



**THE KENYA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
SPEECH BY PROF.F.J.GICHAGA, CHAIRMAN OF THE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE COUNCIL, DURING THE GRADUATION CEREMONY ON 16th
OCTOBER 2009**

- **The Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Dr. Joseph B. Wanjui,**
- **The Chairman of the University of Nairobi Council, Mr. John Simba,**
- **The Representative of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology**
- **Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Prof. George Magoha,**
- **The Principal, Kenya Polytechnic University College, Prof. Francis Aduol,**
- **Members of the Kenya Polytechnic University College Council,**
- **Members of the University of Nairobi Management Board,**
- **Staff of the University College,**
- **Students of the University College,**
- **Graduands,**
- **Parents, guardians, and sponsors of students,**
- **Distinguished guests,**
- **Ladies and gentlemen!**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you, Mr. Chancellor Sir, to this Graduation Ceremony on behalf of the Kenya Polytechnic University College Council. We are indeed most grateful to you Sir, for finding time from your busy schedule to come and preside over this colourful ceremony as we mark this historic day in our calendar of events.

I also wish to welcome all those guests who have joined us during this Graduation Ceremony. As members of the KPUC Council, we are witnessing this inaugural Graduation Ceremony with special interest, because it is our first such ceremony in this institution since we were inaugurated. We would therefore wish everybody to feel at home as we celebrate this historic occasion.

It will be noted that the vision of the Kenya Polytechnic University College is to be a top rated university of technology and our mission is to provide quality and innovative technological education and training. In pursuance to the above vision and mission, we have embarked on several activities which are aimed at boosting the Kenya Polytechnic University College capacity to discharge its responsibilities especially in respect of mounting degree programmes. At the same time we are keeping in mind the requirement to continue with the Diploma and Certificate programmes which the defunct Kenya Polytechnic was offering. We are conscious of the important role this institution is expected to play towards the industrialization of our nation in pursuance of the Vision 2030.

And when talking about industrialization, there are many Kenyans who do not know what is meant by this expression. On one occasion I was put to task, as I addressed heads of secondary schools in the country during their annual gathering. One Principal asked why we should be required to create industrial areas which are associated with noise and dust, and are generally uncomfortable environments not suitable for human habitation.

In broad terms, you need to know that industrialization means adding value to products so that they become sellable and thereby create jobs and wealth for our people. For example, given that our economy is largely based on agriculture, we should put efforts towards adding value to the agricultural raw produce so that the resulting products would be competitively sold in the international market. In doing so one would need to address the whole chain right from the preparation of land, farm inputs such as seeds and fertilizers, weed control, harvesting, post harvest storage and processing to convert the raw produce into final products sellable locally and internationally. Unfortunately, as it is to-day, many Kenyan peasants simply plant crops with little care to relevant inputs resulting in low output during harvest. Additionally, these peasants sell the raw produce at throw-away prices to those able to add value and reap heavy profits, while the poor peasant continues to wallow in poverty.

In order to address the issue, there is need to assist the peasants with knowledge and other inputs. Such inputs like fertilizers could be produced locally if relevant industries are developed. Such industries would in addition create jobs and therefore wealth for our dear Kenyans.

In the case of metal industries, many of you would know that we have iron ore deposits in various parts of our country, and in addition, we have coal deposits. This implies that we could develop industries which can be used to melt the iron ore and produce the various types of steel, thereby saving this country's foreign exchange which is currently used in importing metal components for use in the various industries that we have in our country. Additionally, we could produce the relevant finished metal products locally, which we are currently importing, and thereby save the foreign exchange used to purchase such products and more importantly, create employment and wealth for our people.

When considering the above examples, you will appreciate the role of efficient infrastructure in the process of industrialization. Here we are concerned with efficient transportation system, adequate and reliable energy, ICT systems, and of course sufficient water and wastewater systems in terms of quality and quantity. The infrastructure must be efficient if our locally produced products are to be competitive in the international market.

