

SPEECH BY THE KMTC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, PROF. MICHAEL KIPTOO, ON THE 1ST GRADUATION CEREMONY OF COMMUNITY HEALTH EXTENSION WORKERS HELD AT THE KMTC GRADUATION SQUARE NAIROBI ON 14TH APRIL, 2021 AT 11:00 AM

Chief Guest, Ag. Director General Ministry of Health, Dr. Patrick Amoth

Chairperson of the KMTC Board of Directors Prof. Philip Kaloki

IntraHealth Country Director Dr. Janet Muriuki

Representatives of various Government Entities

Development Partners

CHEWs Graduating Class of April 2021 and their families

Members of the Fourth Estate

Faculty, Staff and students

Online audience

Ladies and gentlemen

Guest of Honor Sir

It gives me pleasure to welcome you *Bwana DG* to the Kenya Medical Training College to officiate this very first graduation Ceremony for Community Health Extension Workers (CHEWs).

KMTC is the training arm of the Ministry of Health, mandated to provide training facilities and develop institutional manpower to bridge the Human Resources for Health gaps in the country.

As the College celebrates 94 years of existence, we are glad to note that KMTC contributes 85% of the local health workforce.

Yesterday we held the College's 89th Graduation ceremony, where **7,509** graduands were awarded various Diplomas and Certificates.

Today, we are gathered here to graduate 56 Community Health Extension Workers, who will play a critical role in supporting community health services, key in achievement of UHC.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the group is represented by two Graduands while rest are following online through our KMTC YouTube Channel.

It is important to note that currently, we have an ongoing CHEWs class of 22 students, whom upon successful completion of their training will join their colleagues in the job market.

Guest of Honor Sir,

For continuity in teaching and learning, the College embraced Innovation and Technology by shifting our training to online platforms thus ensuring our students cover their course content, take exams and graduate as scheduled even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The College appreciates H.E the President, for allowing KMTC to continue with training, while strictly observing the set COVID-19 protocols. This has given our students first-hand experience in managing COVID-19 patients.

The College has been in the front line in provision of Multi-sectoral solutions to support government in managing the Coronavirus including integration of COVID-19 Infection, Prevention and Control protocols in our training.

Guest of Honor Sir,

The World Health Organization has placed Primary Health Care as the cornerstone in the achievement of Universal Health Coverage and subsequently, Sustainable Development Goals.

Globally, the community health approach has been proved to be effective in; improving health care delivery, addressing disease burden, and enhancing socio-economic development. Community health strategy is a key pillar of the Primary Health Care approach adopted by countries in 1978 through the Alma Ata declaration.

Primary Health Care providers and more specifically Community Health Volunteers have immensely contributed towards providing linkages between communities and healthcare services.

As a result, they have remained crucial in tackling maternal and new-born fatalities across low and middle-income countries, including Kenya.

In this regard, therefore, this training and subsequent graduation is a defining moment for our healthcare service delivery.

Guest of Honor Sir,

Kenya launched Community Health Strategy in 2006 both as a commitment to global health goals and to support the achievement of the Second National Health

Sector Strategic Plan (2005-2010), whose goal was to reverse the declining trends in health indicators.

Consequently, the government of Kenya employed 2,100 CHEWs (10 per the then 210 constituencies) in 2011 under the Economic Stimulus Package.

These CHEWs had diverse health backgrounds leading to disparities in health service delivery.

To bridge this gap, in 2017, KMTC partnered with USAID-funded Human Resources for Health, Kenya Mechanism and developed a CHEW training curriculum.

This is a short course, which takes six months to complete and is anchored in the Department of Health Promotion and Community Health.

Later in 2019, this partnership was enhanced through sponsorships of the first cohort of students to undertake the training.

The training was to provide a harmonized foundation for all health cadres involved in the delivery of Kenya's Essential Package for Health at the community level.

Besides the training of CHEWs, USAID-funded HRH Kenya Mechanism sponsored the review of the CHEW training curriculum in November 2020 intending to make it more responsive to current health needs.

We thank HRH Kenya Mechanism led by Dr. Janet Muriuki for the collaboration and USAID for funding the CHEW training and the AFYA Elimu Fund. We look forward to leveraging on our partnership to enhance sustainability of the support for the training of health workers.

Finally, To our graduands,

I congratulate you on this achievement. Your hard work has finally payed off. Receive best wishes from myself and the entire KMTC Management team.

I note with pride that this is the first time the College is graduating this cohort. When the history books are written, you will go down as the pioneers of a course that will change the health care provision landscape of this country.

As you move out, please remember to remain steadfast in helping this country battle health challenges.

The College opened your mind to a world of possibilities.

Now open your mind to the impossible.

Once again Congratulations!

It is now my honor to welcome the KMTC Board Chairperson Prof. Philip Kaloki to give his address.

Karibu Prof.

Thank you
