

**Welcome remarks by Dr. Kenneth S. Ombongi  
Principal Kenya Utalii College at the close of the  
14<sup>th</sup> edition of the National Tourism  
Competitions held on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at  
Kenya Utalii College**

- Chairman, Board of Governors of our College, Mr. Tangai Ngoma,
- Our Chief Guest, Madam Lucy Karume, Chairperson, Kenya Tourism Federation,
- Chairman, Tourism Industry/ Kenya Utalii College Liaison Committee, Mr. Timothy Kagambi,
- All the Stakeholders present,
- Adjudicators and Colleagues from our College,
- Competitors,
- Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you everybody; thank you Chairman; thank you Madam Chief Guest; thank you master of ceremony.

Let me take this earliest opportunity to welcome you all to this great institution - Kenya Utalii College. *Feelanga* free; feel at home; seat back, relax and enjoy our hospitality.

We are always happy to welcome members of the industry, the direct employers of the personnel we train, and, therefore, the most important of the stakeholders in the College.

For us in Utalii we know and appreciate that we exist because of the tourism industry; we are because of the industry and since industry is so we are. Indeed, we are conjoined to each other by the iron chords of inter-dependency which no one can break either now or in the years to come. Without advice from the industry, Utalii can't be the home of hospitality training which it has always been.

I, therefore, wish to restate our commitment to this important partnership with the industry. This partnership is, in our view, the single most important factor in making Utalii College remain the global leader in hospitality training.

## Our Chief Guest:

The finals of the National Tourism Competitions are a bi-annual activity in our calendar of the highly cherished events which manifest our strong links with the industry. This event brings together the tourism industry employees to display their best in diverse categories.

We feel extremely honoured to be the hosts of these competitions. We cannot take it lightly. We cannot take this lightly because it demonstrates the confidence the industry has had in us that we have shined in the past and we continue to shine.

This year more than **217** employees have taken part in various categories representative of many aspects of hospitality. This is an increase of more than **22%** competitors compared with the last year when the College hosted **143** employees.

Reports from our lecturers indicate that there has been remarkable and dramatic improvement in the standards of good performance across all categories of this competition. This eloquently attests to the increasing popularity, quality and sophistication of the programme.

For us, we feel extremely encouraged by these indicators of improvement. They give us enough reasons to continue in our partnership with the industry to organise these events.

This is the best way of fostering excellence in the industry with a view to making Kenya the real home of hospitality which is our passion; which is our driving force; and indeed, which is our profession that we dearly cherish and relish.

Madam Chief Guest,

As we continue bettering our best in various activities and events geared towards serving the hospitality industry, we as a College are not unmindful of the recent less flattering statements about us in the media.

Undoubtedly, we have had a magnificent record of success, excellence and sterling performance as a training institution. We have no statistics, as yet, but I can confidently argue that for every five staff who serve you in hotel establishments in Kenya three or more are from Utalii. It will be even more impressive if we begin to talk about those outside the country in the Eastern Africa region and elsewhere.

However, we are keenly aware that our reputation and respect cannot only come from what we have done in the past.

Yes, our history is wonderful; but it has become our heritage.  
Our greatest challenge is now; the present.

We have now more than ever before set ourselves on the path of constantly improving our facilities, reviewing our programmes and building our capacity a pace with the contemporary demands and challenges; we have folded our sleeves, Madam guest, to push our frontiers of training in hospitality to the very best that we were meant to be.

I therefore humbly beseech you, our partners in the industry, do not be scared. Utalii is intact; Utalii is up and running. If there are a few challenges, we will and shall overcome them; we have done it in the past and we will do it again.

All we need, ladies and gentlemen, is to adopt the right attitude and the right frame of mind as we seek to better our best both in the industry and here in College.

We have to proceed with the knowledge and conviction that tourism is the leading sector in this country, that Kenya is the leading tourist destination, that ours are the leading facilities and, above all, that we are the best of workers. And I will say that again, we are the best of workers.

Finally, this event could have not materialized without the contribution from many people. So numerous that it is impossible to mention them all here and now.

To our supporters from the industry, I say thank you very much; to the competitors, I say bravo! I urge you to go away with the noble understanding that in these competitions we are all winners because we have all had something new to learn. To the adjudicators, I say *shukrani* for the fantastic work done; To the Liaison Committee, I want to acknowledge that you are great people because you have put your best foot forward in everything and made these competitions happen.

Let me at this juncture invite Mr. Timothy Kagambi, Chairman, Tourism Industry/Kenya Utalii College Liaison Committee to make his remarks.

Thank you and may God bless you all.