

**SPEECH BY DR. RASHID A. AMAN,
THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF HEALTH ON THE 88TH KENYA MEDICAL
TRAINING COLLEGE GRADUATION CEREMONY TO BE
HELD AT THE KMTC GRADUATION SQUARE, NAIROBI
ON 3RD DECEMBER, 2020.
FROM 10.00 A.M.**

Members of Parliament

Governors

KMTC Board of Directors Chairperson Prof. Philip Kaloki

KMTC Board of Directors present

KMTC Chief Executive Officer Prof. Michael Kiptoo

Representatives of various Government and Private entities

Development Partners

Graduating Class of 2020 and their families

Media Staff and students

Online audience

Ladies and gentlemen

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honor to preside over the graduation of 4,114 graduands on this special occasion of the Kenya Medical Training College's 88th Graduation Ceremony.

I take this opportunity to appreciate all distinguished guests who have gathered here today and those joining us virtually to celebrate this important milestone.

First and foremost, I congratulate the graduands for their great effort and commitment to undertake courses in the medical field. Nelson Mandela once said that education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world.

Graduands,

The journey to acquiring education can be difficult and stressful.

Your dedication and hard work has yielded fruits and has put you on the path of changing the world.

We are proud of you for this great achievement.

Pongezi sana!

To all parents, guardians, sponsors, faculty, and the entire KMTC fraternity, I thank you for your support towards these young men and women.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me begin by appreciating the key role that the Kenya Medical Training College plays in training competent health workers for our great country.

KMTC contributes 85 percent of the local mid-level human resource for health.

And being a strategic institution under my Ministry of Health, we are proud of its immense contribution towards bridging health workforce gaps.

As part of efforts to ensure socioeconomic transformation through access to equitable, affordable and high-quality health care for all Kenyans as per constitutional provisions, the Government of Kenya, led by H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta, has committed itself to providing Universal Health Coverage.

To actualize this promise, the Government is implementing several policy reforms and programs in the health sector.

These include the Kenya Health Sector Strategic Plan 2018–2023 which is guided by the Constitution of 2010, the Kenya Vision 2030 and the Kenya Health Policy 2014–2030.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Findings from the Kenya Health Workforce Report 2015 indicates that Kenya has taken great strides in the past 5 years to increase the supply of licensed and active health professionals.

From 2006–2015, 19,994 newly qualified nurses were registered with Nursing Council of Kenya to practice in Kenya.

The annual number of newly qualified nurses entering the labor force increased by 68.5% from 1,745 in 2006 to 2,941 in 2015; the annual number of newly qualified doctors entering the workforce doubled from 285 in 2006 to 611 in 2015.

A similar rise was seen among dentists, with 52 dentists registered in 2015 compared to 25 dentists in 2006. The annual number of new qualified clinical officers entering the labour force increased by 45.9%, from 751 in 2011 to 1,395 in 2015.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Towards enhancing the country's healthcare delivery experience and make Universal Health Coverage a reality for all Kenyans, the Government has invested heavily on world class medical equipment; primary health care; recruited and trained more human resources for health and actualized free maternity program.

Further, Government has introduced reforms in the NHIF; established a mandatory Universal Health Coverage Scheme; adopted the Essential Health Benefit Package; and recently launched a biometric registration of identified vulnerable households, among others. All these initiatives are geared towards providing health insurance cover for citizens.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The aspirations of Sustainable Development Goals and specifically Universal Health Coverage are largely dependent on a health workforce that is strong, skilled, motivated, knowledgeable, and responsive to the ever-evolving needs of the health systems.

Therefore, the need to train, and deploy adequate numbers of staff to improve quality, enhance the accessibility of service, necessitated by the rise of the Kenyan population and soaring demand for customer-centered quality health services.

Further, we are alive to the fact that the availability of well-trained and motivated health workforce is a fundamental pillar that distinguishes functional and non-functional health systems.

Towards this, the Government continues to collaborate with County Governments and other like-minded partners to enhance efforts of increasing the number of healthcare workers to meet the

health demands and improve the health worker population ratio, especially in hard to reach areas.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Being a strategic Government health training institution, KMTC plays an important role in propelling the country towards the attainment of specific health-related targets, including Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals.

Therefore, the graduation of some 4,114 health workers will undoubtedly meet this goal.

We are proud that the College has upheld its mandate as reported by the Board Chairperson and CEO.

The Ministry has walked closely with the College during expansion of its Campuses to provide additional training opportunities.

Similarly, I am proud to report that we have partnered with the College to regularly review training curricular and introduce new programs within required regulatory frameworks.

