

SPEECH

BY

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CHANCELLOR

AT

12TH GRADUATION CEREMONY

HELD ON

7TH JULY 2017

1.0 Salutations:

- The Chief Guest, Professor Olive M. Mugenda,
- Prof. Simon Gicharu, Chairman, Board of Directors,
- Madam Jane Nyutu, Co-Founder of Mount Kenya University,
- Members of the University Board of Directors,
- Prof. David Serem, Chairman, University Council,
- Members of the University Council,
- Prof. Stanley Waudu, Vice-Chancellor, Mount Kenya University,
- 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 Staff,
- Graduands and Students,
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

HAMJAMBO NYOTE!

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2.0 Opening Remarks

Allow me to start by conveying my very warm greetings to you all and pass to you the hearty regards sent by my family, as well as the warm regards from University of Cincinnati.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am here this morning to offer the meritorious awards to the granduands who are seated here in front of us. Before I do so, allow me to take a moment to also recognize and acknowledge the contributions of collaborations and partnerships in the development of the University. Over the years, the number of collaborations and partnerships between MKU and other institutions has steadily grown.

I am pleased to note that this is in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals recently launched by the United Nations (UN).

Ladies and gentlemen, we at MKU believe that no one has to win at the expense of others. It is in this belief and the passion for helping one another that propel the systematic and steady growth of the University. As a consequence of the successes in our partnerships, I feel the way Erik Weihenmayer felt on arrival at the summit of Mt. Everest on 25th May, 2001. On arrival at the summit, Erik said:

“I feel like, when I got to the top, I was on the shoulders of lots and lots of people. It wasn't just me standing there.”
(<https://www.drzimmerman.com>).

Kindly join me, therefore, in recognizing and appreciating some of MKU's most recently engaged partners.

3.0 Partnerships and Community Outreach Programmes

Ladies and gentlemen,

Research findings can only find meaning if they are repackaged and disseminated to the relevant communities. We believe that such findings positively influence the social-development of the target groups.

In recognition of the importance of taking services and information to the communities, MKU has initiated the following outreach and partnership programmes:

i) Open School Programmes

The open school programme is anchored on the open school concept. According to Ezra staples:

“The specific applications of this concept are varied and are known by many other names. The free school, informal education, the integrated day, the integrated curriculum, or the free day. The concept is committed to the idea of individualization of instruction and is the antithesis of the regular or conventional classroom in which the teacher stands in front of the learners, dominates the lesson, and in which the learners seated before him are exposed to the same learning experience at the same time. To be meaningful and have indelible impact, openness must be characterized by approachability, relaxed and informal control, ease of communication, mutual support between the teacher and the learner and a stimulating learning environment.”

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Ladies and gentlemen, using the open school approach, the School of Education at MKU has been conducting outreach/corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities at the Naivasha Maximum Security Prison for the last two years. The faculty from the school inducts some inmates on pedagogical skills who, in turn act as teachers to fellow inmates. This approach has helped inmates who are out-of-school access education and excel. It also gives them a higher chance to receive the Presidential Clemency that removes the beneficiary from the confined imprisonment.

Ladies and gentlemen, according to Professor Asha S. Kanwar, President and Chief Executive Officer, Commonwealth of Learning:

“UNESCO estimates that more than 263 million children and youth are out of school, with Africa being the most affected continent. It is estimated that in Kenya, the number of out-of-school children of primary school age alone is 1.1 million. It is almost impossible for mainstream education to deal with this challenge. An innovative initiative such as open school is one of the solutions.”

ii) MKU and Vincent Pol University, (in Poland) partnership (Erasmus + programme)

This very edifying collaboration is on areas of staff and student mobility, and joint research. In December 2016, two MKU Academic staff visited Vincent Pol University while two (2) MKU students visited and stayed at Vincent Pol University between March and June, 2017.

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iii) MKU and University of West Scotland, in United Kingdom Partnership

This partnership focuses on establishing, where appropriate, franchising/local delivery agreements for specified programmes. The University of West Scotland participated actively in the International Conference on Peace, Justice and Social Enterprise that was organized by MKU and hosted at Safari Park Hotel between 17th and 18th May, 2017.

iv) MKU and UNESCO Partnership

Ladies and Gentlemen, you are all aware of the instrumental role played by UNESCO all over the world in enhancing peace and inter-disciplinal as well as multi-institutional scholarly works.

