

**SPEECH BY CABINET SECRETARY FOR  
EDUCATION, AMB. (DR.) AMINA A.  
MOHAMED, DURING THE SECOND  
GRADUATION CEREMONY OF MURANG'A  
UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY HELD AT  
UNIVERSITY GROUNDS, FRIDAY, 10TH  
AUGUST, 2018**

- The Chancellor (Prof. Justin Irina)
- Governor, Murang'a County, Mwangi Wairia
- Senator Murang'a County
- The Chancellors present
- Chairman of Council, Prof. Joachim Osur
- Members of Council
- Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dickson Nyariki

- Vice Chancellors of other Universities
- Members of the National Assembly
- The County Leadership
- Staff and students
- Distinguished Guests
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very delighted to join you in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Graduation Ceremony of Murang'a University of Technology.

As you are aware, the Kenya Government recognises University Education as one of the important cornerstones in the achievement of the Big Four Agenda, Vision 2030, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). University Education is meant to effectively support the labour market if universities work towards re-focusing their programmes. For

instance, the Kenya Vision 2030 envisages an education system that will equip our citizens with the competencies required to transform Kenya into a rapidly industrialising upper middle-income economy. As we enter the Third Medium Term Plan of Vision 2030 –which spans the period 2018-2022–it is imperative that we review our education outcomes so far in light of the targets and expectations set out in the Vision, the Big Four Agenda and the SDGs.

## Ladies and gentlemen

The focus of education in Kenya as in most other Sub-Saharan countries has been mainly on access. The emphasis on enhancing access is evidenced by consistent and targeted policies towards ensuring that all Kenyans, especially the youth, have access to education (as enshrined in the Kenyan Constitution, 2010). Most notable of these targeted policies include the introduction of Free Primary Education and Free

Day Secondary Education initiatives. This will be accompanied by simultaneous development of infrastructure to accommodate the expected rise in student population. Consequently, Higher Education will have to expand as experienced in the recent past.

In order to enhance University Education, we need to explore opportunities and overcome several challenges to ensure orderly progress is achieved in the sub-sector.

These challenges include:

- i. Financial constraints leading to inadequate and even poor infrastructure
- ii. Inadequate quality control and assurance structures
- iii. Tribal and political interference in the management of the Universities, which in some cases has become an impediment in the smooth running of these institutions.



iv. Anda flare up of student indiscipline.

## **Ladies and gentlemen**

These issues are not new to us.I therefore want to encourage all of you as council, senate, management, staff, students and stakeholders to amicably find solutions to them. However, they require practical solutions and new innovative approaches.

The Ministry of Education is committed to making funds available to our Institutions of Higher Learning.

However, I challenge the Universities to prudently manage their finances and, more importantly, find creative ways of dealing with the shortfalls in Government funding. Some of the approaches to address insufficient exchequer funding include public-private-partnership (PPP) initiatives in infrastructural development, entrepreneurial ventures, commercialisation of innovations, engagement in multidisciplinary, multinational research grants that lead to patenting of cutting-edge products, and

offering corporate consulting, among others. I know Murang'a University of Technology lies in a strategic position in the country owing to the good climatic and environmental conditions that favour agricultural production, tourism, transport, biodiversity and alternative energy production. This should be explored to its fullness.

We all need to learn from the successes witnessed by developed countries with a view to adopting best practices, in order to make improvements in our

systems. For instance, Higher Education Institutions in countries like Brazil, China and Korea have in the past grappled with the same challenges we are currently facing but broke the mould by modernising Higher Education, supporting STEM and Research, in addition to being involved in collaborative investments with both the government and the private sector. Successful collaborative efforts among the government, academia and private sector in education have also worked well in the US, Europe and Asia.

Tribal and political influence or interference in our Universities is unacceptable. The Ministry of Education encourages Universities to adhere to the National Values and Principles of good governance as articulated in Article 10 of the Kenyan Constitution. All of us should promote patriotism, the rule of law and inclusive participation of the people in our operations. We must take a lead in promoting equality and non-discrimination. In line with this, the Ministry has plans to reconstitute University Councils to make them more

open and competitive, and to achieve regional balance. The Ministry has also held consultative meetings with the Councils to discuss how to make Universities centres of excellence as well as beacons of hope in the Country.

While we celebrate some impressive gains in the education sector, the focus in our education system has now shifted from one of access to that of quality and relevance. Therefore, the issue of inadequate quality control and assurance structures must be addressed; the

reason being that quality education will help us, as a country, to produce youth who are equipped with necessary skills, valuable hands-on experience and technical knowledge that will enable them to creatively tackle pressing challenges at community and national levels. As a Ministry, we encourage Universities to closely work with the Commission for University Education(CUE)to ensure quality education is offered to our students. This is because,I am aware, that CUE has put in place various tools and structures that aregeared

towards ensuring quality education is offered in our Universities.

The issue of security in our public institutions is of critical importance, and does not need reminding. We should all therefore adhere to the laid down procedures of handling security matters in the institutions. Universities should closely work with Government security agencies for this to be realised. For example, with the involvement of Government security agencies, Universities can engage well-vetted



professional security firms to offer security in order to augment Government efforts in the provision of the services. Further, the Ministry did advise Universities a while ago, as a matter of policy, to introduce biometric registration systems to identify their students as a security measure. This measure enables all students to have their data consolidated and available to be accessed anytime it is required. As a further measure to secure property, staff and students, the Ministry encourages institutions to fence and acquire

their title deeds. To this end, I wish to assure Murang'a University of Technology that we shall closely follow up on the issue of Universityland with a view to recovering all that belongs to her.

## **Ladies and gentlemen**

Let me stress that this country needs to develop a pool of upper tail knowledge—the skills held by top engineers and entrepreneurs that enable a society to innovate and foster the type of rapid technological progress that characterised the industrial revolution.

As Universities, we therefore need to empower people to develop essential competencies that would produce the appropriate human capital for the industrialisation of our country. Focus should be on developing human capital as an appreciation that the adaptation and diffusion of technologies in industry and society require a certain threshold of education among the populace. Public funding for academic research and curricula development should hence be aligned with the changing needs of a knowledge-based economy.



## Ladies and gentlemen

The Ministry of Education is working on proposed amendments to review the Higher Education Loans Board Act to create a Higher Education Financing Bank. It is believed that this would diversify the scope of the Loans Board and enable more Kenyan students to access loans and in turn enhance enrolment in Higher Education. Further to this, the Ministry is implementing “Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012” on Reforming Education and Training Sectors in Kenya.

The paper is developed on the basis of providing globally competitive quality education, training, and research for sustainable development. It places a lot of emphasis on expanding access to education at all levels as well as ensuring quality and relevance of the courses being taught to promote socio-economic development in line with the country's development agenda.

To the graduating class of 2018, I am sure the University life has not only taught you academics but also necessary skills to face the challenges that life will pose

in general. As you soldier on to the next phase of life, I ask that you apply the skills you have attained effectively. I urge you to be great ambassadors of your University, the youth and Kenya at large, for it is a collective responsibility to build a modern nation. Exercise caution, commitment and sincerity of purpose. Be grateful to your mentors, lecturers, and parents or guardians for they have been essential facilitators in your academic journey.

Finally, I commend the Chancellor, University Council, Management, County Government, staff, students and all other stakeholders for their role in the journey of building a promising Institution of Higher Learning in this region of the Country.

**THANK YOU ALL.**