



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**  
**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

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**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY PROF. GEORGE MAGOHA, CBS, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, DURING THE RELEASE OF THE 2019 UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES PLACEMENT RESULTS AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA (CUEA) ON MONDAY, 14TH APRIL 2019 AT 9.00 A.M**

## **SALUTATIONS**

**The Principal Secretaries, Ministry of Education;**

**CEOs of Government Agencies;**

**The Placement Service Board Members;**

**Vice-Chancellors;**

**Principals of University Constituent Colleges and TVET Institutions;**

**Representatives of Regulatory/Professional Bodies;**

**Representatives of the Media;**

**Invited Guests;**

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

I am pleased to preside over the release of the 2019/2020 universities and colleges placement cycle results this morning. I wish to commend the Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) for working with critical stakeholders to complete this exercise of placing the 2018 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) candidates onto various programmes in less than four months.

## **CRITICAL ISSUES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR**

Before I release the Placement results for the 2018 Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination candidates, I wish to outline a few issues concerning the state of universities and tertiary education subsector.

## **Leadership in Higher Education Institutions in Kenya**

Time has come when we must hold candid discussions about the quality of leadership, teaching and research in our universities sector. Having been a manager at the University of Nairobi for 10 years, and having observed the sector now for four years, I feel compelled to state that our university sector is at a crossroads. We must wake up to the reality that various issues have put the university education in jeopardy. We must now open up a debate focusing on the critical issues of sustainability of the public and private universities in view of the increasing demands and the need to prioritise expenditure; determination of suitable funding and staffing models for the

sustainability of universities; effecting the Government's stand on the freezing of recruitment of new staff; and the need to rationalise universities with the view of restoring and preserving their credibility.

We must now open dialogues to free our public universities from the inherent rigmarole of inherent political capture and unplanned expansion as individual universities sought to establish campuses in every nook and cranny. We must match the spiralling growth of university education with commensurate rise in the level of funding, facilities and other resources, leading to a sharp decline in quality of education.

We must seek to de-ethnicise our universities to ensure universities reflect the national face of the country and ensure we get rid of situations where, in some universities, one community holds as much as 50 per cent of members of staff from one community.

### **Duplication of Academic Programmes**

As you will see this morning, there are many programmes in our universities that fail to attract a single student. This situation must be addressed. The Commission for University Education must conduct a thorough analysis of these courses with a view to addressing this shocking scenario, including a review and scrapping of such programmes.

Another worry in the programmes is the fact that there is an unbelievable similarity and duplication of academic programmes in local universities in the face of a few staff and facilities. The import of this situation is low quality in the graduates churned out of our universities.

Another concern is the mismatch between the academic programmes offered in many of the universities and the development agenda. Humanities programmes continue to account for the higher proportion of programmes compared to STEM programmes. This is a heavy threat to the realisation of Kenya Vision 2030 and the Big Four Agenda.

## **Freeze on Staff Recruitment and Contract Terms**

The majority of staff in public institutions in Kenya have employed most of their members of staff on permanent and pensionable terms. In some cases, the percentage of non-technical staff has been much higher than that of the technical staff, indicative that majority of the budget is utilised on activities that do not necessarily contribute to the mandate of the university.

As the ministry has proposed before, there is need for different staffing models to be explored, adopted and adapted. Such models include outsourcing of non-technical functions and having fixed tenure-tracks of employment of staff. Councils of the public universities must develop policies that govern the most suitable staffing models that will result in optimal returns in the respective universities.

The 2015 Government Circular from the National Treasury, dated 4<sup>th</sup> November 2015 directed a “*Freeze on new recruitment (with specific exceptions), purchase of office furniture, computers and new office equipment*”; and Circular from the Office of the President, dated 28<sup>th</sup> July 2017, reiterated the content of the former Circular, directing that “*...henceforth, no recruitment of any new staff should be undertaken, unless in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of this office*”.

