

**Chief Guest Speech**

***H.E, Dr. Idah Betty Odinga***

**DURING THE**

**MACMILLAN TECHNICAL COLLEGE 2ND GRADUATION**

**CEREMONY**

**GRADUATION THEME:**

**“Equipping the World with Competent Workforce”**

**ON**

**FRIDAY, 26th, 2024**

**AT**

**KENYA INSTITUTE FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

* 1. **Salutation**
     + The Board Chairman, Mr. Matthew Cruise
     + The Counsel, Cameroon Ambassador to Kenya / Dr. Vivian NAIN KUMA,
     + Hon. Timothy Wanyonyi, Westland MP
     + Dr. Ooyi Omondi Otieno, CHASP Director & World Bank Consultant
     + Principal & Founder, Mr. Josephat OCHIENG,
     + Members of the College Board of Directors present,
     + Members of the College Management Board and the Teaching Staff,
     + Distinguished Guests,
     + Parents and Guardians,
     + Graduands,
     + Ladies and Gentlemen.
* It is an honor to be here with you to help celebrate this amazing milestone in your lives.
* Macmillan Technical College has been a part of your story and the values of tenacity and hard work engraved in you should keep you going yonder.
* Graduation from college is a collective effort of years or months of sacrifices and hard work. So please celebrate this moment. You deserve the best, we honor you! Congratulations!
* Ladies and gentlemen, this is an important time of transition not only in your lives but also in the socio-political atmosphere around us.
* In light of the current state of our country, with the wave of Gen-Z oozing all around us, I struggle to find the right words of hope and comfort for you today. So, I am here to talk to you not as public figure, but as an empathetic person who feels your pains: your mother; your mentor; and as a citizen concerned about your prosperity and the prosperity of our nation, Kenya
* The past years of our nation has been rocked with various scandals, top of the list, Corruption and Bad Governance; on the flip side, we have also witnessed growth and progress in equal measure;

-Talk of the golden bag scandal, Arror and Kimwarer Dam, The Pandora Box, and including the most recent, the Finland Scholarship Scandal that affected some of your families directly;

- We have been confronted by extra judicial killings before; we have had the cases of J.M. Kariuki, Tom Mboya, Musando, Baby Pendo, and most recently in the wake of Gen Z demonstrations, we have lost Wrex Maasai, Denzel Omondi found dead on a Quary after making his way to the Parliament......... among others

- We have witnessed abductions and police brutality which brings to question if we really care for our young people as a nation.

* — not only this, your struggle might have been motivated by joblessness or poor working conditions characterized by poor pay; these heart hacking experiences have stolen your hopes, mutilated thousands of youth’s purpose, sent dozen into frustration, and subjected our young girls into slavery in the middle East. These pains have so nakedly exposed our nation and we are now grappling with these realities.
* With all these happenings and the on-goings, I want to assure you that every quest for justice, good governance, and a beautiful future for our nation shall ultimately win.

Let me agree with, and draw my affirmation from Dr. Martin Lurther King Jnr, and I quote ***"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice."***

* . I urge you to reflect on the best approaches to tackle these challenges while respecting the laws of our land while taking refuge in our National Anthem that ***‘justice be our shield and defender’.***
* So, as you are graduating today and feeling scared of the future, or confused, or overwhelmed, or just angry by it all, if you feel like you’re searching for a alternative avenues including relocating abroad to find hope, you are not alone.

-I am feeling all of that, as your mother

-I think all the leaders of goodwill present in this assembly feel you too.

* Let me shift focus to the theme of your today’s graduation,

***“Equipping the World with Competent Workforce”;***

Which is in line with the College’s Matra;

***“Training Effective Workforce for the Global Market”***

* As you are aware, 75% of the  51 million Kenyans are under the age of 35;
* As at December 2023, Kenyans without jobs increased to more than 2.97 million; underscoring the labour market woes in the wake of elevated inflation and reduced activity in different sectors of the economy;
* Young people below the age of 29, mainly secondary school and college graduates, are the hardest hit by joblessness;
* With these facts glaring at us in the eye, I would like to commend Macmillan Technical College for modelling Hands-on-Skills Training in the Fields of ICT and Healthcare that ensures that graduates gain skills that are needed in the Global Work-Space.
* I want to further appreciate Macmillan Technical College for taking the bold step in moulding you so that you can fit into the World’s competitive Economy;
* I am happy to learn that the College is emerging to be a key player in Training and Linking Trainees with Employers in Kenya, Europe, and in the UK among other places as opportunities arises.

- This is great because it opens up students to the global arena where you will learn and adopt best practices that not only spur economic stability to your families but significantly to the nation;

* Notably, the institution is keen on healthcare and social inclusion with great investment in the ICT;

-This makes it serve as hubs of knowledge creation, innovation, and skill development.

