



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH MADE BY PROF. PETER M. F. MBITHI, DEPUTY
VICE-CHANCELLOR (ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE),
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, DURING THE DISTRICT
EDUCATION / PRIZE GIVING DAY HELD AT MACHAKOS
TECHNICAL TRAINING INSTITUTE ON JULY 6, 2012**

THEME: EDUCATION: “THE GIFT FOR A LIFE TIME”.

The District Education Officer

Members of the District Education Board

College/Institute Principals

School Principals

Invited Guests

Other Stakeholders

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me pleasure to be with you today on the auspicious occasion of the Machakos District / County Education Day, being celebrated also as the Prize Giving Day. It is an important day when those in the education sector plus other stakeholders get an opportunity to reflect on recent developments in the education sector and also review the performance of the District/County in Education.

I take this opportunity to congratulate those Colleges, Institutes and Schools whose performance is also being recognized today.

BROAD OVERVIEW

Kenya aspires to become a globally competitive and prosperous country offering high quality life to all its citizens as envisioned in Vision 2030. In that regard, Kenya is a signatory to international development commitments including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education For All (EFA).

Successful implementation of these commitments is expected to enable the country have a “Globally competitive Quality Education and Training for Sustainable Development”, which in turn, would result in a critical mass of a human resource base that is well equipped with quality education and training.

The government strategic thrusts in the Education Sector are to enhance access at all levels, quality, equity, science, technology and innovation.

In order to consolidate the gains realized in this sector, the following specific policy initiatives have been pursued:

- i. Implementation of Free Primary Education (FPE);**
- ii. Implementation of Free Secondary Education (FSE);**
- iii. Implementation of policies in Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 and KESSP;**
- iv. Review of strategies especially KESSP to embrace emerging issues and address lessons learnt.**

Ladies and Gentlemen

In spite of the above achievements, various challenges have been identified, key among them being:

- 1. Existence of gender and regional disparities. These have been noted especially in North Eastern, Upper Eastern, Upper Rift and parts of Coast.**
- 2. Poor quality and inadequate infrastructure: the growing enrolment in both primary and secondary schools due to FPE and FSE has overstretched existing facilities. Schools in some areas lack sanitation facilities or they are in a poor state.**
- 3. Poor coordination between CDF (where CDF has set up schools) and TSC, leading to poor deployment of teachers to the schools.**

- 4. Lack of policy on Adult and Continuing Education (ACE) to address issues of inadequate teachers to implement the ACE programmes, together with lack of appropriate ACE learning facilities.**
- 5. High cost of special needs education.**
- 6. Inadequate staffing levels: This affects all public schools and is compounded by high staff turn-over to other sectors.**

To address the above challenges and as part of the reforms in the education sector, the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, Science and Technology have developed a new policy and legislative framework on education and training.

The policy provides for reforms in the curriculum in order to successfully develop the knowledge, skills, competences as well as lifelong learning dispositions to meet the human capital needs of the country.

The goal is to develop a critical mass of human capital with necessary competences and skills that are essential for the achievement of the objectives and goals embodied on the Constitution 2010 and Kenya Vision 2030.

Under the policy, the government undertakes to provide free and compulsory basic education that is equitable, qualitative and relevant to Kenya's development goals; it will be guided by the principal of Universal access to education for every child under 18 as enshrined in article 53 of the Constitution.

Apart from seeking to make learners understand facts and concepts, it aspires to nurture analytical, critical and conceptual skills that define a first rate education system that meets the goals of further education and training as well as for the world of work.

Consequently, the government has prepared the Basic Education Bill 2012, with a view to enacting an Act of Parliament whose aim is “...to promote and regulate free and compulsory basic education; to provide accreditation, registration, governance and management of institutions of basic education; to provide for the establishment of the National Education Board, the Education Standards and Quality Assurance Commission and the County Education Board and for connected purposes”.

MACHAKOS COUNTY SITUATION

Machakos county is quite well endowed in terms of distribution of schools. It has 129 public primary schools and 59 public secondary schools. The total school enrolment stands at 42,887 and 20600 for Primary and Secondary respectively.

At the tertiary level, the county has 3 (three) colleges/institutes i.e. Machakos Technical Training Institute (recently elevated to University College), Machakos Technical Institute for the Blind and Machakos Teachers Training College.

Currently, the three institutions have a student enrolment of 1357, 102 and 1032 respectively. For Special education, the county has two schools i.e. Masaku SPD admitting 151 students and Machakos School for the Deaf with an enrolment of 214 students.

