

REMARKS BY PROF. DANIEL MUGENDI NJIRU, DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 3RD CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF THE EDUCATION DEANS' FORUM TO BE HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EMBU ON TUESDAY, 4TH OCTOBER 2022.

- The Principal Secretary, State Department for Implementation of Curriculum Reforms – Prof. Fatuma Chege - Represented by Mrs. Ruth Mugambi
- The Chairman, Vice Chancellors' Committee of Public Universities – Prof. Geoffrey Muluvi
- The CEO, Commission for University Education – Prof. Mike Kuria - Represented by Prof Marcella Mwaka
- The CEO, Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development – Prof. Charles Ong'ondo
- The CEO, Teachers Service Commission – Dr. Nancy Macharia
- The Director General, TVETA – Dr. Kipkirui Langat
- The Chairman, Kenya Secondary School Heads Association (KESSHA) – Mr. Indimuli Kahi
- The Secretary-General, Kenya Union of Post-Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) – Mr. Akelo Misor
- University of Embu Management
- Distinguished Deans of Schools of Education in Kenya
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning.

First and Foremost, let me take this opportunity to warmly welcome you all to the University of Embu.

It gives me great pleasure to be part of yet another opportunity to engage on a subject that is so dear to our hearts – the present and the future of our education system. Four years ago, the University of Embu hosted the inaugural Consultative Forum for the Deans of Education between the 14th and 15th August 2019 under the Theme

“The Competency-Based Curriculum: Emerging Issues and Implications for Teacher Education”. Since then, I'm pleased to note that there have been robust Deans'-driven conversations on how to recalibrate our teacher education and, as the patron of the Education Deans' Forum, I must say that I am very proud of the milestones the Forum has accomplished this far.

The Forum is taking her rightful role and place in the ensuing discourse on the Competency-Based Teacher Education framework in Kenya, and it is finally being acknowledged.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I dare say that this Consultative Forum could not have come at a better time. It gives us an opportunity to assert our voice and provide direction in the current national education reforms dialogue. In January 2023, the pioneer cohort of CBC will be joining junior secondary; and in January 2029, this cohort will be ready to join our universities.

As we now look forward, with great interest, to the outcome of the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms, we need to increasingly lobby to take our rightful role in resolving the teething challenges of the Competency-Based Curriculum to enable the 21st Century teacher to adapt the curriculum so as to build on learners' strengths and help them gain their competencies. We have no option but to get it right, because we owe this great duty to our country and the future generations. We need to rededicate ourselves to the imperative of a CBC-compliant teacher.

In the next two days, I know that we will thoroughly interrogate the Prof. Fatuma Chege Report of 2020 on CBC, the Basic Education Curriculum Framework, and other relevant documents and come up with a comprehensive roadmap for teacher education in tertiary institutions under the new curriculum framework.

The appointment of Dr. Ciriaka Gitonga, the Chair of Education Deans' Forum by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya as a member of the Presidential Working Party on Education Reform is indeed great honour to the University Deans of education forum. I am confident that she will represent the views and interests of the University educators very competently. Please join me in congratulating Dr. Gitonga for this appointment.

Some of the Terms of Reference for the Presidential Working Party that directly connect with the objective of this Workshop include;

1. The conceptualization and implementation of key tenets guiding the competency-based approach including but not limited to, Value-Based Education, Community Service Learning, Parental Empowerment and Engagement;
2. The assessment and examination framework;
3. The quality assurance and standards framework;
4. The teacher education and training framework for both pre-service and in-service;
5. The teacher deployment framework.

Among others

Ladies and gentlemen, as we all know, the recent pandemic has accelerated the call to re-imagine teaching and learning. The key lessons that we have benefited from in the past 3 years or so can be summarized as follows:

1. We now know and believe that a flexible education system can be more resilient in the face of adversity. Flexibility has enabled our institutions to invent and adapt more agile solutions,

which can be adjusted to better suit the teacher and individual student needs.

2. The creativity and leadership of the teacher is a major factor in resilience. We must give teachers quality training and significant professional autonomy to be creative in the face of challenges like the recent pandemic. We must also invest heavily in digital competences for both the teacher and the learner.
3. We must continue to make investments to enable us achieve equality in education. We all know the challenges that some of our students went through when we moved learning to the online mode. Let us make recommendations to ensure that in future no student is left out of e-learning because of similar challenges.

In conclusion, let me say that the competence of teachers is a vital cornerstone in the advancement of inclusion and equality in education. We need to provide teachers with updated skills and capabilities to effectively manage the dynamic modern day classroom. We also need to develop new teaching practices that will equip the CBC student with the necessary skills and competencies to fit in the modern world of careers and professionalism. A new mindset is also needed to change the attitudes of parents, guardians and teachers as well.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you all the best in your deliberations and hope that your recommendations will have a bearing and weight upon the upcoming national discussions on education reforms.

The future direction of Universities Schools of Education is in your hands.

With those remarks, it is now my pleasure to declare the Education Deans' Consultative Forum officially open.

Thank you very much.
Prof. Daniel Mugendi
VC, University of Embu