

**Mount Kenya**



**University**

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**SPEECH**

**BY**

**GUEST SPEAKER**

**DR. CHARLES MULLI**

*FOUNDER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
MULLY CHILDREN'S FAMILY*

**DURING**

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

**ON**

**9<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST, 2019**

## **1: Salutation**

- Chief Guest, Prof. Raymond Macharia, Professor, University of London,
- Prof. John Struthers, 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,
- Prof. Stanley W. Waudu, Vice-Chancellor, Mount Kenya University,

- Your Excellences, Ambassadors and High Commissioners present (Dr. Richard Masozera, High Commissioner of the Republic of Rwanda),
- Honorable National and County Government leaders present,
- Distinguished Guests,
- Members of Management Board and Senate,
- Staff,
- Graduands and Students,
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning! Hamjambo!

## **2) Preliminaries**

Please allow me to start by conveying to you, the warm greetings of my dear wife Esther, my biological family and my larger family of over 18,000 children at the Mully Children's Family.

I am greatly humbled by your invitation to join you today as the Guest Speaker during this auspicious occasion of the 16<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony of Mount Kenya University. I therefore wish to take this opportunity to thank the Mount Kenya University management for their invitation.

Allow me to congratulate the MKU Management for the choice of today's theme, titled, *"The Role of Universities in Enhancing Sustainable Development Goals through Community Outreach Programmes"*. This theme is relevant to us today, mainly because, Community Outreach should be a driving force in all of us as we need to share what we have with other persons in our neighborhoods. There is value in supporting each other, including the needy in society because it is inspiring, it is service to God and it advances unconditional love and a peaceful coexistence.

I am indeed glad to be here today and to be able to share my thoughts and my personal experiences in line with the theme of this ceremony.

However, Mr. Chancellor Sir, before I share my thoughts, allow me to share my personal experience in answering 3 basic questions as follows;

- 1) What led to the establishment of the Mully Children's Family and when was it established?
- 2) Who are the persons that live there as family members and how do they benefit?
- 3) How do we sustain ourselves at Mully Children's Family?

Growing up as a child, many years ago, after being abandoned by my parents, I faced a lot of hardships, lacking food, health care, clothing, shelter, education and parental love.

I remember not attending school due to lack of food, uniform, school fees and a lack of support and encouragement. Despite longing to join my age mates in school, I stayed busy grazing cattle or doing other chores.

I always wished that my day would come. Through hard work, humility, patience and above all, God's grace and favor in my life, these challenges were turned into stepping stones towards the building of a business empire, and eventually enabling me be a **"Father to the fatherless"**.

Indeed my background is humble yet challenging, and I wish to invite you to learn more as well as learn about my work through getting a copy of a book about my life, titled, “Father to the Fatherless”, which is available in both English and Swahili as well as several other international languages.

The book, also available on Amazon, has received numerous international awards and has led to the release of my life story in Hollywood, USA, in form of a documentary movie titled “MULLY”.

My life story documentary has been nominated for an Oscar award and has won 23 international awards and been acclaimed as a true story that has led to a wave of awakening and opened the eyes of millions in North America, Africa and other parts of the world, to see things from a different perspective.

My wish is that more and more people will be touched by my life's journey and that their lives will be positively transformed.

Kenya and Africa as a whole, has been bedeviled by numerous challenges which include poverty, HIV/Aids, severe drought and food insecurity. It is in this backdrop that my ministry, Mully Children's Family was founded.

Since its founding 30 years ago, Mully Children's Family, has continued to positively impact the lives of destitute and orphaned children, children with HIV/Aids, child mothers, former child commercial sex workers, rural women, widows, the marginalized and unemployed in Kenya and other African countries.

Since 17<sup>th</sup> November 1989, when my wife and I opened our family home to take in street children, our home has become a refuge for over 18,000 children from all different tribes in Kenya and desperate children from across the borders. Today, MCF cares for 3,500 children in 6 facilities within Kenya while simultaneously building the capacity of various projects across Africa to emulate the Mully model.

Mully Children's Family has designed its services along social entrepreneurship through investing in income generating activities to sustainably fund and scale up its charity work. It integrates child rescue, rehabilitation and reintegration by creating safety nets in the community to provide a conducive environment for child survival. MCF has additionally seen over 1 million trees transplanted annually from our tree nurseries thus leading to a renewed microclimate. The climate change initiative has seen MCF conserve water through water harvesting of millions of litres to enable dry land farming.

