

Key Note Speech, By Hon. Martha Karua on the USIU 33rd graduation ceremony on the 20th August 2011

It is an honor and privilege to be asked to speak on a day i am one of the graduands.

I enrolled at USIU for GEMBA in august 2010 exactly three decades since I first graduated with my Law degree at the UON. Am sure my parents never imagined that after they attended my first graduation, that some many years later, I would still be at it.

In between my last education pursuit, I have been in the civil service as a magistrate, have practiced law, been in the NGO sector, an opposition parliamentarian, a minister of water then Justice, then back as an opposition parliamentarian and really enjoying it. You can say full circle!

In my class the word diversity took on full meaning. We had a former child soldier from the newest state in Africa, a businessman from Ethiopia, a fellow politician and member of government, Kenyan business executives from diverse sectors one of them my daughters age! We also had an equally diverse group among our professors and non teaching staff. It was a diversity that we celebrated and that we grew greatly from.

We mingled and learnt from each other and with each other. We gained each others trust and bonded into a community which will go beyond the course. This is the part of learning that is never in focus when we enroll for study, we more often than not focus on the academic skills we come to acquire. But we end up walking away with that and much more!

Education today is a challenge for many. When I first went to University of Nairobi, we were availed loans that provided tuition, accomodation and meals. Today's youth hardly have psimilar provisions and they face numerous struggles in their university life. It is not only school fees that prove to be a hurdle for many, but also the learning infrastructure which in most of our institutions is totally inadequate, with classes being too large to offer quality education, inadequate staffing and many other challenges that undermine access and the quest for quality education. Institutions such as USiU with world class facilities are a priviledge yet the high standards of professionalism practiced here and where gender equality is not just a topic but a practice, should be a norm that the institutions seeking to educate our children...and adults, should aspire to achieve.

I chose my course in Strategic management because I would like to be a professional manager for a corporation that is so dear to me.. My county Kenya. I believe I have added invaluable lessons to the life lessons my journey had so far conferred. This experience has reinforced my belief that learning is a lifelong process and that you learn through instructions and by interaction! . If you are passionate about something, you should not tire nor neglect learning on how you can better serve your passions.

I believe my fellow graduands feel the same, that we are now well equipped to face the challenges of life. To compete in the job market and or to create jobs

and offer employment to others, something that we as a country urgently need to address. It is all possible with confidence in ourselves ,determination, resilience, hard work, discipline and above all believe in God.

What will distinguish each one of us is how we apply the knowledge we have gathered ,how we relate to those around us and the society we belong to. In my mind there must be a clear distinction of someone with an education ! Ethics, self restraint , tolerance of opposing views and of diversity, respect for the rule of law in a nut shell an educated person demonstrates personal and social responsibility. These are obvious things which have ceased to be obvious in our society which today yearns for transformation. Who else should champion that transformation if not us?we are each called to step up the plate for the world around us, for ourfamilies, for our organizations, for our society for our country .as we say in our lingua jitokeze!

It is my sincere hope that we shall all be standard bearers like our Alma Mater ..USIU ! We have a promising future ahead of us but it is a promise that together, we must work to protect and.achieve. It is a promise that awaits you and I to bear fully.

Congratulations fellow graduands, congratulotions USIU ,congratulations to our families and or sponsors . God bless you all.