

SPEECH BY THE CABINET SECRETARY MINISTRY OF HEALTH MRS. SICILY (K) KARIUKI, EGH, ON THE 87TH KENYA MEDICAL TRAINING COLLEGE GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD AT THE KMTC GRADUATION SQUARE, NAIROBI ON 5TH DECEMBER, 2019.

Governors present

Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Health, Dr. Rashid Abdi Aman

Principal Secretary, Ministry of Health Ms. Susan Mochache, CBS

Members of Parliament present

Director of Medical Services

CEO, Council of Governors

Chairman, KMTC Board of Directors

Members of KMTC Board of Directors

Chief Executive Officer KMTC

CEO, Kenyatta National Hospital

Director Kenya Medical Research Institute

Service Chiefs, Ministry of Health

Development Partners

Parents/guardians and sponsors

KMTC staff and lecturers

Graduands

Ladies and gentlemen

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honor to preside over the graduation of 12,621 graduands on this 87th occasion of the Kenya Medical Training College's Annual Graduation Ceremony. I wish to recognize

and appreciate all distinguished guests who are gathered here today, to celebrate this important occasion.

First and foremost, I congratulate the graduands for their tireless efforts and commitment to undertake courses in the medical field. We gather here today to celebrate you, for dedicating your lives to the health sector by undergoing through a rigorous training programme which is tailored to offer support to Kenya's health care. ***Hongera sana!*** We are proud of you on this great achievement. As we celebrate this important milestone in your life today, I am satisfied that KMTC has prepared you to make significant personal contribution to the health sector.

To all parents, guardians, sponsors, faculty and the entire KMTC fraternity, I thank you for supporting these young men and women to ensure they complete their College education within the stipulated time.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

One of the Big Four Agenda as outlined in H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta is Universal Health Coverage which seeks to provide affordable health care for all. For UHC to be achieved there is need for equitable health access and improved quality of health services and ensuring that all Kenyans can get quality health services, as and when they need them, without suffering financial hardship.

The Constitution provides for citizen's fundamental rights and freedom, including the right to the highest attainable standards of health, UHC agenda seeks to deliver on this right. It is also in tandem with Sustainable Development Goal 3, the Astana Declaration on Primary Health Care 2018 that aims at ensuring a people - centered care that offers universal access, social equity and financial protection.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The National Government has designed and implemented various health care policy reforms. To increase access and demand for services in all public hospitals, initiatives such as: Primary Health Care services for all; free maternity services at all public health facilities; health insurance subsidies for the poor, vulnerable and the old; development of a health financing strategy; increase in staff and equipment through Managed Equipment Services at all levels have been operationalized.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The Ministry has made deliberate efforts to increase access and demand for healthcare services and placed emphasis on improving needs to be prioritized in order to achieve UHC. We have put in place mechanisms to enforce quality of services to be institutionalized at all levels.

The Ministry of Health in collaboration with the County Governments is exploring other measures to mitigate the gaps in Human Resources for Health in the country including a collegiate health care workers training system in our health facilities to complement the ongoing trainings in medical schools so as to achieve the desirable health workforce in the country in the shortest time possible.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Adequate, skilled and fairly distributed Human Resource for Health (HRH) is a prerequisite for the attainment of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), Vision 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Both national and county governments have defined roles that are critical and symbiotic in the delivery of health services. For Universal Health Coverage to succeed in Kenya, we must make investments in all health building blocks. Key amongst them is collaborating with like-minded institutions to address Human Resources gaps in the health sector.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am glad that KMTC, with the support of the Ministry of Health, has forged strategic partnerships with County Governments and other partners. This partnership has seen KMTC train for the Counties' identified health needs thus bridging the human resources gaps.

The Constitution of Kenya, mandates the Ministry of Health to provide leadership in the Health Sector through policy formulation and training of health care professionals. Kenya has a health care workers population ratio of 15: 10,000 against a World Health Organization (WHO) recommended ratio of 23: 10,000.

To increase the number of health care workers in the Country, the Ministry of Health, through the Kenya Medical Training College, has set up additional 43 Campuses increasing the number from 28 in 2013 to 71 across the country. This year, new campuses in: Mandera, Taveta, Mbooni, Imenti and Kangundo have been opened and are offering training. The increase in the number of KMTC campuses has addressed the demand for health training opportunities. The Ministry will work closely with the KMTC Board to open campuses in the remaining Counties. Today's graduation is a milestone towards the realization of optimal health worker to population ratio.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

As the training arm of the Ministry of Health, I am aware that KMTC has introduced new programmes in support of UHC, continued to expand existing programmes, strengthened and sustained quality management systems, developed and reviewed curricula in line with current changes, emerging and re-emerging disease trends.

