



**TALKING POINTS**

**BY**

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**CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS – MKU**

**DURING THE**

**15<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY OF  
MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

**ON**

**7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 2018**

## **Salutation**

- The Guest Speaker, the Chairman Commission for University Education – Prof. Chacha Nyaigotti-Chacha,
- The Chancellor, Prof. John Struthers,
- Madam Jane Nyutu, Co-Founder of Mount Kenya University,
- Members of the MKU Board of Directors,
- Chairman of the University Council, Prof. David Serem,
- Members of the University Council,
- The University Management led by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Stanley Waudu,
- Members of the University Senate,
- Members of Teaching, Administrative and Support Staff,
- Distinguished Invited Guests,
- Alumni Representative,
- Graduands and students,
- Ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to address you. Today marks the beginning of a new future for our graduands, whereby everything you do will be adjudged by the knowledge you gained from Mount Kenya University.

Today's theme, which is, "*Promotion of Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development*" will shape and determine your destiny. You will carry it with you for many years to come.

- ❖ Africa is part of the Global Village. MKU is in the circuit of recognized international universities. We must therefore explore this theme in the context of African history and development, vis a vis that of the rest of the world.

- ❖ In olden times, Africa was ahead of Europe in matters of development and innovation. For example, The King of Ghana had enough riches to put golden collars round his dogs' necks, and was much wealthier than his contemporary in Anglo-Saxon England. Mali had a well-organized money and taxation system.
  
- ❖ So, what happened? Why did the Europeans overtake us? We failed to promote "innovation and entrepreneurship," and thus the Europeans sprinted ahead of us. Goods produced at their factories were of better quality than ours. And we had no option but to import them. As the saying goes "*our camels were no match for the steam engine.*"
  
- ❖ I was shocked to learn the other day that Americans have trademarked the term "Hakuna Matata," which I believe is a generic Kenyan term.

Again, the white man has innovated a simple idea, and will now reap profits from it. We shall strengthen our Incubation Centre to enable our students to commercialize their inventions. We shall also connect them with financial institutions that can support their projects.

- ❖ David Livingstone, one of the first European explorers to Africa believed that it was Europe's duty to take **3 Cs** to Africa: **Christianity, Commerce and Civilization**. It's our duty as a university to take **3Es** to our people: **Education, Entrepreneurship and Economic Success**. I will speak about these three Es today.

## 1. EDUCATION:

- ❖ Today, we award Certificates and confer Degrees and Diplomas to confirm the excellent **Education** our students have received. To facilitate the continuous provision of an excellent education, we have set out several initiatives.
- ❖ We shall award **10 scholarships** to students at the College of Health Sciences (*i.e students studying Medicine, Nursing, Pharmacy, Clinical Medicine and Public Health*) to support the Government of Kenya's Agenda Four on provision of Universal Health Care. I would like to challenge other institutions to follow suit and support the government in this noble effort. The MKU College of Health Sciences will also offer short courses to support this dream of universal healthcare.

- ❖ The School of Engineering will receive Ksh. 1billion over the next five years towards purchase of modern training equipment.
- ❖ The ultra-modern **Auditorium**, which is under construction will be opened next year. We have constructed it at a cost of Ksh100 million. It will be one of its kind in Africa, and will have enough capacity to host International Conferences, as well as a variety of student activities.
- ❖ Very soon, MKU Rwanda will be having its own Charter. I am hoping that this is the last graduation whereby the students will travel from Rwanda to Kenya to receive their degrees.
- ❖ In partnership with Utalii Hotel, we recently opened a dedicated facility for the School of Hospitality in Rwanda to train students.

## **2. ECONOMIC SUCCESS:**

As we face the challenge of reduced student numbers, we have delved into alternative sources of income:

a) Research funds -

- i) We were one of the universities to receive equipment worth about Ksh50million from the US Seeding Labs to advance scientific research and teaching.
- ii) Grants in the areas of Entrepreneurship, Innovation, Public Health, Education, and Religion, totaling about US\$ 2 million.

b) Establishment of a strong Endowment Fund

c) Establishment of linked enterprises, notably the Ksh600 million Nyali View Apartments in Mombasa. It will provide internship opportunities for our students from the School of Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Management.

d) Cost effectiveness in management of operational costs.



- e) TV47, which has dedicated local content for all the counties in Kenya.
- f) Royal FM in Kigali, Rwanda, which broadcasts predominantly in English.

### 3. ENTREPRENEURSHIP:

- ❖ **The Graduate Enterprise Academy** propagates a culture of **Entrepreneurship** among our alumni, through “boot-camp” training and provision of investment capital to start businesses. This way, our alumni become job creators, not job seekers.
- ❖ **Mount Kenya University Foundation:** The Foundation, which is the charitable arm of the University, will set up a Ksh.100 million endowment fund next year to support our bright needy students in society. I encourage our alumni and well-wishers to support this noble initiative. 9

**Allow me to conclude with a short story that illustrates that skills, knowledge, abilities and experiences are only useful if you are at the right place:**

*A mother and a baby camel were lying around, and suddenly the baby camel asked, "Why do camels have humps?"*

*The mother said, "We are desert animals, we need the humps to store water and we are known to survive without water".*

*Baby said, "Okay, then why are our legs long and our feet rounded?" The mother said, "Son, obviously they are meant for walking in the desert. You know with these legs I can move around the desert better than anyone does!"*

*Baby said, "Okay, then why are our eyelashes long?" Mother with pride said, "My son, those long thick eyelashes are your protective cover. They help to protect your eyes from the desert sand and wind".*

*Baby after thinking said, "I see. So the hump is to store water when we are in the desert, the legs are for walking through the desert and these eyelashes protect my eyes from the desert then what in god's name are we doing here in the Zoo!?"*

**Thank you for listening to me. Congratulations once again. God bless you and Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2019!**