



Unlocking Infinite Possibilities

REMARKS

BY

PROF. JOHN J. STRUTHERS

CHANCELLOR – MKU

**DURING 14TH GRADUATION CEREMONY OF
MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

ON

03RD AUGUST, 2018

Salutation

- The Chief Guest, the Vice - Chancellor of Makerere University, Uganda - Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe,
- The MKU Founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Professor Simon Nyutu Gicharu,
- Madam Jane Nyutu, Co-founder of MKU
- Members of MKU Board of Directors,
- Chairman of the University Council, Prof. David Serem,
- Members of the University Council,
- The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Stanley Waudu,
- Mount Kenya University staff,
- Distinguished Invited Guests,
- Graduands and students,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

Ladies and Gentlemen, moving now to the theme of the 14th Graduation ceremony, which is: **“The Financing of Higher Education in Africa for Quality and Sustainability.”** I wish to add my own thoughts towards what others have said, which I will do from a partnership perspective as follows;

- 1) There is no doubt that Universities the world over have to be committed to their core business, which is, teaching, research and community outreach, in order to achieve their ultimate goals. To accomplish these goals, universities of course need funding. Where do such funds come from? I wish to underscore the role of partnerships in contributing towards universities income from eg capitation fess. Such partnerships can happen either directly or indirectly.

In either case, every university must work with its partners to obtain additional funding other than what it receives from the government and what it collects in fees.

2) All universities must seek third stream income generation opportunities most of which come through partnerships. Therefore, in my simplest words, I can only describe the role of partnerships to a university to be equivalent to the role of engine oil to an engine. You are all aware that an engine needs oil to run. And so I see the role of partnerships to a university as equivalent to that of the engine oil in enhancing the running of an engine.

Partnerships lubricate the running of universities and add to the efficiency of our institutions by giving them long life and making them more efficient for the best output. Thus, the survival of each university today and in the future, is and will always be dependent on the quality of its partners. As an illustration allow me to inform you that my home university the University of the West Scotland is a good case in point on the need for partnerships. The University of the West of Scotland depends on partnerships and so it is with Mount Kenya University.

Today I note that, other than the University of West Scotland and Mount Kenya University partnership,

MKU's list of collaborations with Universities and industry partners is extensive. In total, there are over one hundred partners spread across all areas of specialization such as education, hospitality and tourism, ICT, human health and allied sciences, animal health, pure and applied sciences, engineering and built environment, and all other areas represented by the respective Academic Schools at Mount Kenya University. These are the partnerships that keep the University engines running efficiently as is evidently the case as we look out across this great graduation multitude. To the Vice-Chancellor and your team of Senate members, please accept my heartiest word of congratulations. I can also add today that I bring with me from Scotland a renewal of the Articulation Agreement between the University of the West of Scotland and Mount

Kenya University. Of course, for the past two years strong links between our two institutions have been developing: for example between our School of Law colleagues; in the field of enterprise and entrepreneurship through MKU's Graduate Enterprise Academy. I can also announce that during the month of July in the year 2021 one of my University of the West of Scotland colleagues will be Chairman of the European College of Sports Science Congress to be held in Glasgow with over 3000 delegates attending from over 70 different countries, and of course Kenya as a country and Mount Kenya University we hope will be participating in that event thanks to the partnership between our two universities.

3) Ladies and gentlemen, I take this opportunity to thank all Mount Kenya University's stakeholders wherever they are. On such partnerships Mount Kenya University's qualitative and quantitative outputs depend greatly. In this regard, in my new capacity as the Chancellor of MKU, and as a true friend and partner of this great institution of higher learning, I also wish to extend the invitation to other stakeholders who may be with us today or read about this event in the newspaper or hear about it on television, to consider joining us at Mount Kenya University as our partners.

4) I also wish to thank the Guest Speaker in today's graduation ceremony Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe,

the Vice-Chancellor of that esteemed institution Makerere University in Uganda for gracing us with his presence today and for being a strong believer in the capacities and ambitions of MKU. I have been told that Makerere University is currently one of the most vibrant partners of MKU. This is evidence of a strong regional cooperation in this vibrant part of East Africa. All of us who are here today will agree with me that this event would not be what it is without Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe's presence. We thank you Prof Nawangwe for this great act of magnanimity. We are sure many other like-minded partners will certainly follow in your footsteps.

