion of primary level education.

The above described scenario requires a Public - Private - Partnership synergy that would include collaboration with the academia under a quad - helix model so as to be very active in ensuring that the next generation of Kenyans is a productive generation, a people with a strong vision for themselves and for the society at large and hence responsible heirs of this country. A quad- helix synergetic collaboration would be the way to go in order to reverse the above indicated unemployment statistics. This would bring together a concerted effort from all sectors of economy so as to ensure that the country's youth is empowered. An empowered youth will enable them get higher opportunities for self-employment as well as for employability to offer their services.

Thus, joint efforts in youth empowerment by the government, academia, and private sector including civil society are most required today in Africa than ever before.

All over the world, universities are considered to be facilitators and catalysts in seeking solutions to the challenges in the society including inculcation of entrepreneurial culture among the students. Therefore, through GEA, Mount Kenya University views herself as a prime institution that inculcates skills and knowledge on innovation and entrepreneurship, equips students with a set of skills, enabling them identify viable business ideas and providing them with a practical approach to entrepreneurship.

In this way, MKU stimulates attitudes and behaviour that promote the capacity for collaboration, creativity and innovation in job and wealth creation.

I take this opportunity to congratulate Prof. Simon Gicharu for having started GEA and also to appreciate all those serving at GEA in one role or the other.

I also do appreciate the various partners especially the Family Bank who are walking along with us on this unique and successful journey.

Finally, I am told that the beneficiaries of this programme who we are commissioning today are all alumni of MKU. Given this kind of support by your Alma Mater, I then congratulate you all for having made the decision to join MKU for your studies in the first place.

Additionally, as you go through the commissioning ceremony today, I wish to remind you that, every achievement comes with a responsibility. I advise you all to strive to be the best that you can be in business. In this way, the world will open up more and more opportunities for you. Please inform many others about GEA which comes in very handy as a hallmark of MKU. Be our good ambassadors now and always.

Thank you and God bless you all.