

Mount Kenya University

SPEECH

BY

Prof. Stanley W. Waudu, Ph.D

VICE-CHANCELLOR

AT

**MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY 16TH GRADUATION
CEREMONY THEMED “*THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES
IN ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
GOALS THROUGH COMMUNITY OUTREACH
PROGRAMMES*”**

ON

FRIDAY, 9TH AUGUST, 2019

AT

**MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY HAPPY VALLEY
GROUNDS, THIKA**

1.0 Salutations:

- Chief Guest, Prof. Raymond Macharia, Professor, University of London,
- Guest Speaker, Dr. Charles Mulli, Founder and CEO of Mully Children's Family,
- Prof. John J. 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,
- Honorable Members of Parliament present,
- 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.

2.0 Welcome Remarks

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I welcome you all with great pleasure to the Mount Kenya University 16th Graduation Ceremony. Our distinguished guests, kindly receive our heartfelt appreciation for accepting our invitation to participate in this auspicious occasion. To our graduands, for your hardwork and success, you deserve unqualified congratulations. Congratulations!

3.0 Opening Remarks

Mr. Chancellor Sir, today we celebrate the academic achievements of six thousand, six hundred and sixty six (6,666) graduands. The graduands have fulfilled all academic programme requirements for conferment of various degrees and award of various diplomas and certificates as follows:

- i. Two (2) Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Degrees.
- ii. Three Hundred and Thirty Seven (337) Masters Degrees.
- iii. One Hundred and Fifteen (115) Postgraduate Diplomas.
- iv. Four Thousand, Seven Hundred and Fifty Five (4,755) Bachelor's Degrees.
- v. One Thousand and twenty (1,020) Diplomas and
- vi. Four Hundred and Thirty Seven (437) Certificates.

4.0 Academic Programmes

Mr. Chancellor Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen, University spurs innovation and maintains sustained progress that sharpens minds in support of generation of new knowledge necessary for socio-economic development. In this regard, the University is committed to periodic review of its academic programmes to align them with emerging socio-economic development needs.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, Mount Kenya University Nutrition and Dietetics programmes were re-accredited by the Kenya Nutritionists and Dieticians Institute (KNDI) in April, 2019.

The Kenya Medical Practitioners and Dentists Council (KMPDC) fully accredited the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery programme and the Masters of Medicine in General Surgery programme in February, 2019. The Public Health Technicians and Officers Council (PHOTC) accredited the Bachelor of Science in Environmental Health programme in July, 2019. The Institute of Surveyors of Kenya (ISK) recognized the Bachelor of Science in Real Estate Management in May, 2019.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, we will endeavour to continue working with regulatory and professional bodies to ensure that the University programmes are of the highest quality and responsive to the needs of the society.

5.0 Research and Innovation

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Great Universities are distinguished by their prowess in knowledge generation through research and innovation.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the investment of the University over the years to build a robust research culture continues to bear fruits. For Example, there is a remarkable increase in the number of publications in peer reviewed journals, and participation in research dissemination forums, which accord the University greater presence and visibility, leading to improved local and global ranking.

As regards research resource mobilization, the University continues to win local and international grants, with corresponding increase in local and international collaborative research. I am happy to report that the 12 National Research Fund (NRF) supported projects have continued to register impressive results. More grants are anticipated from the NRF as a result of additional proposals submitted to it from the University. Different international funding agencies have also supported the university in five different research projects including Precision medicine for early diagnosis of breast cancer, a challenge that has continued to cause untold misery to society. The project is funded by the Medical Research Council of the United Kingdom and it is designed to foster research collaboration between Mount Kenya University and University of Edinburgh in the United Kingdom, UK.

The University was recently awarded a grant worth USD 500,000 (Five hundred thousand U.S dollars) to advance the interaction between science and religion through public engagement model.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University continues to contribute towards Kenya's realization of Universal Health through innovative implementation of research initiatives. In this regard, I am happy to report that the University successfully completed eight newborn units which were handed over to the Bungoma County Government. The project increased the capacity of Bungoma County health system to handle neonatal cases by 40%.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University is committed to contributing towards reduction of the burden of non-communicable disease through research and public education in Kenya and the region.

To this end, the University organized a successful symposium on obesity that brought together surgeons, physicians and academicians to discuss cutting age technologies in the management of obesity, a big risk factor for various non-communicable diseases.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University is contributing to the management of grain weevils. Mr. Donatus Njoroge, an Innovator at Mount Kenya University innovated a bio-pesticide that is effective against grain weevils.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University is currently working closely with the Health Research Unit of Kiambu County to collate data on cancer that will help establish the burden of the disease on the County health system and potentially lead to the establishment of a population based cancer registry.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University recognizes challenges posed by climate change and deforestation. It is in this regard that the University spearheads tree planting in different regions of Kenya with the support of community and other stakeholders.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the university has continued to strengthen its research and innovation capacity through acquisition of modern equipment including the negative 80 degrees freezer necessary for laboratory work. The university is currently finalizing necessary improvements in its research and innovation centre in readiness for application for accreditation of the centre.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University upholds scholarly ethics in all its endeavours and ensures that all research work adheres to required standards.

The Mount Kenya University Research Ethics Committee has continued to review research protocols to ensure conformity with laid down requirements.

6.0 Quality Assurance

Ladies and Gentlemen,

University training must be responsive to the challenges and needs of the society. In order to do so, the training must be relevant and of the highest quality. To this end, the University has continued to incorporate effective quality assurance and control mechanisms in its operations. Mr. Chancellor Sir, I am glad to report that the University has continued to successfully undertake internal audits in accordance to ISO 9001: 2015 Quality Management Systems (QMS) and other requirements in all Campuses and Centres to ensure compliance with set QMS requirements.

7.0 Conclusion

As I conclude,

To graduands, I again congratulate you on qualifying for the conferment of various degrees and award of various diplomas and certificates. As you leave Mount Kenya University, remember that you are beacons of hope for your communities and the country. I leave you with the German proverb: "**Fear makes the wolf bigger than it is**" You are well equipped with knowledge and skills, go out there and fear nothing!

We are confident that we have trained you how to think, never to run away from challenges, but to solve them. Do not seek opportunities, create opportunities! Create jobs and serve your communities! Impact and change lives, a noblest calling! Serve your country with integrity! Fear and Trust God.

GOD BLESS YOU ALL