## **Measures to Steer Universities on Desired Reform Trajectory**

Going forward, I am asking universities to subject themselves to greater scrutiny and be aware that the government is keen to carry out the following measures:

1. Rationalisation of academic programmes and institutions in Kenya with a view to ensure full potential of the existing universities and campuses. If possible, existing universities and campuses can be consolidated for maximum utilisation.
2. The freeze on the establishment of new universities and satellite campuses must be upheld;
3. Consolidating similar academic programmes, with the aim of efficiently utilising and maximising on existing resources;

4. Ensuring universities specialise in academic programmes in which they are relatively strong at;
5. Strengthening academic programmes that greatly contribute to the national and global development agenda, through increased provision of resources, including finances, facilities, equipment, infrastructure and human, for their support.

## **THE 2019 PLACEMENT RESULTS**

A total of **660,204** candidates sat the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination in 2018. Of these, **90,755** scored a mean grade of C+ and above, hence were eligible for placement to universities as Government-sponsored students. Following the successful completion of the

placement process, **89,486** candidates have secured placement to Degree courses of their choice in Public and Private Universities under the Government sponsorship. I am pleased to note that **83,675** of these applicants (**92.2%**) were placed based on their choices. This is testimony to the fact that the Placement Agency – working jointly with school – are doing a fantastic job in streamlining the selection exercise to ensure that the placement is merit-based and aligned to students' choices.

In terms of overall gender distribution in the Degree programmes, **52,610 (59%)** of successful students were male while **36,876 (41%)** were female. Although the percentage composition of female students joining universities has been on the increase, these statistics mean that a lot more

still needs to be done to ensure gender parity in the admission to local universities.

I have also noted that **1,269** candidates who scored C+ and above and qualified for placement to Degree programmes opted for Diploma courses in TVET institutions and have therefore been selected to the preferred programmes. This is an increase of **46.7%** from the **597** candidates who made a similar decision in the 2018/2019 cycle, an indication that the Government's efforts to promote TVET are beginning to bear fruit.

## **TIVET Courses**

The Ministry of Education is keen on achieving 100% transition from secondary to tertiary education, partly by increasing enrolment to TVET institutions. In the 2018 KCSE, **560,678** candidates qualified for admission to Diploma, Certificate and Artisan Certificate courses in our TVET institutions.

In an effort towards the realisation of full transition **98,393** have been placed to various polytechnics and technical training institutions countrywide, so far. While this is a marginal increase from the **94, 907** placed to these TVET institutions last year, I am glad to note that there will be continuous placement of students to TVET institutions throughout the year. This will help to grow this number towards a target of **200,000** by the end of 2019.

## **STEM Courses**

The Ministry is paying keen attention to enrolment in Science, Technology, Engineering Mathematics and Agriculture (STEM). Of the **89,486** students placed to Degree programmes, **57,687 (64%)** have been selected to STEM-related courses while **31,799 (36%)** were placed to Art related courses. This is a big step towards the realisation of the Big 4 Agenda and the Vision 2030 aspirations.

In the STEM related courses, **36,189 (63%)** of the placed candidates were male and **21,498 (37%)** were female. There is a need for all stakeholders to come up with special interventions to bridge the gender gap.

I urge Universities and TVET institutions to ensure that their courses are aligned to the Government's development agenda, including – the 'Big Four' Agenda and Vision 2030.

Additionally, I ask the CUE and individual universities to keep reviewing their curricula to make their programmes more responsive to the changing needs of the country. I have noted, for example, that **NINE** degree programmes could not attract any applicant. An urgent review must start here. Also, there are 98 programmes that no student was selected to join because although there were applicants, no student was selected to pursue the courses since they either did not qualify or were placed to one of their other choices.

## **Accessing Selection Results**

All the successful applicants will be informed of their courses and institutions through direct SMS and the Placement Service student's portal. All Vice-Chancellors and Academic Registrars will also be given access to their respective lists of placed students through their online portals.

The Ministry recognises that some students who have been placed to various universities and colleges may wish to transfer to other institutions/courses. Therefore, I hereby direct the Placement Service to open the online system for inter-institution transfer applications between **1<sup>st</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2019**.

## **Careers Book**

The other reason we are gathered here is to witness the launch of the KUCCPS career book. The book provides insights into subject selection by secondary school students, career opportunities, career progression pathways, entry and subject requirements for various career fields and the KUCCPS placement processes, among other useful information.

It is now my pleasure to officially release the 2018/2019 placement cycle report and launch the Careers Booklet.

**Thank you.**