

**SPEECH BY PROF. FRANCIS J. GICHAGA, PhD, EBS, CHANCELLOR  
JKUAT AND BY EXTENSION MOMBASA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE, DURING THE INAUGURAL GRADUATION CEREMONY OF  
THE MOMBASA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY COLLEGE, ON  
THURSDAY, 25<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2010.**

**The Ag. Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology,**

**The Permanent Secretary, Ministry Higher Education, Science and Technology,**

**Vice Chancellor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Prof. Mabel Imbuga , H W the mayor & Councilors, The Regional Commissioner,**

**The Council of Mombasa Polytechnic University College Chairman Prof. El. Busaidy and the Council members,**

**The Principal, Mombasa Polytechnic University College, Prof. Mwatela**

**Principals and Heads of other Institutions,**

**Graduands,**

**Alumni,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure to come to Mombasa Polytechnic University College to officiate during this inaugural graduation ceremony for those students who have satisfied the Senate of JKUAT for the various awards. This is indeed an auspicious occasion when the University College celebrates the academic achievement of young scholars and professionals who are about to graduate today.

My presiding over this function should not be taken for granted, thus I wish to extend my gratitude to His Excellency the President, Mwai Kibaki, for appointing me the Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. I further wish to acknowledge the contribution by my predecessor Prof. Ali Mazrui, a scholar of international repute, during his six year tenure as Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology.

May I welcome you all, and kindly accept my appreciation for finding time to grace this occasion. As for graduands, your sheer hard work and academic efforts have successfully culminated into today's ceremony. I also note with further appreciation the contribution of your parents, guardians and sponsors in making this accomplishment possible. It always gives me a lot of fulfillment to witness the graduation of young academicians as they symbolize not only the future of the world of scholarships but also the future of this country.

As the institution celebrates its role in the provision of quality training to graduands who are ready for the market, it must also go on record the positive role the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology has played in mentoring this institution. I therefore wish to commend the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mabel Imbuga, and her team who have put in efforts to ensure this University College starts on a sound footing.

I am happy to note that this institution is already playing a pivotal role in delivering the goals and strategic plans of the vision 2030, by providing quality and innovative education through training and research. For this you will continue to enjoy my unwavering support and I am sure the Ministry's as well.

You will recall that I came here on 5<sup>th</sup> March this year soon after I was appointed Chancellor of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture of Technology on a familiarization tour. At the time I mentioned that when the defunct Mombasa Polytechnic was elevated to Mombasa Polytechnic University College, I celebrated because some three and a half decades ago I participated in the design of Mombasa Polytechnic teaching facilities, which project was sponsored by the GTZ of Germany. You will recall how I explained that the reason for my celebrating was that our

dream, at the time we were involved in the design of the learning facilities, had come to pass, namely that the Polytechnic had now been elevated to University status.

You will recall that I spent considerable time in my speech citing the many sections in the JKUAT Act and the Statutes to underpin the need for the management to embrace good corporate governance. I even gave examples of how I had to seek solace from the instruments of managing the University when I was at the helm of the University of Nairobi.

I wish to reiterate that these instruments of running the university must be a constant companion as we manage the University College and more so after the promulgation of the current constitution which is requiring those in positions of responsibility to account for the decisions and actions. Additionally and more importantly, the university is the home of intellectuals who are known for being articulate when it comes to analyzing actions taken by management against the provisions in the Act and the Statutes.

That is why as management, you should ensure that the various organs of the University including the University Council, the council committees, the Senate, the management Board, the academic Board, and other boards, are facilitated to enable them discharge their responsibilities unhindered and efficiently. In this respect, the structures and functions of the organs of this University College are articulated in the various university instruments such as the JKUAT Act, the Statutes, the Terms of Services, the operational manuals etc. There should therefore be no reason for one to usurp the power of an organ without express authority from that organ. Needless to say, if the organs of the University discharge their responsibilities diligently, then various stakeholders would in turn have faith in the decisions arrived at by those organs. Quite often however, you will sense elements of disquiet when a given organ is not discharging its responsibilities as stipulated in the statutes. And intellectuals are known to react

to such lapses with hostility which can sometimes make it difficult for the management to run the operations of the institution efficiently and thereby fail to achieve the projected targets on time.