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I appreciate that, MKU has so far signed two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with two UNESCO offices, namely the UNESCO Paris Headquarter and the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) in Nairobi.

On the one hand, the MoU with UNESCO Paris office, grants MKU an opportunity to establish a UNESCO Chair on Digital Education, Inter-disciplinary Teaching and Sustainable Development at MKU's Nakuru Campus. On the other hand, the MoU with the Nairobi-based Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) allows corporate linkages in various areas of mutual interest including peace consortium, youth empowerment, Information Communication Technology (ICT), amongst many other activities.

Additionally, I am informed that, MKU has embarked on a new partnership with UNESCO regional office at Gigiri where discussions towards the establishment of a radio-based educational program for the MKU - Naivasha Maximum Prison program are underway.

I therefore thank the UNESCO offices Paris, Gigiri, Nairobi, and KNATCOM for joining the MKU list of partners.

v) MKU and Makerere University Business School (MUBS) Partnership

This is a partnership through which shall, effective this year, enable us to offer joint Executive Masters of Business Administration programme.

We are also collaborating in joint research, joint publications, mentoring of student leaders and the Graduate Enterprise Academy programme. Additionally, I am also reliably informed that, another MoU with Makerere University College of Health Sciences is about to be signed which we look forward to.

vi) MKU Partnership with the National Commission for Integration and Cohesion (NCIC).

Ladies and Gentlemen, NCIC is a Government of Kenya's Agency charged with the responsibility of overseeing peaceful co-existence among all Kenyans. NCIC was very instrumental in collaborating with MKU in the just concluded International Conference for Peace, Security and Social Enterprise that was hosted by MKU in May this year 2017.

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NCIC has also joined the MKU-based African Consortium for Peace (AC4P). We appreciate them for this.

**vii) MKU - Africa Cyber Space Network (ACN)
Partnership**

Due to the escalating cybercrime at a global level, many people have been very adversely affected through cyber frauds while many other insecurities including loss of lives have been witnessed everywhere in the world including in Kenya. Consequently, MKU collaborated with Africa Cyber Space Network during the just concluded conference. MKU hosted a panel to discuss on ways of seeking a solution to Cyber Crime. We anticipate continued collaboration with ACN at MKU's School of Computing and Informatics.

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viii) MKU - Clarke University Partnership

Clarke University of USA has also established a very strong collaboration with MKU. Two particular activities that need special mention include the conspicuous presence of three (3) professors from Clarke University who played vital roles during the International Conference on Peace, Security and Social Enterprise that was recently hosted by MKU. Second, was the visit by the students and staff from Clarke University to MKU on a short cultural induction visit. We do appreciate all those who made these visits a reality.

ix) MKU - Wadhvani Foundation Partnership

Ladies and Gentlemen, due to the escalating unemployment trends in Africa, MKU has taken the inevitable path of actively assisting students to have a mind-set change and be job creators rather than being job seekers. In this regard, MKU is partnering with the Wadhvani Foundation in inculcating entrepreneurial skills to our students. Wadhvani Foundation is a Silicon Valley, USA-based company whose sole objective is to contribute to uplifting the standards of the third world countries by empowering students at higher institutions of learning through free online entrepreneurial programmes, which are valued at USD300 million that are offered free of charge. We appreciate Wadhvani Foundation for this offer to our students.

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4.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen, I will quote the words of the Principal of Makerere University Business School (MUBS) when his Council recently invited the Founder of MKU, Professor Simon Gicharu to give a Commencement Speech at MUBS 12th Graduation Ceremony. According to Prof Waswa, collaborations are generated and driven by personal relationships rather than organizational status. All the above-mentioned collaborations are driven by certain contact persons at each organization. On behalf of MKU fraternity, I appreciate whole-heartedly all those that are involved in driving these collaborations at each institution.

Finally, to the graduands, we appreciate you and wish you abundant success in all your endeavors. Remember, in all what you will do, there is always a possibility of doing the same in some kind of partnership. In this way, you will be able to move far in your operations.

May God bless you all, may God bless MKU and may God bless Kenya, the great African Nation.

ASANTENI SANA.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL