

Mount Kenya



University

SPEECH

BY

CHANCELLOR

PROF. JOHN STRUTHERS

**DURING 15TH GRADUATION CEREMONY OF
MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

ON

7TH DECEMBER, 2018

Salutation

- Guest Speaker, Prof. Chacha Nyaigotti-Chacha, Chairman, Commission for University Education
- Prof. Simon N. Gicharu, 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 Mount Kenya University Council,
- Chairman and Members of Makerere University Business School Council,
- Honorable National and County Government leaders present,
- Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Stanley W. Waudu,
- Members of Management Board and Senate,
- Distinguished Guests,
- Alumni Representative,
- Members of Staff,
- Parents and Guardians,
- Graduands and Students,
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am profoundly honoured to be part of this memorable event. Once again, I stand here today, in fulfillment of the noble and honorable role of the Chancellor of Mount Kenya University (MKU).

Allow me to commence by passing greetings from my family, my university and from the Kenyan community living in Scotland. To them all, Mount Kenya University has become part of their lives as they follow through the University graduation ceremonies since August this year, sharing the immense joy with the parents, graduands, the University fraternity and the entire Kenyan community.

Ladies and Gentlemen, having listened to the words echoed by the speakers before me, undeniably, many important messages have been shared with you.

I particularly want to thank our Guest Speaker, Professor Chacha Nyaigotti Chacha, Chairman of the Commission for University Education, who has graced us with his presence here today and for inspiring all of us with his wonderful speech. We are most grateful to him.

Allow me to share with you a message and testimony on the role of *consortia-based partnerships at MKU*. The information I will share with you is a testimony to the reality that strategic partnerships at MKU have enhanced the promotion of innovations and entrepreneurship among students and staff at this university.

Ladies and gentlemen, I laud the University Management, for forming the Inter-University Interdisciplinary Research Consortium with three (3) universities namely,

University of Eldoret in Kenya; Kyambogo University, in Uganda; and Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University (COOU) in Nigeria. On behalf of this consortium, Mount Kenya University hosted the 5th International, Interdisciplinary Research Conference (2018) between 17th and 19th October, 2018. The Consortium publishes the African Journal of Science and Technology (AJEST). The Chair of the Consortium is currently the Vice-Chancellor of Mount Kenya University and this is a position that is held on a one year rotational basis. Similarly, through a partnership between MKU's School of Public Health and the African Institute of Public Health Professionals, MKU hosted a conference that brought together professionals and stakeholders in the

area of public health between the dates 24th and 26th October, this year. This is commendable.

Again, I laud the University Management for entering another consortium composed of five Universities in Germany and two Universities in Kenya. The German universities are Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences, Leuphana University of Lüneburg, Leipzig University, Wismar University of Applied Sciences and the Hasso-Plattner-Institute; and the two Universities in Kenya are Kenyatta and Mount Kenya Universities. This consortium, referred to as **Collaboration for Entrepreneurial Universities (CEPU)** has initiated a three year project which aims at capacity building of staff and students. To this end, two members of staff from the

MKU Foundation participated in job shadowing / mentoring at the Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University for ten days in November, this year.

Ladies and gentlemen, efforts by the University Management to forge more partnerships have further resulted in the University being a member of a consortium under the banner of **“African Higher Education Leadership in Advancing Inclusive Innovation for Development (AHEAD)”**. The consortium has 12 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) institutions and one NGO, namely, 4 Universities from Europe (in Romania, Poland, UK, and Italy), 1 NGO from Bulgaria, 5 Universities from Kenya. The 5 Kenyan Universities in this consortium are

Mount Kenya University, Kenyatta University, Kibabii University, Kisii University & the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. The **AHEAD** consortium has 2 Universities from Tanzania (Dar Es Salaam Institute of Technology & the State University of Zanzibar) and 3 Universities from Uganda (Makerere University, Kyambogo University & Lira University).

In addition, I am delighted to announce that faculty members at my home University of the West of Scotland and that at Mount Kenya University have recently been bidding for research grants together. One of the proposals has been funded by the British Council in the UK under the theme, “**Cultural Heritage for Inclusive Growth in Kenya**”.

I warmly congratulate the faculty at both universities for securing this grant which will help to embed the growing relationship between the two institutions.

Ladies and gentlemen, I also laud Mount Kenya University management and the staff of the MµData Analytics Institute of Germany, for launching a Data Science for SMEs Training project in five (5) counties in Kenya, namely: Nairobi, Nyeri, Kisumu, Eldoret and Mombasa.

As I conclude, I appreciate the work of all development partners who have joined Mount Kenya University in its endeavor to offer quality, affordable and accessible education to its many different communities here in Kenya and in East Africa as a whole.

I encourage the Vice-Chancellor and his able and dedicated team of administrators to forge on relentlessly to ensure that the Mount Kenya University flag remains raised and high at all times as the *University of Choice for all in East Africa*.

Finally, I once again congratulate the graduands and their sponsors, parents and guardians for the successful completion of their courses at Mount Kenya University. Studying for a university degree or diploma is a journey and not a destination. In fact it is no exaggeration to say that the educational journey never ends but always continues and this is how you should view this special day for you and your families.

Kenya is a nation of great athletes. In that regard, the educational journey is more like a marathon than a sprint. Of course, Kenya has produced so many superb marathon runners over the years. In terms of your educational race you have completed the first section of the race, and if you so choose, you can progress to even higher levels.

Therefore, to the graduands assembled here today, please aspire to advance your studies and also to be the best that you can be in your lives. Explore all opportunities for self-development that are readily available and are within your reach. Mount Kenya University has equipped you with all the essential skills, knowledge and attributes to be successful in your future lives.

A good example of this is the work of the Graduate Enterprise Academy within the university and all the support it can offer you to help you in your future options to start your own businesses.

And so go forth to the job market with confidence that success lies ahead. Believe in yourselves but also trust in the Almighty God. Be honest and live an ethical life as you face the future and success will be on your side. But be patient too. As the Prophet Isaiah said in the Hebrew Scriptures in the 40th Chapter of that book..." *He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles;*

they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint..." And so may the same be for your all.

Long live Mount Kenya University, long live our partners, and long live our students and the alumni fraternity. And to our graduands today- in the words of the University mission, may you **"UNLOCK INFINITE POSSIBILITIES"** ...

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous 2019!

ASANTE SANA NA MUNGU AWABARIKI