

TALKING POINTS FOR SICILY K. KARIUKI (MRS.), CBS, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE, YOUTH AND GENDER AFFAIRS FOR USE AT MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY 10TH GRADUATION CEREMONY ON FRIDAY, 15TH JULY, 2016

Prof. Victoria Wulsin, Chancellor, Mount Kenya University,

Prof. Stanley W. Waudu, Vice-Chancellor,

Dr. Simon N. Gicharu, The Founder of Mount Kenya University (MKU) and Chairman, Board of Directors,

Madam Jane Nyutu, Co-Founder of Mount Kenya University,

Elected Leaders present,

Hon. Joseph Nkaissery, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government

Your Excellences, Ambassadors and High Commissioners present,

Senior Government Officials Present

Guest Speaker, Professor John J Struthers, University of West of Scotland,

Members of the University Board of Directors,

Prof. Grace N. Njoroge, Chairman and Members of the University Council,

Members of the University Council, Management Board and Senate,

Graduands

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am greatly honored and privileged to be invited as the Chief Guest on this occasion of the 10th Graduation Ceremony of Mount Kenya University.

Let me begin by congratulating the Graduands of 2016 present here today. Completing a university degree is no mean feat. It is said that a man, and of course a woman, is judged, not by what he starts but by what he finishes. So, well done! for accomplishing this milestone. The degrees you receive today symbolize the achievement of academic excellence that equips you, through your personal effort and dedication, to contribute positively to the enrichment of our life and our Country.

To the parents, relatives and friends who stood by these graduands, cheered them on, helped them get here today - this is your day, as well.

To those of you who are our international guests: welcome to our wonderful and beautiful Country.

Ladies, Gentlemen and Graduants,

I am especially delighted to be here today at one of the fastest growing private higher learning institutions in Kenya and indeed in the region. Started as an Institute of Technology and growing into the areas such as para-medicine, it is the 1st private institution in Kenya to be accredited to train Pharmaceutical Technologists by the Pharmacy and Poisons Board of the Ministry of Health.

I commend Dr. Simon N. Gicharu and Madam Jane Nyutu, Co-founders and sponsors of Mount Kenya University and your team for the Visionary

leadership and tireless work that has enabled MKU to respond effectively to the need for increased access to higher education.

The move by this University to focus on developing human capacity in science, technology and entrepreneurship is greatly reassuring, given the gap in these areas in the market place.

Human Capital Development is one of the principal ways through which Kenya and the region can address new and emerging complex challenges.

It is for this very reason that the government of Kenya is laying serious emphasis on all levels of education and skills development.

We are investing heavily through the digital literacy programme, free secondary school tuition and the re-vitalization of TIVETs. Additionally, the Government is addressing barriers to education of both the girls and boy child.

Human Capital Development cannot be fully met by Government alone. It is for this reason that we acknowledge and support the role played by Private Sector Universities such as MKU in this critical area.

Ladies, Gentlemen and Graduands,

As you enter into the world of employment including self-employment, you must apply yourself and think innovatively. I urge you to put to good use the skills, attitudes and training that you have acquired during your time at Mount Kenya University.

You are now expected that as you leave here today you will be champions of innovation and play an important role in driving our national development through your chosen pathways.

Ladies, Gentlemen and Graduands,

There are numerous opportunities out there and infinite possibilities of what you could do with your kind of training, talent, diligence, passion and character.

Take advantage of the opportunities presented to you by the private sector and Government, among others, to be entrepreneurs.

The Government is currently undertaking a number of programmatic interventions to empower young people like yourselves. These programmes are grounded in the conviction that our youth are our greatest asset and we want to position them to channel their energies to growing the economy and our development aspirations.

The Government youth programs are anchored on the principle of social and economic transformation aimed at moulding the youth into productive and responsible citizens who are empowered to realize their hopes, dreams and aspirations. Towards this, the Government has set aside access to Affirmative Funds.

To address the skills gaps among the youth, my Ministry is in partnership with the World Bank and private sector to provide opportunities for skills training and mentorship through internships and apprenticeships.

Ladies, Gentlemen and Graduands,

For those of you who choose the pathway to enterprise, it is important to note, that the Government is the single largest consumer of goods and

services. Through Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO), internationally acclaimed policy recognized across the world, the Government has dedicated 30% of its procurement value to enterprises owned by the youth, women and persons with disabilities.

I would like to urge you all who are interested in taking up these offers to register companies and apply for the tenders. Consider that once you register a company and obtain an AGPO certificate, you are a prequalified supplier.

Ladies, Gentlemen and Graduands,

For those of you who choose the pathway to employment, allow me to offer you three qualities that employer's value over and above your education:

One, a positive can-do attitude. Good education is no substitute for a good attitude. Much as an education has taught you new skills, it cannot teach you attitude.

Two, work ethics. Every employer desires to have a hard working employee, one who places value on delivering results through discipline and hard work. Do not settle for mediocrity, but pride yourselves in exceptional work. When given a task, go the extra mile.

Three, you must be a person of integrity and you must be reliable.

Graduands,

As the saying goes, '**The sea of knowledge knows no boundaries**'. That phrase reminds all of us that learning does not begin or end with a university education. All of us are swimmers in the sea, on our continuous journey of

learning, without boundaries, whether at home or at work, whether paid or unpaid, whether planned or by chance.

In Conclusion, I wish you every success in putting those achievements to good use, to the greater benefit for you personally and for the communities you serve.

Thank you and God Bless you.