



Mount Kenya

University

REMARKS BY

GUEST SPEAKER

PROF. DAVID MAUGHAN BROWN

AT

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY 9TH GRADUATION
CEREMONY

ON

FRIDAY, 11TH DECEMBER 2015

AT

MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY HAPPY VALLEY
GROUNDS, THIKA

Salutation

- The Chief Guest, Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, Cabinet Secretary for Water and Irrigation,
- Chancellor, Prof. Victoria Wulsin,
- Dr. Simon Gicharu, The Founder of Mount Kenya University (MKU) and Chairman, Board of Trustees,
- Members of the University Board of Trustees,
- Prof. Grace N. Njoroge, Chairman and Members of the University Council,
- Dr. Mohamed Farah Duale, State Minister, Ministry of Finance, Somaliland,
- Mr. Abdillahi Ibrahim Habane, State Minister, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Somaliland,
- Mr. Suleiman Jama, Director General, Ministry of Health, Representative of Somaliland,
- Prof. Hussain Hassan Gulaid, Executive Director, National Commission for Higher Education,
- Mr. Abdullahi Ali Jama, Ministry of Education, Puntland,

- Your Excellences, Ambassadors and High Commissioners present,
- Honorable National and County Government leaders present,
- Prof. Stanley W. Waudu, Vice-Chancellor,
- Members of Management Board and Senate,
- Members of the Staff,
- Graduands and Students,
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen.

Appreciation

- I take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Mount Kenya University (MKU) fraternity for inviting me to this auspicious 9th graduation ceremony. Indeed the invitation and the choice of the topic of my keynote address are a clear testimony to the commitment of MKU to:
 - i) Implement its strategic objective on offering borderless education and
 - ii) Remaining true to its motto of scaling the heights of education.
- Allow me to appreciate the MKU motto scaling the heights of education. Indeed the spirit of the motto is to appreciate that being the best in higher education is like being Mount Kenya, the highest mountain in Kenya.

Congratulation

- I wish to congratulate the graduands who are graduating today. Indeed this is a special occasion to all of us; parents, graduands, lecturers and University management as we celebrate the 9th graduation ceremony day.

Speech

- My brief speech today focuses on the need for global knowledge equality.

GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE EQUALITY

- How do we ensure global knowledge equality? What rules would you design for global knowledge sharing, global knowledge equality irrespective of one's race or geographical background?
- Philosopher John Rawls posed such queries in his book "Justice as Fairness". His question is: What do

we mean by “justice”, if – as a thought experiment - “parties ... know nothing about their particular abilities, tastes, and position within the social order of society. The veil of ignorance blocks off this knowledge, such that one does not know what burdens and benefits of social cooperation might fall to him/her once the veil is lifted. With this knowledge blocked, parties to the original position must decide on principles for the distribution of rights, positions and resources in their society"

- If we transfer this thought experiment to a global level, Rawls principles clearly lead towards an ethics of equal access and open sharing of knowledge.
- Knowledge is the key to growth and social transformation. Sharing knowledge therefore gives developing countries more independence and leads to an element of global knowledge equality.

- The research capacities of poor countries must be strengthened. Otherwise, they will not be able to tackle complex, global tasks that concern us all at the local level.
- Research capacities strengthen the autonomy of these states in global networks and negotiations, but also through the adoption, processing or application of new knowledge domestically.
- Building research capacities in developing countries is an important pillar for equal and effective partnerships. That requires a shared interest in the chosen topics. It also requires joint planning, mutual trust and mutual responsibility. All these in turn lead to global knowledge equality.
- Success depends on how cooperation takes place in practice.

- The international research context has changed. New actors have entered the scene, finance and power relationships are shifting, and new channels for disseminating knowledge have been established.
- Obstacles and conflicting goals in building balanced partnerships must be addressed more decisively.
- Global challenges require new ways of finding solutions and new forms of cooperation so as to reach a level of global knowledge equality.
- Interestingly, commons-based peer learning and production now have the potential to reconcile some of the most acute clashes in the recent past, stemming from various ethos of ethical sharing.

- The “knowledge commons” can be considered a new middle ground. It offers solutions that respect global moral imperatives of fair distribution of relevant knowledge, skills and the freedom to learn, while maintaining some property-based principles such as business models, distribution models, appropriation models and sustainability models.
- Equality of opportunity to act in the face of unequal endowment is central to all liberal theories of justice ... Commons-based and peer production efforts may not be a cure-all. However ... these strategies can make a big contribution to quite fundamental aspects of human welfare and efforts in achieving global knowledge equality.

Works cited

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