

**SPEECH BY DR. KENNETH S. OMBONGI, PRINCIPAL
KENYA UTALII COLLEGE, ON THE OCCASION OF
WELCOMING NEW FOOD AND BEVERAGE SERVICE AND
SALES STUDENTS, May 17, 2010**

- Colleagues in Management
- The rest of the College Staff,
- KUCSA officials,
- New students,
- Ladies and Gentlemen:

When I take a glance at you, our new students, I want to believe that this is a new dawn for every one of you. I have seen it, in the corridors, on the faces of some of you for the time you have been here.

It is a new dawn because not everybody joins Kenya Utalii College. You were picked from tens of hundreds of Kenyans who applied and wanted to be students here but you were the only lucky ones. In a sense, it is a great privilege to be here.

If I were you, I will jealously guard this opportunity; I will be committed to prove that the people who admitted me here did not make any mistake.

Young people, this College has produced many leading lights, individuals with sterling performance, in the hospitality and tourism industry. Every time I have had a chance to talk to these great men and great women they always have a tale to tell about their route to stardom. Few talk about being born hotel managers; even fewer talk of being born captains. It has

never been easy for them. And, for sure, it will never be easy for you either.

This is the time, this is stage in your life, in which, in earnest, you need to set your goals to fame and never look back. Your determination, your focus, your passion for hard work and go-getter attitude will get you there. And by 'there' I simply mean at the highest limelight of the hospitality industry.

Therefore, beloved young people set your goals now; set them now, today and here; tomorrow will be too late; may be it will never come! Yes, set them now.

The stakes are high; the competition for jobs in the industry is tough; and only the most competitive, the eternally most outstanding, ones among you will survive.

I cannot move away from this point before I touch on something which seems to be affecting us lately. And that is

the sad reality that some of us are basking too much in the glory of our past.

Yes, we have been a great institution; yes, we have produced almost every hospitality and tourism personnel in this country; yes, we have spread our tentacles, our influence, beyond Kenya and beyond Africa; yes, we have no competitor in the business of training which we do; yes, my people, many institutions will imitate us but they will neither be us nor achieve what we have achieved.

But remember, but remember, the past is history and only remains our heritage; the present is a challenge you will have to face squarely to prepare for your future. The fact that Utalii has been great in past is just that: great in the past! It won't help you if you do not work hard now.

One other thing we really must take care of, besides avoiding complacency, is our physical out look: from the way we dress,

our hair styles, our general personal grooming to the way we smile.

I have seen in a few institutions where people are dressed like high school students; others look like those young people in a village who aren't very appealing in personal grooming.

Dear friends, for you, you have just joined the hospitality industry. To be hospitable, for you to be welcoming, you must profoundly, indeed deeply, relearn and retrain your face to

smile, to appeal to customers, to accept that you cannot afford a haggard and mournful appearance in this industry; you cannot at all.

Therefore, there is no place here for ladies who wear hair which make them look like a scare crow; there is no place for those boys who wear one ear ring and sagging trousers exposing some sections of their 'seating assets'. No way!

All these demands, all these does and don'ts, are not about me or any one of us in the College; they are all about you and the industry you have joined.

The industry demands that you groom yourself; it demands that you look appealing, you look charming; it demands that you should be brave and all smiling to survive.

If you do all these, besides working diligently, you will progress and move up the professional ladder; but if you don't, you will surely perish. It is that simple; it is that loud and clear.

Don't blame us if you will not make it; please don't say we didn't tell you, you have heard and you will hear from your lecturers in the course of the year; and even if you haven't heard, stones have heard. Yes, stones have heard as the Maragoli proverb goes.

Young people:

Life in a College setting such as this can be enjoyable. College can be a place to experiment with passions of your flesh. You are still young and at teenage years, at least the bulk majority of you barring those in Service Advance. It feels sweet and nice to give into carnal emotions, or sexual demands, but the consequences can be deep and far-reaching.

Young ladies, where are you? Are you here and listening? Never, I say to you again, never, agree to go between the bed sheets with a man at your tender age. My sisters, do first

things first. Get your career going; get your income; then and only then will you want to get your husband, a man who cares, a man who thinks of you first, to whom you 'will serve your cookies', flesh and totally undiluted.

Your young body is so precious, so sacrosanct, so holy, to be played around with. Reserve it, preserve it and only unveil it to that somebody, that special man, on the D-day, that evening after your wedding. Hey ladies, are you with me? That evening after your wedding!

For the young men here, I'm a man like you. I was a student, like you, for years. I know one thing, for sure, that having carnal liberties, or what many of you call sex, with somebody's daughter is not 'oxygen'. You cannot die because of either an under dose or no dose of it at all.

A great man, in my understanding, is he who waits; it is always possible and necessary to wait. If you don't wait, HIV/AIDs is a reality we are living with in our society. If you don't wait in

putting somebody's daughter in the family way we will hold you responsible.

Just like I said to the ladies, make your career first; make your money first. Remember the old wise saying that a man without money, however strong, however handsome, is like a bow without arrows. It has no use at all.

As I move to my conclusion now, there is something I won't finalize my speech without mentioning. I know many of us are

hilariously getting entertained by cyberspace, or internet, social networking media. I personally enjoy connecting with the upwardly mobile generation of 'high tech guys' through internet. I operate an account in *Facebook* and regularly chat with guys on Fridays.

I know many of you have accounts in *Twiter*, *Mespace*, *myspace*, *Ahem*, *youtube* and, of course, *Facebook*, as well as many others. But, like many other good things which make life

easy, internet social networking media can be misused to the detriment of one's life.

Beware of those high sounding profiles, nice looking and glossy photos that you find in these sites. As you enjoy networking never throw caution through the window. These sites are being used to con. Many are the students around the world who can't do anything else once they get addicted to these social sites. I will say to you, my friends, that first and foremost be a good

and hard working student and, I'm pretty sure, that all other luxuries of life, or otherwise, shall be added unto you!

And finally, young people, may God, the almighty, cause his countenance to shine upon the faces of all those of you who have set foot in this great institution to start their careers.

May He grant that by the time you leave here you will be properly equipped to make immense contributions to the

hospitality industry just like the many who have trod these hallowed grounds of Kenya Utalii College.

Thank you and God bless abundantly.