

# Mount Kenya University

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**SPEECH**

**BY**

**PROF. JOHN J. STRUTHERS  
CHANCELLOR, MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

**DURING THE 16<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY**

**OF**

**MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

**ON**

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

## 1.0 Salutation

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

## 2.0 Opening Remarks

I take this opportunity to join other speakers in welcoming our distinguished guests to the Mount Kenya University 16<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony. I say thank you for honouring our invitation. I also congratulate the graduands for attaining various academic qualifications. Today is the culmination of several years of hard work and diligence and on behalf of the whole university I wish you much success in your future careers. You deserve to celebrate today with your classmates, friends and families / guardians. Be grateful for the support you have received that has enabled you to achieve academic aspirations.

In Africa, where there is still massive unmet demand for university and higher education, the high value that is placed on obtaining a university qualification cannot be overstated. To have a growing percentage of a country's population with a university education is good not only for the individuals themselves. It is also vital for the economy and for society generally and in terms of cultural development. There is much statistical evidence that establishes a close link between a growing share of the population having a university education and the economic success of their societies and it should be the same in Africa.

### **3.0 Community Outreach through Partnerships**

Ladies and Gentlemen, in addition to teaching and research, community outreach is an important component of the university mission.

I am happy to report that, MKU has mainstreamed community outreach in each of its operations and partnership portfolios. I commend the University Management for creating an enabling environment for conducting community outreach activities. For instance, the MKU Directorate of Research and Innovation has over the last 5 years worked with Partners-for-Care in holding community outreach activities in various parts of the country including Marsabit and Malindi.

These and many other examples are excellent cases of university-driven community outreach activities.

Other examples of these initiatives include the ongoing pedagogical training of in-mates at Naivasha Maximum Prison by the School of Education. This is another exemplary effort towards community outreach activities for achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). I am happy to report that the prison pedagogical training project has received financial support from the National Research Fund (NRF) and it is being executed under the umbrella of a UNESCO-Chair that is domiciled at the Nakuru campus of MKU.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in April 2019, MKU joined other partners in a youth empowerment project in Isiolo County under the sponsorship of Kenya National Commission for UNESCO. I am happy to report that the Students Training for Entrepreneurial Promotion (STEP) for the youth was successfully between April and June 2019. The Mount Kenya University and Mully Children's Family outreach activities are also good examples of reaching out to communities.

#### **4.0 MKU and Microsoft Partnership**

Ladies and gentlemen, I am also delighted to report the forging with Microsoft. This new partnership was forged in May this year and focuses on digital transformation in education and technology.



The School of Computing and Informatics has already reaped the first fruits from this new partnership.

### **5.0 Ministry of Health and Mount Kenya University**

The Ministry of Health and Mount Kenya University signed a Memorandum of Understanding for the training in Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) course funded by the African Development Bank (AFDB) after the Ministry secured a loan from the Bank to develop East African Kidney Institute. The Institute will serve as a Centre of Excellence in Management of Renal Diseases in the Country.

## **6.0 Telkom Kenya Limited and Mount Kenya University**

Additionally, Mount Kenya University and Telkom Kenya limited signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 1st of August 2019. The partnership with Telkom Kenya Limited will supplement the University teaching and learning ICT infrastructure and shall enhance creation of virtual classrooms as well as on-line peer and professional mentoring of the Graduate Enterprise Academy beneficiaries.

## **7.0 Postgraduate Grants by DAAD**

I am delighted to report that the University received twelve (12) postgraduate scholarships from German-based

sponsorship Program commonly referred to as DAAD to support postgraduate students in the following programmes:

- Four (4) Master Scholarships in Nursing
- Two (2) Reserve candidates in Nursing
- Four (4) Master Scholarships in Public Health
- Two (2) reserve Candidates in Public Health

On behalf of the Mount Kenya University, I do express gratitude to DAAD for awarding these scholarships to the awardees through the university.

## **8.0 Mount Kenya University partnership with University of west of Scotland**

Ladies and Gentlemen, my remarks will not be complete without a mention of the continued University of West of Scotland (UWS) and MKU partnerships. And I bring my greetings from the university to you all today.

I thank MKU for having sent the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic & Research Affairs and Director, MKU Foundation and Endowment on a bench-marking visit to UWS in June this year. We were happy to host them and to share our experiences through the meetings we held at UWS. Following this visit and in tandem with the theme of today's Graduation Ceremony, the joint UWS-MKU team agreed to develop short-term programs on

Leadership & Governance to be offered at County Government levels. A progress report on this will be shared before the end of this year. Indeed there is ongoing collaboration through British Council funded projects and I know that two of my home universities in Scotland will be sending academics to MKU in September this year to further develop this partnership.

## **9.0 Conclusion**

In conclusion I wish to reaffirm the University's commitment to offering quality training and nurturing synergetic partnerships with the aim of making MKU the University of choice. Allow me to report that the positioning of MKU as the University of choice is already being realized.

The latest 2019 Kenyan University ranking by uniRank (4ICU) Company placed MKU among the top three best private universities and top six among all the Kenyan universities. This ranking is an assurance of the quality training being offered by MKU. Therefore, MKU graduands as the products of such high quality training are guaranteed to have the required competencies, skills and attitudes necessary for success in the growing labour market within Kenya, and indeed across Africa.

To you graduands, I wish you all success in your life endeavors.

THANK YOU AND GOD BLESS YOU.

Ahsanteni sana.