



Address
by
Prof. Mabel Imbuga PhD, EBS
Vice Chancellor
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
during the
2nd Graduation Ceremony
Mombasa Polytechnic University College
Mombasa
Wednesday December 14, 2011

Prof. Engineer Francis Gichaga, Chancellor of JKUAT

Representative for the Ministry for Higher Education, Science and Technology

Council Chairman

Prof. Josephat Mwatela, Principal, MPUC

Council Members

Deputy Principals

Deans and Directors

Chairmen of Departments

Graduands

Ladies, Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure for me to stand before this congregation to celebrate with you the second graduation ceremony of the Mombasa Polytechnic University College (MPUC) which is also our constituent college. I take this opportunity to warmly congratulate those of you graduating today for the hard work and determination that has enabled you to succeed in your studies. I am confident that this institution has prepared you well to take your role in nation building.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, what we are witnessing here today is a good reminder of the government's commitment to provide opportunities for our youth and the citizenry to acquire knowledge to foster national development. This graduation ceremony attests to the fact that Kenya has risen to the occasion in the provision of quality education. Today, I am pleased that M PUC is making its contribution to the cause of higher education training in response to the local and global market demands.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, one of the core business of any University is to impart the highest level of education to its students and as mentor; we have constantly followed the academic activities at the MPUC to ensure they meticulously adhere to this requirement. We have been taking our responsibility of mentoring this institution with great zeal and commitment. I take this opportunity to assure the entire MPUC Council, Management, staff and students that we shall continue to provide our full support to this College in its execution of its mandate.

Academic knowledge is not acquired in a vacuum and therefore let me take this opportunity to recognize the milestones accomplished by this University College, Council and Management in providing the necessary infrastructure to promote this institution's academic obligations. Someone who was here in this College three to four years ago will definitely find a major transformation in terms of infrastructure development that have been put in place to match MPUC current status. Under the stewardship of Prof. Josephat Mwatela, this College has recorded exponential expansion in a space of few years to become an important university college offering unique courses.

Ladies and Gentlemen, for higher education in Kenya to remain relevant and competitive, those of us serving in the sector must have plans for the future. As higher education players, we need to come up with a road map that borrows from our past achievements and failures to build on a progressive and solid future. It is the higher education sector and the commitment to applied research in particular that is supposed to confront the obstacles like poverty, diseases, drought, unemployment, hunger, endemic corruption and other social upheavals that continue to burden our people. While the causes of these problems are diverse, there is an emerging sense of thought that now argues, quite convincingly that the higher education sector bears the greatest responsibility in its apparent inability to provide solutions to these crucial developmental problems. The persistence of these problems can rightly be linked to the weakness in research capacities. As a young institution of higher learning, I encourage those of you who are teachers to ensure you spare some time to engage in the enterprise of research targeted to solve community problems

As your mentor, I want to assure you of our readiness to support you in this noble task which must start with the re-engineering of your curriculum to ensure it is a community problem solving curriculum. This should then be accompanied with grassroots based public outreach programmes where your researchers and community members mutually listen to one another and develop long term goals that may impact positively on the life of the community. It is crucial that the community entrust local scholars with their problem. This is a concept that we at JKUAT have totally embraced and vigorously pursuing with the ultimate intention of transforming JKUAT from a teaching University to a research and development oriented university and we invite interested institutions like MPUC to join us.

Our resolve to make JKUAT a research and development based university received considerable boost two weeks ago when we organized a two day workshop in Nairobi with the agenda to promote applied research in African Universities through innovative planning and increased partnership with industry. The workshop that we jointly organized

with the Association of African Universities and the Association of Canadian Universities and Colleges of Canada that brought together 28 universities from Africa and Canada made a number of recommendations to address challenges that continue to plague efficient utilization of higher education in Africa. We have started to factor in some of the recommendations in our new 2012 -2017 Strategic Plan that we are in the processing of developing. Indeed I am glad to announce that your College sent a representative, Dr. Marangi Mbogoh, your Deputy Principal Academic Affairs to participate at a two day JKUAT Senate Strategic Planning workshop conducted last week by our twinning collaborators from Canada's University of Western Ontario. This is a concept that must succeed since it offers a suitable and practical approach in the implementation of the Vision 2030. Institutions of higher learning such as MPUC have a central role to play in the country's industrialization programme.

JKUAT emphasis on applied research and innovation has received considerable attention not only in Kenya but from the entire continent of Africa. It is a result of our unique attention to research that JKUAT last January was able to win a highly competitive bid to host the Pan African University, Institute of Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation. The honour has effectively thrust JKUAT to actively drive Africa's interstate relations through graduate training and research. This is a noble agenda that we welcome Mombasa Polytechnic University College to partake particularly in the technology aspects of the Pan Africa University where your institution has considerable strength

Turning to the graduands, I urge you to demonstrate professionalism, commitment and dedication as you move into the next stage of your vocation. I certainly may not be best placed to give you a lecture about your profession, but I do have responsibility to give you an indication of what the society expects and will demand from you. As young professionals, I urge you to be guided by what we at JKUAT have summed up into our core values that include; quality, teamwork, professionalism, innovation, dynamism, accountability and integrity. These are values likely to assist you to overcome the many challenges that you are likely to encounter in the execution of your duties. In tackling the

various challenges of life, remember to utilize the old age virtues of patience, endurance, and above all a great measure of perseverance.

As vice chancellor of your mentor university, I want to assure the graduands and the entire Kenyan nation that the training that you have received here has prepared you to move into the future with confidence. Furthermore, let me remind you that enormous national and family resources have been expended on your education. I expect you to reciprocate to this kind gesture by offering committed service first to our motherland and to the entire mankind. I therefore have every reason to be certain that you will triumph and make this institution proud. Remember that as the alumni of this University College, you will always be representatives of the institution wherever you will be.

In conclusion, I wish to pay tribute to the various players who have contributed to your success. In particular, let me thank the parents, guardians, University staff, the Government and other development partners for their unfailing support.

I thank you most sincerely for listening to me.