

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

Speech by

DR. BENSON I. WAIREGI, EBS
CHANCELLOR, KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

On the Occasion of

THE 41ST GRADUATION CEREMONY

Held on

FRIDAY 16th DECEMBER, 2016

- ✚ Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology – Dr. Fred Matiang’i;
- ✚ Principal Secretary, State Department for University Education, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology – Prof. Collette A. Suda;
- ✚ Chairman of Kenyatta University Council – Prof Ratemo Michieka;
- ✚ Members of Kenyatta University Council;
- ✚ The Acting Vice-Chancellor – Prof. Paul K. Wainaina;
- ✚ Your Excellences the Ambassadors and High Commissioners present;
- ✚ Chancellors of other Universities;
- ✚ Vice-Chancellors present;

- ✚ Members of University Senate;
- ✚ Staff and Students of Kenyatta University;
- ✚ Parents and Guardians;
- ✚ Esteemed Graduands;
- ✚ Distinguished Guests;
- ✚ Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Morning!

Dear Graduands, I commend and congratulate you all on your individual and collective achievements in reaching this significant milestone. An honour such as this is a wonderful way for Kenyatta University, your family, community and Kenya as a country to recognize and celebrate the choices and sacrifices you have made. You have proved the adage that **“All our dreams can come true - if we have the courage to pursue them”**.

But I believe that what should make you and your parents most proud is not the actual graduation ceremony itself, but what you had to do to qualify to be honoured today. The reward for something well done is to have done it. Any form of appreciation and celebration is just the icing on the cake, not to be expected but definitely to be enjoyed.

I am happy to note that following the launch of partnerships with our national security agencies, the first cohort the Kenya Prisons Service, and the 4th Cohort of the Kenya Military Academy (KMA-04) are graduating today. Like all other students, you have learnt the art of leadership and the importance of integrity as you worked to receive your Commission as uniformed officers of the Republic of Kenya. The reputation of our uniformed forces rests firmly on your shoulders. Carry your responsibility with pride. You have earned the honour with hard work and you will retain it by living by the core values of your profession: courage, initiative, respect and teamwork. These values will

be reflected and demonstrated by aspiring to high ideals and the pursuit of excellence.

To all that are graduating today, I challenge you not to rest on your laurels but to continue striving towards even greater goals. Excelling in academia requires discipline, leadership and character. These qualities are indeed the core of a fulfilled and fulfilling life. Discipline consists not in succumbing to external pressure but in cultivating mental habits which lead impulsively to desirable actions. If there is any one thing that is evidenced by your daily choices it is your character. In the end, personal day-to-day decisions and choices will eventually reveal your true character to the world. Leadership is not about being appointed or elected to an office. Leadership is an attitude cultivated over time. Leadership is about having a purpose and following that purpose to get the ends you desire. Leadership is having a vision. People without visions can be likened to driving in a strange country without a road map: they are going to wind up somewhere, but where exactly?

The most important thing to remember is that discipline, leadership and character are the sum of many individual decisions. They embody a positive attitude backed by purpose. The only way to achieve your purpose is to take small actions every day. In the end, they all add up. My hope for you is that as you join the labour market or go back to your work stations, you will cultivate this attitude backed by purpose in your own life.

While it would be easier to glide through life without a goal, it would not be satisfying. Only by setting difficult targets and attaining them can we find our true self-worth.

Many see diploma or degrees certificates as means to an end. Others view them as unfortunate (and often inconvenient) necessities of life. Once again true scholarship is community service, it's an attitude. When it is all done, you should be able to look back at your career and realize that you did something worthwhile. That you helped your fellow

human, your village and your country in some way. No man is an island entire of himself/herself. Indeed, a good education invites us to

look at our fellow human beings with generosity and curiosity. I therefore urge you to use the knowledge you have gained from this institution to promote healthy vibrant societies, to reduce, if not eradicate human suffering, and to promote a more thoughtful, substantive, empathic world order.

As I conclude my remarks today, let me remind you that the few days ahead will be characterized by a lot of festivities during Christmas and the New Year. As we celebrate these important occasions, I want to urge you all to avoid excesses of all kinds. Remember that the Christmas spirit is the spirit of humility, forgiveness; the spirit of suffering, sacrificing and even dying for others.

Once again, I congratulate you all for your achievements. Enjoy your big day and remember that as Saint (Mother) Teresa said, "**Life is a promise; fulfill it.**"

Thank you and God bless