

**Speech by Hon. Aden Duale, Cabinet Secretary for Health, during the Official Opening of the 8th Kenya Medical Training College Scientific Conference at the Nursing Assembly on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2025.**

**Salutations**

- Board Chairperson Mr. Joseah K. Cheruiyot
- Board members present
- CEO Dr. Kelly Oluoch
- Keynote address speaker Prof. Sylvester Kimaiyo
- All speakers present
- Online participants
- KMTC Staff and students
- Members of the fourth estate

**Good morning.**

It is my humble pleasure to join you today for the official opening of the 8<sup>th</sup> Scientific Conference of the Kenya Medical Training College.

This is a gathering of some of the brightest minds, young and experienced alike, who are collectively shaping the future of our nation's health system.

I am especially delighted to be here today, not just as the Cabinet Secretary for Health, but as a proud member of the KMTC family, joining you officially for the very first time in this capacity.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Kenya Medical Training College is a strategic pillar within our national health framework. Its mandate, to produce competent, middle-level health professionals, is critical not only to the country but increasingly important globally.

Our community health strategy, primary health care reforms, and now the rollout of the Social Health Insurance Fund all depend on a robust and reliable health workforce. KMTC is central to this mission.

Allow me to thank the KMTC Board of Directors, Management, Staff, and Students for their steadfast commitment to excellence in training, service, and innovation. The Ministry of Health recognizes your contribution and stands with you.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

I have extensively discussed some of the challenges you face in delivering your mandate with the College leadership. One of the most pressing concerns is access to education for financially disadvantaged students. I want to assure you that this matter is receiving our full attention.

We are discussing with the National Treasury on releasing Kshs 500 million to support KMTC students through the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB). While this may not fully resolve the funding needs of all students, it is a bold and promising step in the right direction.

In addition, we are engaging the Ministry of Education to ensure that KMTC students are considered for inclusion alongside their peers in technical institutes and universities in accessing HELB funding.

As we do so, I want to challenge the College leadership to explore innovative and sustainable financing models, including public-private partnerships and alumni support funds, to ensure no student is left behind.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

If there has ever been a time when research mattered more, it is now.

Research has become the foundation of public health decision-making, from pandemic response and policy decisions to health systems reforms and disease surveillance. At the Ministry, we rely on evidence to shape and implement policies.

Data and research findings guided the recent reforms under the Universal Health Coverage agenda. That is why I did not hesitate to accept the invitation to join you today. I know this conference is not merely an academic exercise; rather, it is a national service.

The theme, “*Advancing Health Equity in a Rapidly Changing Environment*,” speaks directly to our shared goal of promoting access, equity, and quality in health care through the Social Health Insurance Fund and the broader primary health care approach.

I urge you to continue generating research that responds to our national health priorities. Some of the most significant health transformations around the world have begun with bold research conducted in conference halls and lecture rooms just like this one.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The burden of disease in our country remains high. While infectious diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS have long been our concern, noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) are now emerging as the leading threat to public health.

The increasing prevalence of hypertension, diabetes, cancers, and mental health conditions should alarm us all. Current estimates show that NCDs contribute to over 50 percent of hospital admissions and nearly 40 percent of all deaths in Kenya.

It is only through timely and targeted research that we can develop effective prevention strategies, craft better treatment guidelines, and create advocacy messages that encourage healthier lifestyles.

I am pleased to note the rich range of subthemes being explored during this conference, including:

- The potential of the **Competency-Based Curriculum** in transforming health professional training
- Current and future strategies for **health care financing**.
- The role of **digital transformation and artificial intelligence** in health care education
- The growing link between **climate change and disease patterns**
- The role of **micro research** in strengthening health systems in low and middle-income countries.
- **Health, disease, and wellness**.

These topics are timely, relevant, and critical to our nation's future. I encourage you to engage deeply, challenge assumptions, and above all, emerge with practical recommendations that we can act on as a Ministry.

I look forward to receiving a summary of your findings and recommendations after this conference, and I assure you they will be taken seriously.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

As we open this scientific conference, let us remember that science without action is a missed opportunity. Let your work translate into better policy, improved service delivery, and, above all, healthier communities.

With those few remarks, it is my singular honor and privilege to officially open the 8<sup>th</sup> KMTC Scientific Conference.

Thank you, and may your deliberations be fruitful.