The Ministry, KMTC, AMREF and NYS partnered to implement the Presidential directive of training 2,000 National Youth Service men and women on Community Health Volunteers module. Further, in collaboration with KMTC and St. Johns Ambulance, we are in the process of training 1,200 Community Health Volunteers.

The introduction and implementation of programs such as the Foundation Course in Community Health, Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWS), Community Health Workers and Community Health Assistants has also increased access to training opportunities in health. These courses have empowered health care service providers with skills to effectively give primary health services at the family and community level, thus helping fulfill the government's Primary Health Care strategy.

It is therefore critical that all health professionals are reoriented to shift care from the facility to the family and Community.

In an effort to achieve this shift, I applaud Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC) for mounting Higher Diploma Programs in Family Health and for embracing e-learning to ensure services are not interrupted as the health workers continue with their professional development.

I urge the counties to support these programs by sponsoring their staff to be trained so that they can spearhead UHC and transform health care delivery system.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am glad that KMTC has developed and implemented new programs that are market driven and in support of UHC such as: Higher Diploma in – Oncology; Palliative Care; Quality Care Dialysis; Community Based Rehabilitation; Neurotherapy; Audiology and Hearing Care Technology; Emergency and Critical Care Medicine: Chest Medicine; Dermatology; Venereology; Orthotics, Contact Lenses, and a Certificate course in Kenya Sign Language for Health Workers.

As a Government, we have a critical role of ensuring that our youth are free from drug and substance abuse which poses a serious social problem in our country.

I am informed that there is a program on Addictive Studies that enables graduates deal with challenges posed by alcoholism and substance abuse in the society. I urge the KMTC Management to remain focused in ensuring that students learn in drug free environment which adheres to our national values.

I applaud KMTC for these efforts, which have resulted to the attainment of set targets in the health sector that are aimed at improving the well-being of all Kenyans

Thank you for being at the forefront of training competent mid-level health workers, contributing to the transformation of Kenya's health sector.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am aware that KMTC is implementing its 2018-2023 Strategic Plan, which is anchored on the Kenya Health Sector Plans and outlines the College's transformative agenda. I acknowledge KMTC's efforts to improve accountability, efficiency and ease of doing business through the adoption of the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) in all its processes.

KMTC has remained focused to innovations such e-learning platforms, bio-digester solid waste management and innovative sanitary towel disposal.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

My Ministry aims at improving the overall livelihoods of Kenyans through provision of an equitable, efficient, accessible and quality health care system with the best standards. Cognizant of the fact that access to health is a right of every Kenyan, the ongoing programme between the Ministry and the World Bank has seen KMTC train Enrolled Community Health Nurses for arid and semi-arid areas. This initiative is aimed at giving training opportunities to the people from the Vulnerable and Marginalized Communities. This will improve access to healthcare and consequently reduce maternal, neo-natal and child mortality. I urge the counties to employ and deploy these graduates in their communities to support the implementation of Primary Health care for UHC.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The provisions of the Health Laws (Amendment) Act no. 5 of 2019 have re-positioned KMTC and aligned its mandate with emerging government reforms and the Big Four Agenda. The Ministry is ready to support KMTC in operationalizing the new provisions in support of effective and efficient service delivery.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I am confident that the 12,621 graduates being released to the job market today have the requisite skills, knowledge, competencies and a set of values to positively impact the society. It is therefore my joy to witness this great milestone.

I to take this opportunity to remind the graduands that the health sector offers enormous opportunities. We join other sectors that are actively involved in passing entrepreneurship skills to the youth to help them identify and exploit opportunities. I urge you to embrace hard work, perseverance and persistence in order to succeed in your undertakings.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

As I conclude, would like to thank H.E the president of the republic of Kenya for steering the nation to make significant strides in uplifting the standards of living, for being at the forefront of driving the economic social development blue print, Kenya's Vison 2030, and focusing on UHC a one of his Governments Big Four Agenda.

I also appreciate the KMTC Board of Directors led the Chairman Prof. Philip Kaloki for offering the strategic direction that has steered the College to greater heights.

To the Management team led by the Chief Executive Office Prof. Michael Kiptoo, thank you for your commitment and contribution that has ensured the College continues to produce competent health professionals to support health service delivery in the country.

Lastly, I wish to appreciate our esteemed partners for their commitment in supporting the implementation of health policies in the country.

May God bless you all.