In the area of research, I applaud the College for upscaling the uptake of research activities to support the national rollout of UHC,

meet market demands and respond to global health challenges, including emerging and re-emerging diseases.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is noteworthy to report that the geographical distribution and strategic location of KMTC Campuses – adjacent to health facilities has contributed to an uninterrupted supply of human resources for health to over 450 hospitals across the country.

This has also enhanced access to learning opportunities for all deserving Kenyans.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The recent endorsement by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) for KMTC to host IGAD Regional Centre of Excellence on Nutrition training demonstrates the College's capacity to drive regional policies towards coordinated regional health response.

This move will enhance the College's operational research capacity as well as innovations towards UHC, and improve graduate education for East Africa Community. I urge the College Management to work closely with IGAD representatives and the

relevant Government Ministries, Departments and institutions to accelerate and successfully conclude the accreditation process.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

I thank the Board for the strategic leadership and the support by Management which has enabled the College stay true to its Vision of being a “model institution in the training and development of competent health professionals”.

As you train for better health, the dynamic nature of the health sector in this era of technological advancement, climatic change, emergence and re-emergence of new diseases, requires innovative approaches in health care management.

I urge the College Management to remain strategic in providing innovative solutions to the ever-evolving health challenges.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

In regards to management of COVID-19, I thank all Kenyans of goodwill for doing their best to observe Government protocols to mitigate against the spread of the disease and save lives. Through partnership and collaboration, the country has emerged remarkably

stronger in many ways and has put in place the right measures, not only to contain COVID-19, but also other diseases.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

As a country, we remain committed to protecting vulnerable Kenyans against the adverse effects of the coronavirus pandemic. We have developed a robust COVID-19 recovery strategy.

Similarly, we have strengthened our surveillance and response systems; built substantial bed capacity; scaled up our diagnostic capacity;

hired and trained a new cohort of healthcare workers to complement our existing capacity; strengthened community health units, among other measures.

All these efforts could not have been possible without the selfless sacrifice and commitment of our medical fraternity, who have played a key role and offered critical services to Kenyans in the management of COVID-19 and attainment of UHC.

To you we say a big thank you!

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Special thanks to the country's leadership as guided by His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta for leading the country's COVID-19 response efforts.

Early this year, a National Multi-Agency Team on COVID-19 was established and tasked with preparedness of quarantine and isolation facilities in the country, of which KMTC is a member.

The College is also a member of the National Advisory Committee assisting in planning for COVID-19 containment interventions and strengthening of health systems for UHC in the counties.

We thank KMTC for partnering with the Ministry of Health, County Governments, and other stakeholders to build the substantial bed capacity in the country by availing its 44 Campuses with a bed capacity of 3,397 to serve as quarantine/isolation facilities.

Also, KMTC lecturers who are accomplished health practitioners in various fields were on the frontline taking care of the COVID-19 clients in the facilities.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

The College took an active role in educating the public on COVID-19 preventative measures. Similarly, the College has donated handwashing facilities and provided mental health and psychosocial support to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus.

I am reliably informed that at the advent of the pandemic that disrupted face-to-face conventional teaching and learning, the College rose to the test and shifted to online platforms to ensure students cover their course content, take exams and graduate without undue delay.

I commend the College for moving with speed and integrating COVID-19 Infection Prevention and Control protocols in training, a curricular which has also been used to train Community Health Assistants and Community Extension Workers on the management of the pandemic.

I am glad to note that as the College plans to physically-reopen, it has put in place the necessary measures to adhere to Government protocols to mitigate against the spread of COVID-19.

I commend the College for its commitment to complementing Government efforts in the fight against COVID-19.

To the graduands, you are graduating at a unique time.

It is the time to acknowledge our resilience – resilience to overcome the tough times as we remain hopeful for a better tomorrow.

Your education journey has just begun. As we celebrate this important milestone in your life today,

I am glad to note that KMTC has prepared you adequately and molded you to become outstanding individuals in society.

Therefore, you must remain focused on your goals, for that is the hallmark of the noble profession you have chosen.

The health sector offers enormous opportunities. I call upon you to utilize the entrepreneurship skills you have acquired, coupled with persistence and determination, and you will succeed in your undertakings.

Let innovation and integrity be your mantra, and let commitment to the call of duty be your highest aspiration.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

As I conclude, I would like to thank the County Governments, National Government Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF), development partners, other Ministries, and Agencies within Government for supporting the country in the quest for a healthier Kenya.

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.

I also appreciate the Board of Directors led the Chairman Prof. Philip Kaloki for offering the strategic direction and spearheading the College's recent expansion, making its presence felt within Kenya and beyond East Africa.

Lastly, I would like to thank H.E The President Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta for offering direction to the country, and driving the economic social development blueprint through the Big Four Agenda, and more specifically Universal Health Coverage, to which the College is committed, through training of Human Resources for Health.

Once more, congratulations to the graduands and May God bless you all.