

SPEECH BY KENYA MEDICAL TRAINING COLLEGE CEO PROF. MICHAEL KIPTOO DURING THE OPENING OF THE SIXTH KMTC SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE HELD AT THE KMTC HEADQUARTERS, NAIROBI ON JUNE 2, 2021 AT 9:00 AM.

Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Health Dr. Rashid Aman
Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Health Dr. Mercy Mwangangi
KMTC Board of Directors
KMTC Management
Representatives of Government entities
Development Partners
Conference Committee and presenters
Faculty, Staff and Students
Online audience, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure, **Guest of Honor Sir**, to welcome you to the Kenya Medical Training College, to preside over the official opening of our sixth biennial Scientific Conference. I thank you for honoring our invitation and making time out of your busy schedule to be with us during this important occasion.

KMTC is a premier Training institution whose reputation for quality training and development of Health professionals cuts across East Africa and beyond.

Our mandate is to develop human and institutional capacities by providing training facilities for national Health manpower requirements, offer consultancy services and conduct research.

Since the College held its inaugural Scientific Conference in 2010, this biennial event in the Calendar of KMTC has continued to be a critical forum for sharing and exchanging knowledge on issues facing the health sector.

It is my hope that the presentations made since morning and those that will be made in the next two days will critically look at the challenges, and opportunities that COVID-19 presents to the health sector in general, and to health training in particular.

Held under the theme “Optimizing Training and Research Towards Attainment of Universal Quality Health Coverage in the wake of COVID-19”, this year’s Conference theme is designed to advance the mandate given to the College by the Ministry as part of the Government’s commitment to improving health care at the National and County levels.

The conference sub-themes are:

- i. Family Medicine

- ii. Public Health
- iii. Health Professional's Education
- iv. Translating Research into Practice
- v. Non-Communicable Diseases
- vi. Nutrition and Health
- vii. Habilitation and Rehabilitation

These sub-themes were specially selected to focus our efforts towards supporting acceleration of attainment of the Government's mandate of providing quality, equitable and affordable healthcare for all Kenyans in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This Conference provides an opportunity to share knowledge and provide solutions to some of the challenges facing the health sector. In this era of rampant lifestyle diseases, research findings have the potential to address a wide range of questions on how we can address these issues.

Guest of Honor Sir

The Kenya Health Policy 2013-2030 places a lot of emphasis on research to generate evidence for use in policy decision making, programmatic planning, and practice.

It gives me pleasure to report that the College was re-categorized from PC level 2 to PC level 4A, consequently improving terms of service for staff and expanding our mandate to include Research.

Further, the Research mandate is espoused in the KMTC Act of 1990 as amended by Act No. 5 of 2019. We are in the process of operationalizing the Research and Innovation Directorate in the College to be headed by a Deputy Director.

Since expansion of the College's mandate, we have attached high importance and sponsored Staff to specifically conduct research, innovation and outreach.

At a time like this, the world is banking on enhanced research capabilities to contain the novel coronavirus pandemic. It is because of this that the College prioritizes and encourages research activities in all areas of training through the following strategies: -

- Building capacity of Staff and Students to carry out and publish research
- Disseminating research findings to stakeholders
- Mobilizing resources for research
- Establishing Research and Scientific Committees in all Campuses
- Developing an M&E framework for research activities

Further, the College has developed a Research Policy which guides research activities and ensures high ethical standards are upheld. Through this Policy, coupled with creation of an enabling environment for research to thrive, Staff and Students are getting empowered to conduct, disseminate and report results effectively.

Guest of Honor Sir

The Policy increased the grant awarded per study to Kshs. 500,000.00 and an additional Kshs. Ksh50,000, as publication fees for those whose manuscripts are accepted in peer reviewed journals.

This support has led to a significant increase in the number of studies carried out in the College. In this financial year, 20 studies have been funded, nine have been conducted and completed and 27 have been published in different peer reviewed journals. The upward trajectory in research in the College is encouraging.

Similarly, the College allocates sufficient funds every financial year to fund research studies, attend symposia, workshops, seminars and conferences both nationally and internationally.

For example, the Board has allocated Kshs. 50 million this financial year to support research undertakings in the College.

This has stimulated new innovative approaches and ideas that contribute to KMTC's strategic priorities and general public health concerns in areas such as, training, Student welfare, healthcare access, health finance and other emerging issues.

In addition, participation in local and international conferences and symposia has led to meaningful interactions and networking which have contributed to growth of research in the College.

Moreover, the College launched its first annual international Journal of Health Professionals (IJHP), ISS No. 82141, Vol 1, issue 1 in 2013, and it is now at Volume 1, issue 2.

Guest of Honor Sir, please note that majority of the presenters in this Conference are Staff from KMTC, an indication that Staff are actively involved in search of knowledge, which is critical in a training institution.

As the College places emphasis on research, quality of such initiatives remains critical. A Research and Ethics Committee, whose terms of reference include vetting of research proposals by the College Staff and even outsiders, has been established.

The Committee, which plays a major role of oversight in the institutionalization of research capacity also carries out resource mobilization for improved research. Through this Committee, research has been integrated in all our training curricula.

With this, every College Student now must write a research project paper as part of the requirement for the award of respective Diploma.

As we delve deeper into the new decade, the College will build on its past successes in research to advance its resource mobilization efforts.

Plans are in place to continually identify potential organizations with regional or national reach that provide funding for advisory and consultancy services, and position the College as a service delivery partner.

It is our firm belief that to progress towards Universal Health Coverage and even to keep at bay pandemics such as COVID-19, it will be critical to find local solutions to local problems.

I urge our Researchers to remain strategic in providing innovative and lasting solutions to the ever-evolving health challenges and enhance healthcare service delivery in our health sector and beyond.

It is our firm belief that to progress towards Universal Health Coverage and even to keep at bay pandemics such as COVID-19, it will be critical to find local solutions to local problems.

As I conclude **Guest of Honor Sir**, we are hopeful that this Conference will give

an opportunity to those who have done various researches to share their findings with the participants.

Ultimately, it is our expectation that the information shared and gained in this forum will go a long way in taking this country closer to achieving the UHC goal by 2022.

Guest of Honor Sir

As the country fights with the COVID-19 pandemic, we wish to reiterate that the College has indeed been a frontline player in providing Multi-sectoral solutions to support government in managing the Coronavirus.

In our strategic response, we will continue to join hands with like-minded partners in provision of critical services and integration of COVID-19 Infection, Prevention and Control protocols in our training.

Guest of Honor Sir

I also wish to again thank the organizers of this conference, coordinated by the College Research Committee, for their commitment and relentless efforts that have made this Conference possible.

To the participants of this conference, I wish you a successful deliberation in the next three days.

I thank the Ministry of Health, our Board of Directors, Management team, Staff, Students and Stakeholders at large for supporting the College achieve its mandate.

Guest of Honor Sir

I now call upon our Board Director and Chairperson of the Board Committee on Academics, Standards, Training and Ethics Dr. Emily Koech, to address us.

Thank you.