

**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY**

**Speech**

**By**

**PROF. OLIVE MUGENDA, PHD, EBS, CBS  
VICE - CHANCELLOR**

**39<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony  
Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2015**

- ✚ The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education Science & Technology – Dr. Fred Matiangi;**
- ✚ The Chancellor – Mr. Benson Wairegi;**
- ✚ Principal Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science & Technology – Prof. Collette Suda;**
- ✚ Chairman of Council – Prof. Ratemo Michieka;**
- ✚ Your Excellencies the Ambassadors & High Commissioners;**
- ✚ Chancellors of Sister Universities;**
- ✚ Members of Council;**
- ✚ Members of University Senate;**
- ✚ Staff and Students of Kenyatta University;**
- ✚ Parents and Guardians;**
- ✚ Graduands;**

**✚ Distinguished guests;**

**✚ Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**Good Morning.**

**I am delighted to welcome you all to the 39<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony of Kenyatta University. On behalf of the entire Kenyatta University community and on my own behalf we are glad that you joined us today in celebrating the conferment of various degrees and awards to the graduands. Allow me in a special way to welcome the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology -Dr. Fred Matiang'i to this auspicious occasion of the 39<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony of Kenyatta University. I wish to congratulate you Sir for being appointed the Cabinet Secretary for Education. As a University, we are privileged CS that this is the first University Graduation Ceremony that you are attending in the country in your new capacity. I also wish to thank the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education – Prof. Collette Suda for gracing this occasion and also congratulate her for being appointed Principal Secretary, Ministry of Education State Department of Higher Education. I Welcome all to our biggest graduation ceremony ever in which 7,741 graduands are being conferred various degrees and others being presented with awards.**

**I wish to acknowledge many distinguished guests among us today, who have taken time from their busy schedules to celebrate this occasion with us. (Attached list of guests)**

**May I also recognize the presence of the guest school - Pangani Girls High School who are with us today to celebrate this momentous occasion. Our Chief guest, at every graduation ceremony, we host a school to motivate them as they strive to excel.**

**Our Chief Guest, I wish to thank you for coming to the Education sector with an open mind even though you make the final decisions in the sector. Your leadership, consultative spirit, open mind and respect of all players in the sector is highly appreciated. CS for us who are below you, we feel respected, our work valued and we feel that the playing ground is level for all of us to support you and the sector to show our full potential as we perform duties entrusted to us by the government through you. In the short period that you have been in office, you have shown us sir your key interest is to see leaders under you succeed and to do their work without fear or favour. We salute you for this position Sir.**

**Mr. Chancellor Sir, I congratulate the 7,741 graduands who will be awarded various awards today. They have stayed true to their goal through hard work, perseverance, dedication and sacrifice and today's celebration is a culmination of their efforts. As a University, we are full of pride and joy to have made this possible through the remarkable work of the professors, lecturers, internal and external examiners, non-teaching and the determined support of parents and guardians. These are our students who came up under double intake. We are proud to**

**have been the first University to reduce the waiting period for students from 2 to 1 year after completing Secondary School.**

**Mr. Chancellor Sir, this graduation presents a joyous time, a moment for reflection and great anticipation for both the graduands and the University. It also serves as a formal ceremony that allows the University to release graduands to the larger society to enable them to make their contribution in the growth and development of the country. We are confident that the graduands will make use of the knowledge and skills acquired to create a positive impact in the society and the world at large.**

**Our Chief Guest, this graduation ceremony is special to me. This is the last graduation ceremony that I am celebrating as the Vice-Chancellor. When I look back 10 years ago when I took over, as the first woman Vice-Chancellor, I was equal to the task but wasn't sure whether a woman Vice-Chancellor would be accepted. I am here to say our CS and Mr. Chancellor Sir that I have been given space by the government and my colleagues to do my work without interference. We have achieved many milestones and accomplishments from the time I took over in 2006.**

**The University has grown in many respects in the last ten years. For example, in terms of access we have grown by over 121% from a population of 15,000 students to over 70,000. Secondly, focusing on the**

**students, we have developed and implemented various projects that support students growth and development. These projects include:**

- i. The Intra Africa Students Exchange – students proceed on a semester abroad to other partnering universities**
- ii. The Growing Leaders Programme – to impart soft skills among our graduating students including leadership, communication and positive attitude.**
- iii. Students Work Induction Programme (SWIP) – to give our students working experience before they leave University.**
- iv. Students Training for Entrepreneurship Promotion (STEP)- to enhance their entrepreneurship skills.**
- v. Legal Aid Clinic - to help communities.**

**Thirdly, to enhance research which is a core function of the University, we created a division to specifically focus on research, innovation and outreach. The division is headed by a Deputy Vice-Chancellor. We also created a Directorate of Grant Writing which co-ordinates grant proposal writing. Additionally, we established a Directorate of Teaching Excellence and Research Training which trains academic staff on research to make them better researchers and better teachers.**

**Fourth, we established critical infrastructure to support and enhance service delivery, teaching and learning, research and other core functions of the University. Some of the infrastructure includes:**

- i. The Post modern library- which holds 5,000 students**
- ii. Chandaria Business Innovation and Incubation Centre**
- iii. Business and Students Services Centre**

