



**Kenya School of Law**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Graduation Ceremony**

**Date: 11 December 2018**

Speech by the Director/Chief Executive Officer

The Honourable the Attorney General of the Republic of Kenya, Justice (Rtd) P Kihara Kariuki, represented by Deputy Chief State Parliamentary Counsel Ms. Catherine Ochanda,  
The Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Kenya School of Law, Prof. Fatuma Chege,  
The Kenya School of Law Members of the Board of Directors present  
The President of the Law Society of Kenya, Mr. Allen Gichuhi  
The Chairman of the Kenya Law Reform Commission, Mr. Mbage Ng'ang'a  
The Chief Executive Officer of the National Council for Law Reporting, Mr. Longet Terer,  
The Chief Executive of the Council of Legal Education, Dr. Jacob Gakeri  
The former Director of the Kenya School of Law, Prof. PLO Lumumba,  
Representatives of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, Ministries and State Agencies present;  
Kenya School of Law Management and Staff,  
Kenya School of Law Students, past and present  
Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is my distinct honour and privilege to welcome all of you to this, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Graduation Ceremony of the Kenya School of Law, and my first as the Director and Chief Executive Officer of the School.

In that regard, I would like to begin my remarks by thanking the Board of Directors of the School for entrusting me, earlier this year, with the responsibility of leading the School as Director for the next four years. It is an honour and a duty that I take seriously and which I am committed to executing to the very best of my ability. I would like to thank the Board, the staff and the students for the warm welcome that they gave me and for the support that I have received since joining the School. I look forward to maintaining a harmonious, dynamic and productive relationship with all stakeholders over the next three and a half years.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank my predecessor, Prof. Patrick Lumumba, who has taken time out of his busy schedule to join us for this graduation ceremony, for his contribution to the growth and development of the School. Indeed, all of today's graduates went through the School during his tenure.

Legal education and training in Kenya, and the legal profession in Kenya in general, is at somewhat of a cross-roads. This can be seen in the disquiet that has been expressed regarding the pass rate of students taking the Bar exam and the resulting spotlight that has shone upon the School. As management, this is a matter that we are cognisant of, and under the guidance and direction of the Board, measures are being taken to identify the factors underlying the pass rate and to see what measures we can take as a School to ensure candidates are sufficiently equipped to pass the Bar exam and, more importantly, to render competent services across the entire legal sector, be it in public service, private practice, the judiciary, academia or the corporate world.

The number of universities offering the Bachelor of Laws Degree programme has continued to expand, and with it, the number of graduates wishing to enrol in the Advocates Training Programme. With this expansion has come a concern regarding the quality of recent law graduates as well as of advocates in practice. Just last week, we witnessed the appointment of a Queen's Counsel from the UK by the DPP to prosecute a matter before the High Court, causing members of the Bar to take diverse positions on social media regarding whether or not it reflects adversely on the calibre of Kenyan advocates.

My personal vision is for a time when there will be no need to look beyond our borders for legal practitioners because among our Kenyan advocates will be individuals of impeccable character, and competence whose integrity is beyond reproach. As the institution mandated by law to train legal practitioners, it is our duty to ensure that vision is attained.

Following a number of court rulings regarding various aspects of the training process for lawyers, the former Attorney General (and now chairperson of the Council of Legal Education) Hon. Githu Muigai established a task force in September 2016, chaired by Fred Ojiambo, SC, to look into various aspects of the legal profession (Prof. Lumumba was a member of the task force).

The report of the task force is yet to be presented formally to the Attorney General but we are aware that it contains a number of recommendations aimed at improving various facets of legal education. We look forward to reading the report in due course and to engaging with stakeholders with regard to its implementation.

The Diploma in Law programme is an integral part of the School's mandate and is aimed at ensuring that the country has a well-trained cadre of personnel who are able to provide support services to various parts of the legal sector. It can also serve as a stepping stone for

those wishing to further their academic credentials. We continue to seek ways of improving the learning experience of our diploma students as well as the quality of their training.

Turning to matters internal, in the course of the past year, the Board of Directors has approved the implementation of a new Organogram, Career Guidelines and Human Resource policies for KSL staff. These documents are aimed at ensuring that the School's administrative structure is streamlined in line with the School's Strategic Plan and that the School is able to recruit and to retain the highest calibre of staff possible for the discharge of its mandate.

2018 has also been a significant year in that it has marked the end of the 2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan period and the start of the new 2018 – 2022 Strategic Plan period. In the next 4 years, the School intends to put in place interventions aimed at enhancing service delivery. The objectives for the plan period will include

- i) Provision of quality professional legal training for the ATP and PTP
- ii) Provision of practical training for continuing professional development
- iii) Undertaking research, consultancies and projects
- iv) Enhancing and broadening revenue streams and cutting costs to achieve financial sustainability
- v) Strengthening institutional capacity for operational excellence and
- vi) Enhancing customer satisfaction

More about this will be said at a future event within the next couple of months at which the Strategic Plan will be launched.

The School continues to face certain challenges, including the growing number of applicants for the Advocates Training Programme. We are confident that with the new Strategic Plan we shall be able to overcome these challenges.

An additional challenge that our students at both the ATP and the diploma level face is with regard to the payment of fees here at the School. In order to address this challenge, the School started an endowment fund a few years back to support students who have difficulty in paying their fees. However, the funds raised were limited and insufficient to meet the demand.

The school is therefore actively exploring the possibility of establishing a specific fund to be administered by the Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) to be used exclusively to support students undertaking the ATP and PTP here at the school.

Finally, and returning to the business that has brought us here, today, we are celebrating the graduation of the 2016/2017 and 2017/2018 cohorts of the Advocates Training Programme/Postgraduate Diploma in Law programme as well as the 2015-2017 and 2016-2018 cohorts of our Diploma in Law programme, represented by the graduands seated here today. We are also delighted to be able to recognise and to honour the best students in those groups by giving them certificates of excellence and awards to mark their achievements. In this regard, we would like to thank all those well-wishers who came on board at fairly short notice with trophies and gifts for the best students in some of the categories. We appreciate your collaboration with us and look forward to your support in future.

Let me end by extending my sincere congratulations to all our graduates.

BEST WISHES IN YOUR FUTURE CAREERS AND/OR STUDIES AND AS WE ENTER THE HOLIDAY SEASON, MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY AND HEALTHY 2019!

**DELIVERED THIS 11<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF DECEMBER, 2018**

**BY**

**DR. HENRY K. MUTAI**

**DIRECTOR/CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**