



**SPEECH BY HON. EUGENE WAMALWA, E.G.H.,
CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF WATER AND
IRRIGATION DURING THE 9TH GRADUATION
CEREMONY OF THE MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY
ON 11TH DECEMBER, 2015**

**The Chancellor, Prof. Victoria Wulsin,
The Guest Speaker, Prof. David Brown,**

**The Founder of Mount Kenya University, Dr. Simon Gicharu,
Members of Board of Trustees,
Your Excellences Ambassadors and High Commissioners,
Prof. Grace Njoroge, Chairperson,
Members of the University Council
Graduands and Students,
Parents and Guardians,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honour for me to join you today during this ninth Graduation Ceremony. May I start by congratulating

you on your Graduation and the hard work, sacrifice and achievement you and your Lecturers and Parents have put into this.

Ladies and Gentlemen, US President Theodore Roosevelt once said that in every struggle for human betterment, one of the main objects and often, the only object, has been to achieve in large measure equality of opportunity. In the struggle for this great end, Nations rise from barbarism to civilisation and people press

forward from one stage of enlightenment to the next. I believe that there can be no better tool for equalisation and the betterment of humanity and enlightenment of society than education. Education, apart from death, is the ultimate equaliser in any society.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have in my own life seen a son of a squatter beat a son of a Landlord and a son of Watchman of a Supermarket beat the son of the Owner given an equal opportunity to education. I believe all of

you Graduands do not come from the same backgrounds, but through education, you can become anything you want to be and that is the main reason we are here today not just to witness, but to celebrate your achievements.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are here to celebrate the success of Private Public Partnership such as Mt. Kenya University that has seen the Private Sector invest billions of Shillings in the Education Sector, as Dr. Gicharu has done to increase access to education through such first

class facilities. I have just come from one of the best and oldest Universities in the world, Oxford University, where many eminent Kenyans had to struggle and travel miles to access. But with the building of new Universities like Mt. Kenya, Kenyans no longer have to travel thousands of miles to foreign lands to access world class education. You can now do so right here in Africa, right here in East Africa, right here in Kenya, right here in Mt. Kenya University. For this we want to thank and appreciate our local Investors such as Dr. Gicharu and on behalf of the

Government, assure you of our continued support and partnership. The Government remains committed and supportive to making higher education accessible to all Kenyans regardless of race, ethnic origin, religion or political affiliation. Through Public Private Partnership, the Government has broadened the environment in which not only Public and Private Universities thrive, but in which entrepreneurship and innovation are nurtured.

Ladies and Gentlemen, innovation plays a critical role in ensuring that productive growth occurs and that the Kenyan economy is progressively transformed into a knowledge-based economy. Universities are critical drivers of innovative systems and the resultant developments in application of knowledge, especially in bio-technology, value addition, manufacturing, information and communication technologies (ICT) that lead to industrial and entrepreneurial development. By establishing the Graduate Enterprise Academy whose

mandate is to nurture development of ideas into commercial product and services, Mt. Kenya University has set the ball rolling in this Region and the world at large and act worth emulation.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I know you have passed many CATs and exams to be graduating today. I have a few questions which are going to be the last CAT I promise you. They are:

- Name the Nation with the fastest growing economy in Africa.
- Which Nation in Africa is the world's third fastest growing economy according to Bloomberg and East Africa's economic powerhouse?
- Which is the third most improved Nation as far as ease of doing business is concerned according to Forbes?

- Which African Nation played first Host to the Pope and the President of the United States of America the same year?
- Which country emerged the World Champion in Athletics in Beijing 2015?
- Which African country will be the first to host the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) on African soil?

- Which African country will be first the host the first World Trade Organisation in Africa?
- Which African country was the first to host the Global Entrepreneurship Summit opened by President Obama who referred to it as the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship in Africa?
- Which country has the largest economy in East Africa and the gateway to sub-Saharan Africa and accounts for 40% of East Africa's GDP?

- Which country in Africa was honoured by the UN to co-chair the Special Committee on SDGs?
- Which is the most improved country in Africa in terms of good governance according to Mo Ibrahim's Index of African Governance?
- Do you believe in the concept of Africa rising. If so, which country is the rising star of Africa?

