

SPEECH

BY

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VICE-CHANCELLOR

AT

**MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY 12TH
GRADUATION CEREMONY**

ON

FRIDAY, 7TH JULY, 2017

AT

**MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY HAPPY VALLEY
GROUNDS, THIKA**

1.0 Salutations:

- Chief Speaker, Professor Olive M. Mugenda,
- Prof. Victoria Wells Wulsin, Chancellor, Mount Kenya University,
- Prof. Simon N. Gicharu, CBS, 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. David K. Serem, Chairman, University Council,
- Members of the University Council,
- Honorable Cabinet Secretaries present,
- Honorable Principal Secretaries present,
- Honorable Members of Parliament present,
- Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners present,
- Honorable National and County Government leaders present,
- Members of Management Board and Senate,
- Members of the Staff,
- Graduands and Students,
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen.

2.0 Welcome Remarks

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the Mount Kenya University 12th Graduation Ceremony. May I take this opportunity to thank all our distinguished guests for accepting our invitation to participate in this auspicious occasion as we celebrate the culmination of hard work by the graduands. To our graduands, congratulations on qualifying for conferment of various degrees and award of various diplomas and certificates.

3.0 Opening Remarks

Madam Chancellor, today we celebrate the academic achievements of six thousand, six hundred and three (6603) graduands.

The graduands fulfilled all academic programme requirements for conferment of various degrees and award of diplomas and certificates as follows:

- i. Five (5) Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degrees
- ii. Two hundred and fifty three (253) Masters Degrees
- iii. Seventy three (73) Postgraduate Diplomas
- iv. Four thousand, one hundred and fifty seven (4157) Bachelors' Degrees
- v. One thousand, six hundred and forty one (1641) Diplomas and
- vi. Four hundred and seventy four (474) Certificates.

4.0 Mount Kenya University Academic Resources

Madam Chancellor, Guest Speaker, ladies and gentlemen, academic resources are among the critical requirements for offering quality education and training. To this end, I am pleased to report that Mount Kenya University has adequate academic resources that enable it meet its training needs. The adequate academic resources are as a result of effective assembly and consolidation of academic resources guided by proper understanding, interpretation and implementation of the University strategic plan. The ten objectives of the University Strategic Plan are:

- a.** To improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- b.** To increase capacity for research and innovation.
- c.** To provide adequate infrastructure to support teaching, learning and research.

- d. To improve student welfare.
- e. To enhance community outreach services.
- f. To mobilize resources and build a sustainable funding base for the University.
- g. To strengthen institutional capacity to deliver the University mandate.
- h. To enhance human resource attraction and retention and
- i. To promote corporate governance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Mount Kenya University has also put in place effective quality assurance and control mechanisms.

The academic resources and quality assurance and control mechanisms have provided the University with gateways to developing competitive advantages necessary for sustainability of the growth of the University.

On behalf of the University Management, I thank the University staff who get their work done without passing the buck or creating excuses and for making it possible for the University to develop the various competitive advantages.

5.0 Community Focused Research

Madam Chancellor, the primary reason that Universities world over exist is to contribute to the development and prosperity of the society.

This mandate is a responsibility of scholars who the society views as the ultimate generator of knowledge that addresses societal challenges. In this regard, at Mount Kenya University we make deliberate efforts to generate knowledge and participate in community outreach programmes.

Madam Chancellor, the University has endeavored to fill the gap between academia and community needs by initiating programmes, in collaboration with partners, that impact directly to the welfare of the society: A case in point is the recently held International Peace Conference that provided a forum to deliberate on how to promote peace in the society.

One of the key outcomes of the conference was the launch of the Africa Consortium for Peace (AC4P), a multi-institutional platform that will carry forward peace initiatives in Africa. We welcome individuals and institutions to join this important consortium.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Mount Kenya University faculty members are actively participating in research that focuses on community health issues among others. For instance, one of our faculty members, Mr. Francis Makokha, is involved in an international consortium that is undertaking a cancer project that is being conducted in five continents. The study is funded by Cancer Research, UK.

The University also hosts the Christian and Scientific Association of Kenya (CSAK). This is an association that seeks to build synergies between academia and religion in Kenya. The association recently organized a public debate on the role of Christians in politics that attracted over 1,000 participants.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in the area of innovation, the University has continued to support young innovators. Recently, the University through the Directorate of Research, Grants and Endowment announced an “Innovation Challenge 2017 Grant” to support emerging students and staff innovators.

In May 2017, a member of staff, Mr. Donatus Njoroge, was one of the winners in the recently concluded East Africa postharvest technologies competition, a competition sponsored by Inter-Region Economic Network (IREN) in conjunction with USAID and SIGENTA.

Additionally, MKU is participating in a five-year maternal newborn health programme, which was initiated by the United Kingdom (UK) Department for International Development (DFID). In partnership with the Foundation African Trust and the County of Bungoma Ministry of Health, the following seven activities are being undertaken in the County of Bungoma:

- i) Setting up neonatal special care units in 7 sub-county hospitals.

- ii) Upgrading neonatal care units in Bungoma and Webuye County Referral Hospitals.
- iii) Training of 72 nurses and 18 clinicians working in the target hospitals on diagnosis and management of common newborn problems.
- iv) Establishing a tele-health platform to facilitate effective diagnosis and management of various neonatal conditions and complications.
- v) Updating clinical guidelines and disseminating to healthcare providers.
- vi) Establishing a call centre for early detection of neonatal problems and
- vii) Sensitizing the community on availability and utilization of newborn care services.

Madam Chancellor, I thank the MKU team led by Dr. Jesse Gitaka, the Principal Investigator whose efforts made the Maternal Newborn Health Project a reality.

Conclusion

In conclusion, again I congratulate the graduands on qualifying for the conferment of various degrees and award of various diplomas and certificates. Graduands, as you leave Mount Kenya University, remember that graduation marks a step towards greater success in future. It is the beginning of a new life of responsibility. As Henry David Thoreau said:

“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams and actualize them.”

GOD BLESS YOU ALL