5) In the same vein, I thank all the partners who have so far come to believe in MKU's spirit of **"Unlocking Infinite Possibilities"** and have joined us in working towards this grand vision for our university. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier on, it is true that MKU's partners have contributed greatly to the work of MKU as evidenced by the outstanding contribution by the 1st Chancellor Professor Victoria Wulsin of the University of Cincinnati who contributed hugely in making MKU what it is today. At this moment, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to pay my special tribute to my predecessor, Prof. Victoria Wulsin who at both a professional and at a personal level over a number of years made her mark on this institution and indeed on the great country of Kenya.

It is indeed a huge honor for me to follow in the path that she trod. I hope one day to thank her personally on behalf of the Chairman and all the other members of MKU staff- perhaps even in the precincts of the MKU grounds- so that I can take over the mantle from her. Having met her on my previous visits to the university she had a profound impact on me and was absolutely correct in saying that MKU is not just an institution. It is in fact an *MKU family- an extended family-* in the true African sense of that phrase.

6) Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, no one can ever exhaust the benefits that MKU has so far reaped from the spirit of partnerships. I note, and I congratulate the University for the following Partnerships which is just a sample from the many that exist. These include:
The prestigious ERASMUS + programme of Europe,

the UK's Newton Fund, and DFID in the UK, the European Commission, the Association of African Universities, and the Inter-Universities Council of East Africa with all the quality assurance networks that it offers. They also include:

The German Government through the Centre for Immigration and Development (CIM), the DAAD.

All of these have helped to support many different projects at MKU, examples of which include:

- a) The Data-Analytics training programme for SMEs supported by the Centre for Immigration and Development (CIM).

- b) The Student Training on Entrepreneurial Promotion or STEP programme supported by the University of Luneburg in Germany.
- c) The DAAD sponsored Collaboration for Entrepreneurial Promotion Universities (CEPU) which involves only two partnering Universities in Africa, namely, Kenyatta University in Kenya and MKU along with a consortium of 5 Universities in Germany.
- d) The Erasmus + sponsored “AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION LEADERSHIP IN ADVANCING INCLUSIVE INNOVATION FOR DEVELOPMENT (AHEAD) project which involves a consortium of 5 Kenyan Universities, 4 Universities in Uganda including Makerere University, 2 Universities in

Tanzania and 4 universities in Europe and 1 European Non- Governmental Organization.

e) The Erasmus + programme which has also sponsored a vibrant partnership between MKU and the Vincent Pol University of Poland.

f) We are also appreciative of other partnerships with a number of African, American, European and Chinese Universities and organizations including:

The Petroleum University of China, the Catholic University of Italy, the Nottingham Trent University of the UK, the Makerere University College of Health Sciences and College of Education, Makerere University Business School in Kampala, the UNESCO office in Paris, and the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO and the UNESCO East African Regional

Office at Gigiri, Nairobi.

And closer to home, the Kenyatta University in Kenya, the Kenya Utalii College, and various universities in the 5th International Interdisciplinary Research Conference Consortia.

Our partnerships also include those with industry such as: BIDCO, the banks, CARITAS Nairobi, and many others too numerous to mention individually in this short maiden speech as Chancellor.

To all of MKU's partners, whether you have a signed Agreement or not with us and on behalf of the MKU Management, kindly accept our appreciation.

Finally, to the graduands and your guardians and parents, congratulations for your achievement on this part of your educational journey. It is important to point out that educational achievements in the form of the degrees that you are being awarded today represent *a journey rather than a destination*. In fact it is not exaggerating to say that the journey of education never ends but continues and that is how you should view this special day for you and your families and friends.

Of course now that you are graduates there is the potential to commence a new journey for each one of you. The programme of study that you have followed at MKU will ensure that you have all the skills, knowledge and attributes to be successful in your future endeavours.

And so go forth to the job market with confidence that success lies ahead. Believe in yourselves but also trust in God, be honest and live an ethical life as you face the world of work, and success will be on your side. As the prophet Isaiah said in the 40th chapter of that Old Testament Book...with God's help... the youths will..."Soar on wings like eagles" ...

I do thank you all for listening to me. Long-live MKU, long-live MKU's stakeholders, alumnus, partners and supporters. And to our graduands today may your achievements which we celebrate today in the words of the University's mission... *"Unlock Infinite Possibilities* "...for all of you.

God Bless You All. Asante sana na Mungu awabariki

Prof. Struthers, Chancellor, MKU