Currently, the organization is nearly 65% percent self-sustaining.

## **OUR IMPACT**

**3,500 children are under our daily care and in receipt of holistic care and support, 15,000 children have successfully been reintegrated back to the communities, 20,000 families access clean drinking water from our various project sites, 670,000 students and teachers have in the last 5 years benefited from our climate change, mentorship and leadership program, while 200,000 community members have accessed free medical care and emergency relief food from us in the last 5 years.**

Mr. Chancellor Sir, allow me now to share my thoughts on the theme of today's ceremony.

#### **4: Definition of the concept of Community Outreach**

Different people may view community outreach activities in different ways. However, for the purpose of this talk, I will use this term to refer to the act of providing services by an organization to any population in need of that service. A critical component in community outreach is that it helps to raise awareness of the need in the community with regard to the service being offered.

When well organized, an organization's actions may lead to motivating others to join in the same act or in related activities.

In this regard, I will quote University of Iowa's Office of Outreach and Engagement's definition of this term, who indicate that "community outreach" is the application and provision of institutional resources, knowledge and services (and obviously the skills) to the community for the sole benefit of the community.

Outreach activities are meant to fill in a gap in what the government offers and more often than not, it is undertaken by non-profit, non-governmental organizations.

Occasionally, some organizations may use outreach activities for marketing purposes but quite often, this may be done as a way of giving back or even a humane act where specialized knowledge and skills may be used such as medical camps or artistic performances at no cost to the community.

Universities and research centers may also reach out to the communities to provide research-based solutions on matters of concern in the community.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, in other cases like my case, we do what we do as MCF as a result of a 'calling' to offer an intervention at a personal level.

**5: The need to help students undertake community engaged learning.**

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the community around a university is another specialized type of learning facility, a kind of a library or even a laboratory that is richly endowed with real-life situations that help the students to internalize the theory they learn by practicing it. Therefore, the University of Iowa's model of community-engaged learning should be recommended to our universities including MKU. This is a pedagogical approach that connects students and faculty with activities that address special cases of identified needs in the society or community.

This is achieved through mutually beneficial partnerships that deepen students' academic and civic learning.

**6: An invitation to Universities to use Mully's Children Family resources for community outreach**

Mr. Chancellor Sir, MKU and other institutions of higher learning in Kenya have schools that relate to activities at MCF. In line with the theme of this ceremony, I am pleased to invite MKU students and faculty as well as those from various higher institutions of learning in Kenya to join our diverse activities at MCF as a community resource for community - engaged learning.

Please bring your students to interact with our children and staff as well as to learn from the internationally acclaimed Mully model. Ours is a unique innovative intervention that can easily be replicated for use elsewhere.

In this regard, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to note that, one innovator from Mount Kenya University by the name of Donatus Njoroge whose name was acknowledged by the Vice-Chancellor, and was earlier on this year named as the overall winner for biologically-based pest control technologies. I am pleased to invite Donatus and his students to visit MCF with the aim of finding ways in which we can partner.

I appreciate that the tourism management students at MKU are already engaging with the Mully Children's Family Safaris Ltd, in various professional related activities including ecotourism. May the same be the case for all other disciplines.

**To all the graduands assembled here today, please receive my warm congratulations for your achievement. As a parent and guardian of thousands of children and youth, I know this is a special day as we do not only celebrate your academic achievement but also celebrate your parents and proud families, the entire MKU community as well as your guardians who have given you a conducive social environment to thrive and receive the best education.**

I have no doubt that the graduating class of 2019 gives Kenya and the world, a blessed generation of professionals ready to positively impact the lives of people and communities they will work with or serve. I wish you all, the greatest God-Given success beyond your imagination as you pursue diverse career paths.

## **7: Conclusion**

In conclusion, let me appeal to you today and to people of the world in different professions and ventures, to value being important in the life of another. Universities as knowledge and skill hubs should be on the fore front in this undertaking.

Let's break the ivory tower trends and reach out to the communities who will provide an inexhaustible source of knowledge and a training facility as you also offer technical support in areas of need.

Thanks to MKU for the invitation and to everyone for listening to me.

**Thank you and may God bless you all.**

*DR. CHARLES MULLI,*  
**FOUNDER AND CEO**  
**MULLY CHILDREN'S FAMILY**