

SPEECH BY TAGDev STUDENT AT EGERTON UNIVERSITY-Lucky Nyasulu.

My name is Lucky Nyasulu from Malawi, currently a student at Egerton University, Kenya. I grew up in Eswazin, Mzimba district where we could wake up early in the morning and go to farm before going to school. This is a common way of living in many rural areas of Malawi and possibly many countries in Africa. This kind of life was not easy, but it gave me the motivation to work hard in school so that I could become employed one day. Indeed, some years down the line, my dreams came true and I was selected to go to LUANAR where I pursued BSC in Irrigation Engineering. After finishing my degree, all my hope was that I could get a job instantly but I ended up being frustrated in the end.

This is the mentality many youths have, that we will get employed one day. However, things are no longer the same, there is employment crisis not only in Malawi but the whole world and youths are the most victims.

Employment crisis does not mean intelligence crisis. There are still opportunities being young, we are energetic, innovative and creative. We don't need to waste these opportunities but we have to let them serve as capital in our lives. We need to stop thinking of getting employed but rather think of how we can provide opportunities for ourselves and other people.

In other countries youths have organised themselves into groups and are doing collective actions. Organisations find it easy to work with people who are already organised. May we the youths of Africa emulate and learn from this.

There is also need for collaborations between government, youths, faith group leaders, communities in bringing solutions to the problems youths are facing. I also request Governments and NGOs that those youths who have come up with ideas and innovations should be supported and mentored. We appreciate efforts made by AfDB, Tonny Elumelu, FANRPAN and RUFORUM and in supporting the youth.

For example, last week there was a conference in Nairobi where RUFORUM gave awards to some of the young innovators, I was glad that Malawi was represented by a young man Clement Kandodo. He has such a good innovation on biogas production. However, he lacks support to expand his industry. Some organisations visited him and appreciated his technology and took nice pictures of the technology but none of them came back to give support.

Special attention to youth in rural areas is needed through the creation of innovation hubs where youths can brainstorm their ideas and bring them to reality.

The youth have energy, capacity and resilience as well as zeal to learn but we need support to play our role of contributing to the development of our villages, towns, districts and countries. Please embrace our zeal and energy by giving us a hands up.

As a young African, I believe that the youths will not fail you if given support.

As I earlier said, I am a student at Egerton University pursuing masters in Community studies and Extension, it is my strongest desire that I should come back and be the agent of change in rural areas, it's my desire that one day I will have a model farm which will not only help me but the community at large to benefit from modernised technologies. This is feasible through science and innovations.

My sincere heart of thanks go to organisers and funders for supporting my studies and bringing me back home to attend this conference.