



SPEECH

BY

**PROF. DAVID SEREM
CHAIRMAN, UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
AT**

**MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY 12TH
GRADUATION CEREMONY
HELD ON FRIDAY, 7TH JULY, 2017**

AT

HAPPY VALLEY GROUNDS, THIKA

Salutations:

- Guest Speaker Professor Olive Mugenda
- Prof. Victoria Wulsin, Chancellor, Mount Kenya University,
- Prof. 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 University Board of Directors,
- Members of University Council,
- Your Excellences, Ambassadors and High Commissioners present,
- Honorable National and County Government leaders present,
- Prof. Stanley W. Waudu, Vice-Chancellor,
- Members of the Management Board and Senate,
- Members of Staff,
- Graduands and Students,
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen.

Today we celebrate the 12th graduation ceremony of this great University, Mount Kenya University (MKU) whose graduands are a significant contribution to the national and global Human Resource Development. I heartily congratulate all the graduands for qualifying for award of various academic certificates / diplomas and conferment of various degrees. To our Chief speaker, Professor Mugenda and other distinguished guests, I say thank you for honouring our invitation. I also want to recognize and appreciate the graduands' parents, guardians and other stakeholders for their support. I further appreciate the Mount Kenya University academic and nonacademic staff for their commitment in providing a conducive learning environment for our students.

Prof. Simon N. Gicharu and Madam Jane Nyutu, the Founder and Co-founder of MKU, we are grateful for your great vision, entrepreneurial skills, intellect and fortitude that set the foundation for the establishment of MKU. Thank you for providing the leadership. Your vision will outlive all of us. You have truly made a very significant contribution to higher education in this country.

Madam Chancellor, in order to inject efficiency and affectedness in the management and administration of the University, MKU implemented the ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management System (QMS). The University was ISO 9001:2008 certified in the year 2012 and re-certified in 2016.

The benefits which the University derives from the ISO 9001-2008 QMS include:

- i. Efficient management processes.
- ii. Improved Efficiency and Reduction in Wastage,
- iii. Increase in Customer Satisfaction with our services
- iv. Improved Consistency of our operations and
- v. Continuous improvement.

Our experience is that strict adherence to the QMS requirements have added advantages. It has for instance enhanced our capacity to meet some of the requirements of the Commission for University Education (CUE) quality standards.

It worth noting that the University is in the process of transiting to ISO 9001:2015 in compliance with ISO regulations that affect all sectors.

As you may be aware, CUE conducted quality audit in 70 Universities and Colleges in Kenya between January and February 2017. The audit was a systematic examination of quality in the following areas:

- i. Curricula accreditation
- ii. Student enrolment
- iii. Student progression
- iv. Quality and integrity of examinations
- v. Certification process
- vi. Appointment and promotion of staff
- vii. Academic research and
- viii. Library

Madam Chancellor, I am happy to report that CUE audit established that MKU had maintained the required standards and also made some recommendations on areas of improvements that the university has addressed.

Ladies and gentlemen, without effective leadership, quality management systems are likely to be ineffective.

According to Justin Mrocket ([http//www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)):

“A firm may have all the industry best practices employed, but it takes internal leadership to take quality management to a level that will put the firm in the best possible position to succeed.” To this end, I commend the MKU leadership/management for putting the University

in a position of success through quality management system.

Madam Chancellor, in order to achieve success, difficult decisions have to be made. In respect to this, Roosevelt, the 26th President of the United States said:

“A man in leadership, if he fails, he at least fails while daring greatly so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.”

Ladies and gentlemen, sometimes, decisions that impact on an institution positively may impact negatively to some employees. For example, decisions made in the process of staff restructuring and rationalization that aim at right

sizing workforce in order to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness may result in laying off some employees. Such a decision, although at times painful, has to be made for purposes of ensuring continuity and efficiency of the institution.

Madam Chancellor, in recognition of the critical role policies play in guiding the process of decision-making and institutional operations, the University recently approved the following policies:

1. Library Collection Policy

The Library collection policy will complement the University Library Policy in setting out principles, which

guide the development of quality library collection that meets the information needs of a dynamic community. It will also ensure that the quality of the library collection is maintained through consistency in selection and de-selection process and in continuous evaluation.

2. Digital Varsity Policy

Ladies and gentlemen, the traditional modes of training are not capable of meeting the needs of the 21st century students who are subjected to a competitive workplace. Use of digital technologies in education creates opportunities for expanding, individualized learning and mitigating some of the challenges of the 21st century students. To this end, MKU's new Digital Varsity Policy

will guide the Digital Varsity in delivery of a range of programmes through the use of technology.

3. Alcohol and Other Drugs Abuse Policy

Madam Chancellor, the Alcohol and Other Drugs Abuse Policy will:

- i. Help the University create awareness on the harmful effects of alcohol and substance abuse.
- ii. Assist the University in managing cases arising from alcohol and substance abuse through early detection and intervention, and
- iii. Enable the University to maintain alcohol and drug free, healthy and productive members among others.

4. Risk Management Policy

Madam Chancellor, in recognition of the importance of risk management in institutional governance arrangement, the University Council approved the Risk Management Policy. The policy sets out the process for integrating risk management in University operations and it establishes:

- i. Responsibilities for risk management in the University.
- ii. Accountability for good governance.
- iii. Mechanisms for formal reporting of information relating to risk.

5. University Security Policy

The University Council also recently approved the

University Security Policy that establishes what must be done to protect the University. As you are all aware, insecurity is an ever-present concern for all of us. This policy is therefore a vital guide for implementing watertight security measures at Mount Kenya University.

6.0 Mount Kenya University Alumni Association

Constitution

In addition to the policies, the University Council approved the MKU Alumni Association Constitution.

The objectives of the constitution are:

- i. To promote mentorship of the current students by the alumni.
- ii. To promote mobilisation of scholarships and resources to support gifted needy students and advancement of scholarly research.

- iii. To promote the interests of members and networking for opportunities in business, employment, research, academic and social spheres.
- iv. To promote scholarly and professional excellence in line with the vision and mission of the University.
- v. To promote generally the influence of the Association in the University, and beyond.

On behalf of the University Council, I commend the University staff for their contribution in developing the University policies.

I also take this opportunity to thank members of the Alumni Association particularly the interim officials led by the chairman, Mr. Gakera Kahara for developing the constitution. May I request the chairman and his team to stand and wave at the congregation.

Conclusion

Graduands, this graduation ceremony marks the start of using your education as a springboard, not a finish line. As I congratulate you, I also challenge you that, may all those that interact with you hereafter affirm to the fact that you were educated at this great University. As our Alumni, be our good ambassadors as you strive to be the best you can in your lives. You can only be the best by embracing the virtues for honesty, humility, respect for others and self and hard work, I wish you all the very best out there. I have no doubt for your success because MKU has prepared you adequately.

BEST WISHES AND GOD'S BLESSINGS TO ALL OF YOU. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.