Ladies and Gentlemen, the mistake we make is that we dwell so much on what divides us instead of what unites

us. We dwell so much on what is negative about Kenya instead of what is positive about Kenya. We put too much energy in bringing out the worst in us rather than the best in us. And this must change and you can be the agents of that change. You can change that narrative. Kenya is a nascent economy that we are boosting with more highly educated young people.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the State under Article 55 of the Constitution is required to take measures including

affirmative action programmes to ensure that the youth participate in political, social, economic and other spheres of life. Pursuant to that, I want to assure you the Government has put in place Policies to enable you access opportunities and lead meaningful lives.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you graduate and leave the gates of this University, we must prepare you for the next transition stage out there. You graduate at time of great changes and challenges locally and globally. Our country,

Kenya, is now full of great promise and opportunities. The Government continues to advocate for policies that generate more opportunities for everybody. Policies that strengthen youth, women and people with disabilities and give them a chance to climb their way into entrepreneurship, policies that create more good jobs and reduce poverty. The amendment of the Public Procurement Act 2005 that provides room for 30% preferential procurement for youth, women and marginalised groups is at your disposal. More than Ksh

200 billion has been set aside for your uptake into business. However, the uptake has been low and I encourage you to seize this opportunity. It is time Mt. Kenya University and your generation gave birth to new entrepreneurs, job creators rather than job seekers. The amendment of the Companies Act allows you as an individual to step out and start business. In a broader way, you as an individual can set up business registration within a shorter period in an efficient and more effective way. The Government shall continue to increase its

Budgetary Allocations towards funding Higher Education to enable Students both in Public and Private Institutions to continue accessing funds, Scholarships and Bursaries.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you leave this University, you are also entering East African Region that Kenya has helped create a common market with its sister countries through Free Trade Agreements signed in June 2015 with over 140 million consumers and also the COMESA and SADC Agreements which offer access to over 600 million

consumers. Beyond East Africa Community, COMESA and SADC, you are also entering the society when the world is transiting from MDGs to SDGs where Kenya played a critical role of co-chairing the formation of the SDGs in New York for which it received a global honour and recognition. In this regard, the Scriptures say “To whom much is given, much is expected”. I therefore challenge you in the pursuit of the realisation of SDGs by 2030, Vision 2030 and ultimately, in the realisation of Africa’s vision 2063. You are Kenya’s best hope and Africa’s best

hope in the realisation of all these lofty goals and visions for a better Kenya, better Africa and better world.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this is not to say, however, that Kenya is without challenges. The challenges our Founding Fathers faced at Independence of poverty, ignorance and disease are still the challenges of our time and even as we have worked together as Kenyans in common strive over the years to defeat the three traditional enemies, new ones have emerged on the horizon and these are

corruption, tribalism and terrorism. President Obama has talked to you bthe youth about it when he visited Nairobi this year and said “you are responsible for the greatness of this country, you can change this country but not with tribalism in your hearts and minds, nor with hatred or divisions”. The Pope has also talked to you about it when he asked you at Kasarani to hold hands in unity against corruption and tribalism and put it to you that you either overcome these challenges or be overcome by them the choice is yours. Three years ago, during the launch of

TNA, I spoke about the same challenges. I say that what has stood in the way of the Kenyan dream and made Nations like Malaysia, Singapore and South Korea leave us behind and now their GDP 40 times that of Kenya when we were at per at independence is corruption and tribalism. As we send you out of these gates, we are asking you to say no to corruption, tribalism and radicalisation.

As I conclude Ladies and Gentlemen, may I remind you of that legend of the eagle that on the 40th year of its life must retreat high up the mountain and go through a painful moulting process where by it sheds of its beak, its feathers and its claws and grows new ones and renewed, it gets a *new lease of life*. Kenya is like a 40 year old eagle that must go through a moulting process and shed off its beak of corruption and grow a new one, shed of its claws and feathers of tribalism and grow new ones, and you young Kenyan graduating here today are Kenya's new

feathers, new beaks and new claws that are untainted by these vices tribalism and corruption. You are Kenya's best hope.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as you go forth, you are the fresh and untainted blood that we are injecting in our national vein, be ye the agents of change, may the Good Lord bless you, always trust in him. As the prophet Isaiah reminds us that even youth grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall but "They that wait upon the

Lord shall renew their strength, they shall soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not be weary, they will walk and not be faint". **God Bless you all. God Bless Mt. Kenya University and God Bless Kenya.**

THANK YOU

**HON. EUGENE WAMALWA, E.G.H.,
CABINET SECRETARY**