

SPEECH FOR HON. DR. SALLY KOSGEY

The Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui, Chairman of Council, Vice-Chancellor, Principal, Staff and Students, Graduands, Ladies and Gentlemen.

I feel happy to join this congregation in celebrating the inaugural graduation ceremony of the Kenya Polytechnic University College. I note that the history of this institution is as old as the history of our country. Over the years the Kenya Polytechnic, as it was known until August, 2007, has played an integral part in the development of our nation by providing training and education to generations of young Kenyans. The Polytechnic successively produced high quality graduands, world renown for their hands on ability.

This tradition should be maintained even as the College ventures into the new frontiers of knowledge by offering degree courses. The elevation of the Kenya Polytechnic to a degree awarding institution was as result of the Government's desire to respond to the challenges of technological development of our nation. A stakeholders' forum held in 2005 culminated in the development of the Sessional Paper No.5 of 2005. Three years later the Government launched the Vision 2030. In both policy documents, the principal pillar of national development has identified as technology.

Therefore, the elevation of the Kenya Polytechnic to a degree awarding institution is intended to develop technology through education, training, research and innovation. It is imparting the principles and philosophy of technology to young Kenyans who form the majority of your students that the nation will develop a strong cadre and critical mass of citizens with the ability to conceptualize, design and produce machines, equipment and systems to transform our economy to middle income.

Owing to its long tradition and relative vast experience in this field, the Kenya Polytechnic University College is expected to be at the apex of Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET). The College is expected to continue to train at Certificate and Diploma levels as well as provide leadership in technological training and education at degree levels. It will therefore be the catalyst in national development.

The College occupies a unique position in the education and training of Kenyans and beyond. The uniqueness of the College lies in its ability to produce solutions to our national development challenges. The College should therefore provide personnel with the required skills and knowledge to apply the research results produced for the benefit of our nation. This mission is only achievable if the Kenya Polytechnic University College prioritizes on research, innovation and technology transfer. Research for the production of knowledge, innovation for the turning of the research results into designs and products and transferring the same for use in solving human problems

From the onset, the efforts of the College at providing leadership for the country in this area must be captured in terms of both the physical and resources assigned for this task. Therefore, as the institution grows, it must be clear to all that the “hands on” culture is strengthened and centrally positioned both in the organizational thinking, structure and management. In this regard, the collaboration with industry and strong partnerships with universities of similar aspirations must be enhanced. The Ministry expects that the College will continue with supervised industrial attachments in all courses as well as maintaining regular external examinations by academics from universities of international repute.

However, the most important aspect of the mandate of this College is that of technology transfer. More often than not, universities in Africa engage in research for academic purposes only. The ordinary people therefore do not appreciate the value of research because the results of such research do seek to address the problems of the local people.

They do not identify with the researchers or their efforts. The Kenya Polytechnic University College should venture more into applied research and thereby transfer technology for use by the ordinary mwanainchi. We look up to the College to accelerate the culture of the use of technology in our daily lives.

Within my Ministry, there are already deliberate efforts to avail more resources towards research, technology development and innovation. I invite the College to take advantage of this opportunity since it has a long standing tradition in this area. Toward this end, the College will need to identify institutions, both locally and internationally, with which it will partner. The Government encourages collaborative and multi-disciplinary research as a way of promoting applied research. This will enable us provide solutions to our local problems.

This College is expected to be a fully fledged university. The responsibility of its growth is vested in its Council and the Senate of the University of Nairobi. I am confident that these two organs will discharge this task without hindrance.

While it is envisaged that the institution will grow to full maturity by attaining the status of a university, the path that the College takes must ensure that it does not become just another University in the traditional sense. We all expect that the College will develop to become a leading university of technology. As I mentioned earlier, the establishment of strong partnerships with peer and international institutions, the industry and the informal sector “Jua Kali” will be integral in this endeavor.

This College, together with Mombasa Polytechnic, is therefore expected to offer high level university technological education while still continuing to maintain leadership in the provision of tertiary education. It is worth noting that some of the courses offered in your institutions are unique and may not be available elsewhere. The government therefore expects councils of these institutions to situate centrally research, innovation and technology transfer their planning and operations.

The current leadership of the College should therefore play a leading role in ensuring that the institution does not deviate from its intended direction and purpose. All these must be done without losing sight of the timelines that the Government has put for the attainment of this goal. The Ministry expects that the Council and the Senate of the University of Nairobi will ensure that the College becomes a fully fledged university by 2011.

Finally, may I join the previous speakers in congratulating the graduands. You have earned highly respected diplomas and certificates in your respective fields of specializations. I wish to encourage you to further sharpen your skills through continuous training and education even as you go out to seek employment.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Thank You and May God Bless You.