- The institution is bridging the gap between theoretical learning and practical application by nurturing a culture of entrepreneurship, fostering research and development, and providing a skilled workforce equipped to address the challenges faced by different communities.

- It is by creating solutions that the true meaning of knowledge application is seen and by extension, job creation.

* It is my hope therefore, that you have been a part of the journey of your young college and the values of hard work and a keen focus on your individual goals shall not be destructed amidst many challenges you may face.
* So, graduates, I hope all these happenings around you can be your wake-up call, that they push you not just to think about what kind of career you want to build, but what kind of person you want to be and the future you want to create.
* **And here’s the thing:** You have no otherwise but to learn these values faster than the generations before you, and you can make them part of your culture together, as a cohort of young people ready to take on the world, no matter how difficult it may be.
* **And that leads me to my second lesson:** In a world of uncertainty, time-tested values like professionalism, integrity, empathy and compassion — are the only real currency and principles of life that will uplift you.

- Treating people right will never, ever fail you.

* Now, do not be deceived. I know that you’ve seen some of our people in the public service flaunting expensive life-style with questionable sources of money; I tell you, one can climb a long way up the ladder selling falsehoods and causing pain to people, and shunning those with less privilege and advantaged.

- But that is a heavy way to live.

- Love simple life of honesty, do not be swayed to corrupt ways in any field you shall find yourself in;

- I tell you, shortcuts and corrupt ways may seem like a winning strategy in the short run, but trust me, graduates, that kind of life catches up to you, especially in the wake of Gen-Z where accountability is now becoming the order of the day.

* My children, do not rob yourselves of the things that matter most by engaging in destructive ways— deep and loving connections with others, honest work that leads to lasting contributions to your community, the vibrancy that comes from a diversity of ideas and perspectives, the chance to leave this world a little better than you found it.

- Don’t deprive yourselves of all that. There is no substitute for it.

* So, graduates and young people out there, it is your time now. And listen, our country isn’t perfect, but it is the only country we have. I have traveled the world and seen different countries and people in them. I can tell you that we have a beautiful country, and yes, we can collectively make it better.
* But it doesn’t work if you silence yourselves. It does not work if you disengage from the process, and we’re seeing the consequences of that right now.
* But if you hold strong with the same faith that carried all those giants before you towards real, measurable progress — you will change the course of history.
* So, what does that mean for your time?
* It starts where change always starts — in your own home, in your own social circles, in your own neighborhoods. At your own dinner tables.
* Sometimes it’s easier to stand with strangers at a protest than it is to challenge someone in your own backyard.
* So if you hear people expressing bigoted views, or talking down to “those people” — it is up to you to call them out.
* Because we won’t solve anything if we’re only willing to do what’s easiest. We’ve got to make hard choices and sacrifices in our own lives.
* So, if you’re spending a lot of time just hashtagging and posting right now, that’s useful, but that is not enough
* Mobilize all your friends to register as voters. Text everybody you know to join you in exercising their constitutional right including showing up on the ballot box to making a choice and making your voice heard.
* Ask yourself: Do you know where your polling place is?

-Do you know the elective positions?

-Do you know the roles of your elected leaders?

-Who are the incumbents and the candidates at every level of government — not just president, but governors, senators, MPs, Women Reps, and MCAs?

* And don’t just ask yourselves these questions: Ask your friends, your family; ask everyone you see in your neighborhood and at your workplace or in your classes.
* And while we’re reaching out, please let’s give everyone a chance to make their own judgement and rational decision, that is what democracy means.
* Everybody’s got to vote when the time comes, but the activism that leads up to that day starts now.
* So Macmillan College graduants, remember that, as you step out into the world beyond these College walls, carry with you the values instilled in your Great Institution. Let integrity, perseverance, and empathy be your guiding principles.
* Remember, success is not solely defined by wealth or accolades but by the lives you touch, the difference you make, and the values you uphold. Your journey does not end here; it merely takes a new direction filled with opportunities waiting to be seized.
* As you embark on your individual paths, don’t forget the lessons learned, the friendships made, and the memories cherished during your stay here. Strive to be compassionate leaders, ethical professionals, and agents of positive change in whatever you choose to pursue.
* To the graduand’s parents/guardians, and other stakeholders, I congratulate you all for all your efforts that have led to the graduands’ timely completion of their studies at Macmillan Technical College; an effort that has culminated in this colorful ceremony. We welcome the graduands to the world of work.
* I’d also wish to applaud the college for sponsoring and offering scholarship to a number of continuing and graduating students today. You never lack by giving.
* In conclusion, I wish to mention that I am an educationist who is dedicated to supporting education, research, innovation, and well being of young people in this our beloved country.
* I wish you all graduands the best in your lives hoping that you will uphold the values of intergrity and hard work and strive to be Effective in the Global arena. Do not forget, “Service to People is Service to God”.

Thank you.

H.E. Dr. IDAH BETTY ODINGA