

**WELCOME SPEECH BY DR. KENNETH OMBONGI, PRINCIPAL
KENYA UTALII COLLEGE, DURING THE INTRODUCTION AND
COURSE OPENING FOR NEW STUDENTS HELD ON TUESDAY,
26TH MAY 2009 AT THE MADARAKA HALL FROM 8.00 A.M.**

- Divisional heads,
- Heads of department,
- Lecturers,
- College workers,
- Chairman KUCSA,
- Members of the students' council and the entire student
body
- Ladies and gentlemen,

I'm happy to join with you today in warmly welcoming the 159 new students who have just joined us to pursue their studies in various courses.

Young men and young women, I share your joy as you join Kenya Utalii College to begin the task of fulfilling your dream of building a career. You are really lucky; you are lucky because joining Utalii per se constitutes a truly extra ordinary achievement.

Many are the young men and women who aspire to join us in vain. Count yourself privileged to have made it here.

You have the rare opportunity to benefit from our exceptionally high quality of academic staff as well as to taste the vitality of the intellectual and professional life in this campus.

Not only that, you will benefit from the reputation of Utalii's role in the entire spectrum of Kenyan hospitality training. Young people, you have become part of the rich tradition that this shining star, Utalii College, has always been. And I want to let you know that with a qualification from Utalii, you are cut out for greater things in the hospitality industry.

Consequently, I will not hesitate to urge you to make the best of the opportunity you have got. I urge you to better your best in your career pursuits in this institution. No matter what! -don't give in to 'oh, poor me mentality'.

Your stay here holds many possibilities and the choice is yours. You either decide to lazy around and become an uncouth ruffian or work diligently to emerge victorious and create a career for yourself.

Indeed, this is a time in your life that will either make or break you. For us in Utalii, failure is no option. I will say that again, failure is no option.

On the other hand, I'm sure many of you have come here with various expectations. Expectations of having it smooth all the way; expectations of making a walk over this place; expectations of enjoying life away from the watchful eyes of parents. But let me tell you from the outset, life here, just like elsewhere, isn't a bed of roses. Even if it were, even roses have thorns.

You will succeed in this place if you work harder than hardest in your studies, if you engage in positive relationships, if you utilize student freedom responsibly and you obey College rules and regulations. We don't condone drug and substance abuse, we don't welcome the reckless use of ICT nor do we tolerate those who infringe on the freedoms and liberties of others.

For your social life young men, young women, HIV/AIDS is an epic challenge we cannot ignore. We cannot bury our heads in the sand like the proverbial ostrich. I will say it here, now and today that HIV/AIDS is a reality we don't have to fear. It is spread predominantly through careless sexual intercourse.

For the young men, please *fungia mbwa mahindi yameharibika*. Keep it tightly locked and out of reach until that hour of reckoning during your honeymoon. Be the captain of your own 'equipment' not vice versa.

For the young girls, kindly avoid the helicopter mentality. A helicopter is a very useful aircraft that has the capacity to land anywhere and everywhere unlike the jumbo jet which needs a big airport to land.

Thou shall not be a helicopter my dear sisters because the consequences are too grave to imagine; know where you land and land cautious. I say to you young ladies, this is a time to exercise your ability to make rational choices.

However, in cases of emergency and if only you are sexually over-engined our clinical officer tells me that there are enough 'ATMs' all over campus. Get what we used to call in my University days CDs and use them properly and I say it again, use them properly. This is my advice for both women and men.

I'm not out to scare anybody; far from it. Young men, you are free to mix and mingle as long as you do it within the purview of College rules and regulation.

Young women, now is the time to draw a line between who are the boys and who are the men; now is the time to lay the foundation for your future dignified family. Yes, this is the time to look around, the time to see him if this is where it has been destined for him to come from. As father of a daughter, however, I know it is worthwhile waiting for the right time. Patience has never killed anybody.

Our new students as you do all these things, remember that the College has remained uncompromising on academic standards; the College has remained unwavering in enforcing discipline among students and staff as well. There are no shortcuts to success; our rules and regulations are there to be obeyed; failure to do so, disciplinary measures will be instituted in tandem with justice, fairness and due diligence.

For the continuing students, it will be tantamount to teaching a hen on how to lay eggs to reiterate that your core business here is your studies and your studies only.

So far, so good, there are excellent reports about your diligence, determination and commitment. Mine, is to urge you to carry on with that spirit.

Our workers in various departments, I'm really overwhelmed by your efforts to deliver efficient services to the Utalii community. I know you have worked for too little for too long. I want to encourage that often times suffering without bitterness is redemptive.

Continue working with the hope that the day is soon coming when meager wages will be history; the day is coming when our efforts will be rewarded appropriately and we will be smiling all the way to the bank!

I am sure that sooner than later we will see the hand of God in our efforts if we remain hopeful. I know for certain that tomorrow will be better than yesterday.

Finally, for our lecturers, we take great pride in the various achievements and the stable reputation you have build over the years as indomitable teachers in hospitality.

This achievement has not come easy; nor has it been the work of a single individual. This is the result of the concerted hard work with a collective determination to succeed and to remain at the top. I salute you all and say to you my friends - *Aluta continua!!*

With those remarks, it is now my great pleasure to declare the new students members of the Kenya Utalii College family.

Merci!