During my visit in March I also raised issues concerning establishing efficient financial management systems. I imagine that this is an area where considerable focus is required to ensure that the limited financial resources that we receive from the exchequer and other partners are prudently managed and in accordance to the financial plans and regulations. Related to this, I also talked about the need to structure and develop income generation programmes to enable you finance teaching, research and other activities of the University College. Related to the above is the strategic plan which guides you on where to invest the revenue on a timeline.

As you are aware government institutions, including public universities are being evaluated annually to establish how far they have achieved their targets relative to the performance contracts, which are derivatives of the strategic plan. I imagine that this is an area where you must be facing the challenges of limited resources versus ambitious targets.

One of your challenges is the preparation towards acquiring full-fledged university status. In this respect, I expect that you will seek assistance from your mentor - Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, so that you can address the requirements that you need to satisfy in order to qualify for elevations to full-fledged university status.

Among the challenges to be addressed is the development of physical facilities to increase the teaching and research capacity of the University College. Additionally you will need to recruit

suitable qualified academics that have capacity to provide leadership in the key professional and academic areas in the curricula.

I did encourage you to seek for public private partnerships where you can collaborate with the private sector organizations and companies. Such collaborations can assist in raising resources that enable you invest in projects where you have similar or common interests with the collaborators, to the benefits of the University College Community.

And in the area of research and development, the university must be in the forefront in establishing its niche for itself. Given that the University College is located here at the Mombasa County, one expects that there will be a lot of focus in the areas of technology relating and important to the development of this region.

As a university college aiming to be a world class university of Engineering Science and Technology, Mombasa Polytechnic University College should take the advantage of its locale. I am happy to note that this University College intends to mount programmes relevant to the region, so as to capture the market and the needs of the region. I urge the fraternity of this institution to continue exploiting this opportunity fully.

I am pleased to note that this institution is already venturing into relevant programmes like Marine Science and Engineering which are appropriate for this region. This is one of the crucial elements of the pillars for national development. Other elements are in the areas of Science, Technology and Innovation and the role of energy in industrial development.

There are also possibilities of exploiting minerals in this region and one would therefore expect that our researchers will engage the right gear in order to enable this country benefit from such natural resources as titanium, iron ore etc.

I wish to urge our dons to come up with strategies and appropriate research programmes in order to create the international competitiveness required by exploiting knowledge in Science, technology and innovation. The role of energy in the industrialization process of this nation cannot be underestimated. In order for our industries to survive in this cut-throat economic competition globally, our researchers must put every effort possible towards the development of renewable and affordable energy for that purpose.

In wrapping up this area of research, development and innovation I wish to emphasize that we must be prepared to invest heavily if we are to raise the development orbit of our country to the middle income level as indicated in the Kenya Vision 2030.

In order to propel our country to greater heights through vision 2030, Kenya has established itself as a political giant in Africa, by putting in place its homegrown constitution. This has opened many opportunities not only for us in the academic world but for all Kenyans. I wish to urge all of us to explore this new political goodwill and dispensation. Above all I wish to urge our dons to be patriotic enough to use their expertise in this country. We note with helplessness, especially in the past, that even we have added more universities which have produced more doctors and engineers, many of this ended up in the Diaspora.

Ladies and gentlemen, I came here today to confer degrees to graduands from the various faculties and schools. As we congratulate them, I wish to encourage them to face the new challenges with confidence and determination. We live in a very complex and competitive world given the transformation we are going through towards globalization. You need to be prepared

to face the inevitable eventuality starting with the newly created and wider East African Community now consisting of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. This wider East African Community is however expected to bring with it opportunities for many of those graduating today. I urge you to explore these opportunities fully.

In conclusion ladies and gentlemen, I wish the graduands the best of luck as they begin a new journey in their professional careers and personal development. I wish to remind them that learning is a continuous process, a lifelong commitment and experience and in this regard each one of you graduands has a rendezvous with destiny. Go out there and exploit fully your skills as you direct your energies into building this nation. Be proud of it and your worthy contribution should stand out to be counted as those who have in one way or the other reinvented the wheel of development to extreme heights.

And finally, let me thank the Council and the management of the Mombasa Polytechnic College for excellent arrangements of this inaugural graduation ceremony.

Thank you very much and may God bless you all.