- iv. Students Computer Centre**
- v. Ole Moi-Yoi lecture hall which accommodates 3000 students**
- vi. Science Laboratories**
- vii. Graduate School Building**
- viii. School of Engineering building**
- ix. School of Hospitality and Tourism building**
- x. School of Law building in parklands**
- xi. Amphitheatre**
- xii. The Campanile**
- xiii. An alumni building**
- xiv. Nyayo 1 and 2 hostels in the main campus with 600 bed space**
- xv. Hostels in Mombasa which will accommodate 600 students**
- xvi. We are in the next few months completing the International Programme building, School of Education building, sixty (60) staff houses, extension of the Health Unit and Engineering Workshops**

**Our Chief Guest, I know you are concerned with the expansion of satellite campuses in the country. I want to assure you Sir, that Kenyatta University's expansion has been well planned and well thought through in the University strategic plan. We have bought and have completed paying for our campuses in Kericho, Mombasa, Nakuru ,and City Campuses. These campuses have been inspected and passed by the Commission of University Education.**

**Mr. Chancellor Sir, in 2 months time, we will be opening our 600 bed hospital with a cancer center, a dream that started with a proposal 8 years ago. Mr. Chancellor, we have also started the construction of 300 bed children's hospital next to the main hospital to be opened in the next 1 year.**

**Our Chief Guest, the year 2015 will remain remarkable in the history of Kenyatta University. We are so honoured to have hosted the 44<sup>th</sup> president of the United States of America, Barrack Obama in July this year. In addition, Kenyatta University is now privileged to be the home of the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI), a brainchild of his Excellency president Obama that he inaugurated on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2015 at Chandaria Business Innovation and Incubation Centre.**

**Second, as we come to the close of 2015, we are delighted to reckon other noteworthy milestones that we have attained as we strive to achieve the University's strategic goals. Allow me to highlight some of the developments we have realized so far.**

**First, we are proud to have launched a new national television station - KUTV on 7<sup>th</sup> November this year. This is a premier television station that will not only serve to provide alternative programming to the existing national television industry but also act as a melting pot for the great talent nurtured at Kenyatta University. By so doing, KUTV will provide an avenue where staff and students' internal capacities will be tapped to ensure provision of high quality programmes. We also anticipate that KUTV will continue to deepen partnerships with the industry stakeholders and sector players.**

**Second, we officially opened a new state-of-the art Alumni Centre a month ago. The facility will benefit many who have graduated from Kenyatta University.**

**Third, Mr. Chancellor Sir, a few days ago, we opened a fully operational bookshop in our Nairobi satellite Campus. We believe this will go a long way in promoting the reading culture among our students, staff and the society.**

**Fourth, in October we celebrated KU @30. This historic celebration kicked off on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015 with the launch of a gender awareness campaign dubbed HeForShe to rally men in support of gender equality and women empowerment in society. The culmination of the two-week celebration was marked by showcasing of diverse socio-cultural activities to give emphasis to the Kenya's national diversity.**

**Fifth, Mr. Chancellor Sir, we are happy to note that the first phase of the Kenyatta University Teaching Research Hospital and Referral Hospital is complete and fully equipped. In fact, preparations for the official opening the state-of-the-art health care facility are in place. Moreover, the laying of the foundation stone for the proposed Children's' Hospital has been scheduled to take place in February next year and the construction will commence immediately.**

**Mr. Chancellor Sir, we have continued to strengthen the existing and establish potential inter-institutional and multi-disciplinary collaborative networks with various like-minded stakeholders in pursuit of promoting the corporate image of Kenyatta University.**

**Our Chief Guest, I am delighted to disclose that, in the weeks to come, we are planning to launch the proposed School of Architecture and Built Environment at Ruiru Campus. The current state of affairs in the fast growing and sprawling urban sector in Kenya has necessitated the establishment of the proposed school. The school will offer multidisciplinary curriculum that comprises various programmes like Architecture, Construction Management, Valuation and Real Estate Development.**

#### **Words of advice to Graduands**

**At this point, allow me to give a few pieces of advice to the graduating class of December 2015. As you graduate, remember that your graduation releases you from one competitive world of academia into another equally competitive world of work. You need not allow life's numerous and inevitable obstacles to impede your progress. Have confidence in your abilities as the University has given you the required skills to scale through the world. The country is looking up to you as the driving force that will steer our growth and development. Make use of opportunities presented to you and if none is availed create them yourself.**

#### **Thanking stakeholders**

**May I now appreciate the tremendous support that the University has received from parents, guardians, sponsors, development partners and other stakeholders. It is as a result of your continued support that we celebrate our student's achievements today. I also wish to thank the**

**Chancellor – Mr. Benson Wairegi for his support and counsel, the University Council under the chairmanship of Prof. Ratemo Michieka for constant support, the University Senate, Management Board, teaching and non-teaching staff and the entire student fraternity for your commitment towards the development that the University has accomplished. I also thank KUSA for being focused and keeping to their mandate in the University.**

**Mr. Chancellor Sir, before us are graduands who have been dully examined by their professors and external examiners. They have qualified for the certificates, diplomas, and degrees they will receive today. On behalf of the University Senate therefore, I am pleased to present to you over 7,741 candidates for the award of certificates, diplomas, and degrees of Kenyatta University. These include 56 PhDs; 800 Masters; 17 Postgraduate; 6,447 Bachelors; 401 Diplomas, and 53 Certificates.**

**Our Chief Guest, allow me now to invite the Chairman of Council to address the congregation.**

**I wish you all good celebrations a Merry Christmas and a successful New Year.**

**Thank you**