

REMARKS BY DR. KENNETH OMBONGI, PRINCIPAL, KENYA
UTALII COLLEGE, DURING THE CLOSING CEREMONY FOR THE
2010 NORTH COAST REGIONAL REFRESHER COURSES HELD
ON FRIDAY, 23RD APRIL 2010.

Our Chief Guest, Mr. Titus Kangangi,
Chairman, Kenya Association of Hotelkeepers and Caterers Coast,
Partners in the Hotel and Tourism Industry,
My colleagues from Kenya Utalii College,
Course participants
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to welcome you all to this occasion that marks the end of the 2010 two-week refresher course programme for this region. We are particularly grateful to you, our chief guest, for kindly agreeing to grace this occasion which is an important event in the academic calendar of the College.

Let me at the onset take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. Kangangi on your appointment to the Kenya Utalii College Board of Governors. We assure you our cooperation as Management and staff of the College. We wish you and the rest of the board a fruitful tenure of office

I wish to also welcome all our supporters and collaborators who have come to be here with us today.

Our guest of honour, we in the College value the role played by the refresher courses in the development of the tourism industry. The courses have been a viable option for those in the industry who, for one reason or another, are notable to pursue our regular full time programmes.

They have enabled many industry employees to acquire knowledge and skills that enable them to effectively serve in the industry, while, at the same time, serving as an appropriate forum for employees to interact, share ideas and acquaint themselves with the latest trends in the sector.

I wish to assure the participants and the industry at large of our full commitment to satisfying their needs training. As you are aware, Kenya Utalii College exists, first and foremost, to satisfy the needs of the industry.

It is as a result of this that the College has continued to come up with training programmes geared towards ensuring that the

industry remains at the top in terms of service. In this regard, we have ensured that our selection of courses under the refresher and management development programmes are a true reflection of your needs as presented to us by the industry's representative in the Kenya Utalii College/Tourism Industry Liaison Committee.

In recognition of the need impart entrepreneurial skills, we have this year, in a addition to the regular operational courses, we have deliberately included cross cutting courses such as those touching on IT, Communication supervisory skills, and customer service. These, we trust have given the participants the necessary

extra skills to navigate the ever complex work environment with ease.

The 140 participants receiving their certificates today are part of the estimated 1,000 industry employees at the operational and supervisory levels, who will have gone through refresher courses this year.

In addition, the College will train about 200 managers during the month of June under the Management Development Programmes.

I am glad to inform you that, in addition to the traditional refresher courses, the college has now expanded the programme to members of the Pubs, Restaurant and Entertainments Association of Kenya

(PERAK). This programme, which started last year, has been hailed as an important inclusion of a fast growing segment of the industry which is now playing a significant role in the development of our sector. This year, we shall mount the PERAK related courses in Mombasa, Kisumu and Kakamega

Ladies and gentlemen,

During the annual symposium of the association of hotelkeepers and caterers in June last year, we made three commitments to the industry as our contribution in ensuring that the industry fulfills its commitment to the national economy under the Vision 2030.

These were the upgrading of our course programmes, expansion and collaborations with other renowned institutions of higher learning to enhance the relevance of our trainees to the job market.

Today, I am glad to today that we have made significant strides towards realizing these goals.

In the month of January, the college in collaborations with Nairobi, admitted 59 students being the first batch under the degree programmes. The courses on offer are Bachelor of Arts Hospitality Management and Bachelor of Arts in Travel and Tourism Management.

The second intake for the above course is due next month. We are encouraged by the enthusiasm and support that has greeted this development especially from the alumni of the college.

I wish to report that discussions are going with the university on how best we can take care of our diploma graduates, who, we believe, should not be subjected to going through the full course in order to get their degrees.

At the same time, I would like to inform our prospective students that we have now reviewed all our courses in terms of duration and intake qualifications. Once completed the reviewed programmes should ensure that students of the college who join us for certificate course

will be able to move up the academic ladder to the degree programmes.

Ladies and gentlemen, another programme which has been in the pipeline for as long as we can remember is expansion. The plan to move beyond Thika road was first mooted in the late 1970s, and the first port of call was the Coast. I am filled with joy to announce today that Kenya Utalii College has now, at long last, set up a base in

Mombasa. For those who may not know, we are now occupying two floors of Southern House on the Moi Avenue at the centre of Mombasa town.

Ladies and gentlemen we are now here and ready. Our facilities are ready. Our lecturers are ready to start work. We are asking the people of Coast Province: the parents, the politicians, the hoteliers: give us students. Fill those two floors with students; for daytime classes; for evening classes. We are willing to higher more floors. All we need are students.

The last commitment we made to the hoteliers last year was to ensure that we train and produce all round graduates. Graduates who are not only employable; but also one whose ultimate aspiration is to be employers.

To this end, the college has now entered into collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom in a project aimed at enhancing the entrepreneurial skills of our students.

This is a tripartite collaboration involving the two institutions and the local hospitality and tourism industry, represented by KATA, KATO and KAHC.

I wish to assure the industry and all our stakeholders that we shall continue to explore way and means of ensure we achieve our mandate not only to the sector and but also to the national economy at large.

Ladies and gentlemen, in response to various representations from the industry, the College organised the following refresher courses for this region this year:

- Front desk techniques
- Supervisory Skills
- Tourism Sales and Skills
- Customer Care

I would like to thank the hotel and tourism industry for working closely with us under the tourism industry/Kenya Utalii college liaison committee to organise these courses.

Finally, I wish to congratulate the 140 industry employees who have successfully completed their courses.

I urge them to ensure that they put into practice the knowledge and skills they have gained in the two weeks of intensive training.

I would like however to ask you not to consider this the end of education. Explore further and enrich yourselves by constantly seeking knowledge. I wish you the best of luck.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it is now my pleasure to invite, our chief guest, Mr. Titus Kangangi, Chairman, Kenya Association of Hotelkeepers and Caterers Coast, to address us and

thereafter award certificates to the participants of the 2010 North Coast region refresher courses.

Thank you.