You should also know that the economy of the future will be largely driven by knowledge, and accordingly, it is imperative that we acquire knowledge capacity to be in a position where we can reap benefits from an efficient industrialization process. The training offered at this University College is structured towards addressing the many dimensions relating to industrialization as spelt out in our mission and the strategic plan.

We acknowledge that imparting knowledge, in the context of providing quality and innovative technological education and training, to address the various aspects of industrialization is indeed a very tall order for this University College; but we wish to assure Kenyans that we are equal to the task.

In this connection, Mr. Chancellor Sir, in addition to holding Council meetings as required by the Legal Order, in August this year, we held a four-day fruitful joint workshop for the top management and the members of the KPUC Council in order to sensitize ourselves on the role of the various organs of the institution in the context of good corporate governance. We have also started recruiting critical management staff who will lead the various departments and sections of the University College.

At this point, as KPUC Council, we would wish to record our sincere appreciation of the Board of Governors of the defunct Kenya Polytechnic for steering this institution up to the time the Council was appointed and inaugurated.

As expected, the young University College will require substantial financial resources to enable it develop its physical facilities as well as human capital in line with the requirements of a university college. In this respect we wish to acknowledge the financial support we have received from the Government through the parent Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. In particular we wish to record our appreciation of the help accorded to the staff who were formerly employees of the Teachers Service Commission who have now been absorbed by the University College.

We also wish to observe with appreciation that the Kenya Polytechnic University College was allocated funds which have been used to carry out major rehabilitation and expansion of the teaching facilities in addition to buying laboratory equipment which are being used by the students pursuing degree courses. During the last financial year the KPUC was allocated a total of KShs120m for development of which KShs80m was for refurbishment and KShs40m was for new construction works. I am happy to report that the funds have been put to good use. The KPUC arranged to spend and recoup the relevant amount from the Treasury after the construction was accomplished. Unfortunately this arrangement did not favour the KPUC as at the time the supplementary estimates were being worked out, it was erroneously assumed that KPUC did not have the capacity to spend the allocated amount. As at January this year KPUC had only been able to recoup KShs19m from Treasury. As a consequence, while we had set our estimates for the current financial year at KShs145m for development,

according to the approved budget, KPUC got only KShs45m. This means that our development plans have to be curtailed at a time when KPUC is expected to expand its facilities in order to absorb more students to pursue degree courses. As the Kenya Polytechnic University College Council, Mme Minister, we wish to appeal for more funds to enable us develop and expand the teaching and research facilities as required by the KPUC Strategic Plan and also satisfy the requirements as stipulated in the performance contract. We have indeed signed the performance contract for which we are due to be evaluated and rated at the end of this financial year.

Another aspect related to the expansion of the KPUC facilities relates to space. As is evident, KPUC needs more physical space given that we are planning to expand its capacity to cater for increasing numbers of students and of course staff; and yet at the moment KPUC is fairly squeezed with practically little room for expansion. In this connection, Mme Minister, we wish to enlist your support so that KPUC can be allocated more land. In addition to teaching and research facilities, we are also concerned about recreation facilities for our students.

And now turning to staff, I would like to encourage the staff of this University College to put all effort possible so that we can excel as envisaged in our vision and in our performance contract. I also wish to encourage the students to work hard and embrace the virtues of honesty and good citizenly so that they can acquire the knowledge that will help them to qualify to be engaged in satisfying careers which will contribute towards the industrial development of this nation.

As I conclude, let me congratulate the graduands for successfully completing the courses they undertook to pursue at this institution. This is indeed your day to celebrate with your relatives and friends as a mark of successful achievement of the goal that you set yourself to achieve when you joined this institution. I wish you success in the careers that lie ahead for you.

And finally, we wish to acknowledge the support we continue to receive from our mother and mentoring University of Nairobi along this exciting journey towards becoming a full-fledged technical university.

And with those remarks, Mr. Chancellor Sir, ladies and gentlemen, I now have the pleasure to invite the Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Dr. Sally Kosgei, to address the congregation.

Thank you.