



UNIVERSITY OF EMBU

SPEECH BY

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VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF EMBU,

DURING THE PRESENTATION OF COMPLETION CERTIFICATES
CEREMONY TO EMBU YOUNG COFFEE FARMERS

HELD AT

THE UNIVERSITY OF EMBU

ON

17TH JUNE, 2021 AT 10.00 AM

- The President of Connect Coffee Ltd, Mr. Chris Hwang
- Executive Vice President, Connect Coffee Ltd, Ms. Sunny Park
- Rabo Foundation, Project Manager, Mrs. Elizabeth Kiarie
- CEO of Embu Teaching and Referral Hospital, Mr. Simon Nyaga
- CEC of Agriculture, Embu County, Mr. Suleiman Kariuki
- Members of the University Management Board & Senate
- Trainees
- Distinguished guests
- Ladies & Gentlemen



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Good morning.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the University of Embu to witness the presentation of Certificates of Completion to Embu Young Coffee Farmers. I thank you all for sparing time out of your busy schedules to come and celebrate with us. Today, we celebrate the successful completion of training by our pioneer group of young coffee farmers in Embu County.

The Embu Young Coffee Farmers Training targeted youths in the County that have interest in coffee farming as an enterprise. The two weeks training christened “Seed to Cup” was jointly organized by Connect Coffee Ltd, the County Government of Embu and the University of Embu under the sponsorship of the Rabo Foundation.

I want to sincerely thank the Rabo Foundation through the Project Manager, Mrs. Elizabeth Kiarie for this noble initiative. I also thank the organizers of this training led by Mr. Chris Hwang and Mrs. Sunny Park of Connect Coffee Ltd, as well as Dr. Bernard Gichimu of the School of Agriculture, University of Embu.

We also recognize the goodwill and support that we have continued to receive from the Embu County Government. We do not take this for



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granted, and we look forward to even stronger collaboration to enable us give our clients the best higher education opportunities in the land.

As a University, we strive to continuously produce knowledge that is of relevance to the community. In this regard, we shall endeavor to include the perspectives of the local community in all our research activities so that together, we can find solutions to the challenges affecting our farmers and the community in general. We are fully committed to making a difference here at Embu County, where the University has found a home.

The Young Coffee Farmers Training wouldn't have come at a better time than now because currently, most of our youths are shunning Agriculture. Indeed, even the agriculture programmes in our institutions of higher learning are not attracting students and many risk closure. It is, therefore, our duty to encourage more and more youths to pursue agriculture-related careers if we are to achieve and sustain our national food security goals.

As one young farmer recently put it, agriculture is more than the backbone of our economy because we cannot live without it. I urge our parents to inform their sons and daughters that those who are brave enough to venture into agricultural-based careers today, when everyone



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is shunning it, will not regret in future. I can assure you that this is a goldmine that is waiting to be discovered by our youth.

The “Seed to Cup” training is tailor made to cover the entire coffee value chain in order to encourage the trainees to identify themselves with numerous opportunities along the value chain. We are confident that the just concluded training will change the face of coffee farming in Kenya which is currently dominated by old farmers averaging 61 years.

We also hope that some of the youths will use the skills gained to innovatively revamp the coffee processing and marketing segments for enhanced profitability. The training also targeted the rejuvenation of the coffee sub-sector which in the recent decades has been dwindling despite being one of the most important contributor of farm-based incomes in the Country.

To the sponsors and organizers, this is just the beginning of a long journey ahead. Let us not tire but roll up our sleeves to ensure that the gospel is widely spread to reach more youths, not only within Embu County, but also in all the other coffee growing counties in Kenya. It is my hope that more funding will be available to enable us to roll out the same initiative to other counties. The University of Embu, with the support of our partners, will continue to support similar initiatives that are geared



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towards empowering the community and building their capacity for social and economic progress.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In conclusion, allow me to once again congratulate the trainees and encourage them to use the skills learned to create jobs rather than to seek employment. I am confident that you have been equipped with all the necessary knowledge and skills that you need to venture into any segment of the coffee value chain as entrepreneurs or employers. Today marks a new chapter in your life. I urge you to use the acquired knowledge and skills to open new doors. Be creative, innovative and impactful. Show the world that University of Embu has helped you to become your best.

I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

God be with you and bless you.

Thank you.

Prof. Daniel Mugendi Njiru, Ph.D.

VICE-CHANCELLOR



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