In terms of teachers staffing, the county has a total of 1,336 primary teachers covering Mutituni, Muvuti, Muumandu, Kola, Kalama, and Mumbuni zones. The secondary schools have a total of 533 teachers.

Stakeholders in the education sector within the county see poverty as the major challenge affecting majority of people in the county. However, the introduction of FPE and Free Day Secondary School Programme has greatly helped to mitigate against the adverse effects of poverty on educational standards.

But understaffing at all levels continues to be a major concern for the county, more so in view of increased enrolment both in primary and secondary level.

Other challenges include inadequate infrastructure in institutions, i.e. libraries, laboratories, dining halls and offices. HIV/AIDS is also a challenge and there is need to strengthen the AIDS control unit and enhance counseling in schools.

I have been informed by the District Education Officer that in spite of these challenges, the District/county has continued to perform favorably, managing to present 4,896 KCPE candidates in 2011. The county attained a mean score of 231.60 in 2011, rising from 227.27 in 2010.

At the Secondary level, the school enrolled 4,083 students in 2011, growing from a figure of 3690 in 2010. Of these, 14 candidates scored A plain, 63 scored A-, 136 scored B+, and 192 scored B plain.

These are good grades which will lead to admission to public universities under government sponsorship. Machakos Boys, Machakos Girls and Mumbuni Boys produced the bulk of these good performers.

But beyond the achievements highlighted above both at the national and local level, it is important for all of us to review and consider the impact this has had “on the ground”, specifically, how has progress in the education sector significantly affected the well being of our people? What are we doing with those graduates churned out of our universities, polytechnics and institutes?

It is therefore pertinent for us to look at the “post harvest technology” of our education management, the output vis-à-vis the process and outcome.

Education must not only be seen to add value to our youth and society in general, but has to be linked to employment rates which ultimately translates to improvement in the economic well being of our society.

Some people want to see this as a challenge for government i.e. job creation, and as you know, Kenyans’ have cultivated this culture of “tungetaka serikali...” But let us remember the words of J. F. Kennedy, “Ask not what your country has done for you. Instead, ask what you have done for your country.”

It is good to appreciate that government is not an amorphous body sitting somewhere separated from the citizens; we are all part of government.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are operating in an era of rapid changes especially in technology and new approaches to problem solving issues. A major challenge therefore is management of change, especially among our more senior citizens. Though there has always been a way of doing something and it worked, there is also a way of doing the same thing or achieving the same goal that works better or faster.

There is therefore need for proper planning and allowing some flexibility in the way towards achieving our goals. Proper mentorship and a shared vision are critical to this process.

Success is best achieved when you are clear about the goal but flexible about the process of getting there.

While our challenge as leaders and teachers is to adapt to change and new methods of achieving set goals, we need also to ensure that we develop value systems that support this, and are in tandem with societal goals. Such values like teamwork, honesty, respect, accountability and adaptability to change. There is need to inculcate all these among our students.

I wish to take this opportunity to appreciate the great role played by our teachers, individually and collectively, in ensuring that our schools continue to forge ahead and to deliver on targets.

Teamwork is essential in the realization of goals and I wish to thank the School and College Principals and the Education Office for encouraging and sustaining a culture of teamwork in the county.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is important to realize that all worthwhile achievements have to do with hard work. Even those receiving prizes today must have worked hard. There is nothing that will bring you to the attention of your superiors faster than your developing a reputation of being a hard worker. People who are in a position to help you advance in your studies, even in your career, will always be impressed by your willingness to work harder and longer than anyone else.

But it is not enough to just work hard, or work long hours. You must be working on high value tasks and activities towards the accomplishment of meaningful and important goals. You must therefore work “smart”.

As for the students, let me remind you that your rewards in life will be in direct proportion to the value of your service to others. We make our living and add meaning to our lives by serving other people in some way. We are all dependent upon other people for the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the homes we live in and the various elements that make our lives enjoyable and worthwhile.

Further, you should always ensure you put the time available to good use, because it is one resource you are able to control. Many are those in society who live to regret why they misused their time in school, which ended up making them lose out on a lot of opportunities.

The challenge, therefore, is to all of us: politicians, business people, professionals, the clergy, farmers and those in the informal sector to upscale our commitment to our schools and colleges, and by extension to the welfare of this county, for it to be among the well managed counties in the Republic. We owe it to ourselves, our youth and posterity.

Let me once again congratulate those who have achieved and are due to receive their prizes today. To all of you, institutions and individuals, I say “You are ‘tall’, because you stand on the shoulders of Giants”. May all the collective efforts hand you “the gift for a life time – EDUCATION!

I wish you all a Blessed day.