



**DeKUT CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH DURING THE 6TH GRADUATION CEREMONY AT
DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
DELIVERED BY PROF. SHELEMLIAH O. KEYA, CHANCELLOR, ON FRIDAY, 28TH APRIL,
2017 AT THE UNIVERSITY GRADUATION GROUNDS**

1. Acknowledgements and Greetings

- Our Chief Guest and Chancellor of University of South Africa (UNISA), His Excellency, former President of the Republic of South Africa Dr Thabo Mbeki, Molo mhlekazi

- Cabinet secretary for Education Dr. Fred Matiangi
- Fellow Chancellor of University of Kabianga Prof. Richard Musangi and fellow Chancellor of Kisii University Prof. Godfrey Muriuki;
- Chair of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Council, Dr. Jane Nyakang'o and Members of Council;
- Chairs of other Universities Councils;
- The Vice Chancellor of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Prof Ndiragu Kioni;
- Vice Chancellors from sister Universities;
- Deputy Vice Chancellors of DeKUT and Deputy Vice Chancellors from other universities;
- Excellencies and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
- Honourable Senators and Members of National Assembly present,
- Honourable County Government Executives and representatives;
- Members of DeKUT University Senate;
- The Alumni Association

- Graduands, Parents, Staff and students;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

2. Welcome and opening remarks

Hamjambo, Moriega adu witu, Molweni, and a very warm welcome to you all this morning.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the sixth Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Graduation ceremony today 28 April 2017. I also extend a very special welcome to the graduands. It is because of you that we are assembled here today. To the graduands parents, families, friends and colleagues who have joined us on this occasion, we thank you.

The graduation ceremony is the most significant and meaningful occasion in the University's calendar—particularly for our graduands. The ceremony creates a rare opportunity for important guests to visit the university. Accordingly we are honoured by the presence of Dr. Fred Matiangi, Cabinet Secretary for MOEST and

Prof Colette Suda Principal Secretary State Department of Higher Education. Dr Matiangi has been here before when he was Cabinet Secretary for ICT but today we appropriate his presence at this Graduation ceremony. We thank the CS for the timely appointment of the second University Council. To this end, I would like to congratulate and welcome the Chair of Council, Dr. Jane Nyakan'go and Council Members to their first graduation ceremony since assuming office.

I am particularly delighted to welcome His Excellency the former President of the Republic of South Africa, Dr. Thabo Mbeki, an eminent Statesman, whose person, far exceeds the degree we will confer upon him today. We are therefore honoured and humbled by his presence hence, I thank him for accepting to receive this Degree, *Honoris Causa*, which pays tribute to the spirit of African liberation heroes.

3. Tribute to Former President of South Africa, His Excellency, Chancellor, Dr. Thabo Mbeki

Members of the Convocation, permit me to congratulate and make a few remarks befitting the presence of His Excellency the former President of South Africa, Dr Thabo Mbeki.

I begin by conveying our best wishes to our Chief Guest, his wife former First Lady Zanele Mbeki, the Mbeki family and the Government and people of South Africa. Not only has the Mbeki family—including his parents the late Govan Mbeki and the late Epainette Mbeki—individually contributed greatly to the freedoms we enjoy and ideals we stand for today as Africans, but they have also lived these ideals. His Excellency, the former President Dr Mbeki is a notable South African and International Leader. He has contributed immensely to African philosophy, education and leadership. He is indeed a gifted orator and poet; his speeches are hardly ever without several lines quoting powerfully from the great philosophers, poets or some other thinkers of his time. I wouldn't dare anyone in dialogue to blankly attempt a speech without proper research in his presence. But let me say this:

Firstly, His Excellency is a philosopher mostly recognised as an intellectual, and a voice of reason. He has made enormous contributions to Africans, Africa's people, most remarkably in the areas of African identity in modern society, intellectual discourse, and guidance. His stance regarding corruption, the rule of law and above all, his stance on the magnitude of social morality as the key weapon against corruption is well known. He continues to champion the struggle against the dispossession, marginalization and oppression.

Secondly, I congratulate His Excellency on his appointment and election as Chancellor of the University of South Africa (UNISA) in February, 2017. UNISA is perhaps the most eminent of South African universities. It was founded in 1873 as an open distance learning institution in Africa. Today it distinguishes itself as the most venerable, devoted distance education university in the world.

Thirdly, His Excellency provides leadership in policy and education, as patron of the Thabo Mbeki Foundation and the Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute hosted at UNISA. The Thabo Mbeki African Leadership Institute promotes debate

on the continent's future and invests in the training of tomorrow's leaders, an ideal we fully prescribe to here at DeKUT.

Fourthly, His Excellency is recognized for his initiation of the rebirth of the African Renaissance. The Mbeki Foundation has also helped reposition Africa and His Excellency's own country South Africa is an outstanding hub in international economic and political affairs. In this position, His Excellency continues to vigorously contribute to the revitalization and development of leaders for Africa.

4. Our Goal towards Self Realization

A major pillar in Dedan Kimathi University of Technology is, “attaining self realization of your dreams through creating extensive networks of people and establishing collaborations, here and around the world”. This goal is supported by the institution's programme for scholarship through self actualization and technology innovation to assist the university in its effort to become a preeminent Kenyan and African University giving hope in the service of humanity. This goal is also led by the recognition that research is a critical pillar both at the institutional

and national development levels. Our thrust is to provide technological education and create distinctive structures for research, innovations, extension and technology transfer. These efforts are steered by the desire to promote African thought, philosophies, and interests through investigation, scholarship and partnership.

Where are we at 4 and half years after award of Charter?

Ladies and Gentlemen, it would be remiss if I didn't briefly highlight a few of the University's recent significant achievements and challenges:

- Between 2017 and 2022 the education sector in Kenya will be piloting a new education system. As a university we need to be prepared for the forthcoming challenges. To this end we should intensify our efforts towards excellence by strengthening our Strategic Plan through continuous monitoring and evaluation in order to realize our commitments with development partners, students and staff.

- The quality and relevance of our programmes is what sets us apart from others and the only way we can get this quality assurance is to have as many of our programmes internationally recognised through accreditations.
- I notice the University has sent out an Announcement and Call for Papers with regard to the 3rd International Conference on Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship-the conference scheduled from the 1st – 3rd November 2017 here at DeKUT main Campus, in Nyeri. This will help you benchmark yourselves alongside other intellectuals whom you will invite for the colloquium.
- Accreditation of the DEKUT engineering programmes by the engineering Board of Kenya was a mammoth step being the first among technological Universities established in 2012. However we should uphold those standards and aspire to benchmark with the best universities in the world.
- The University has embarked on partnering and building community linkages through technology transfer and this is commendable. I note that DeKUT has taken a lead in this coffee growing region of Kenya. The University has

initiated research, training, provision of coffee seedlings, advisory services and value addition to produce quality coffee and coffee products. This is also commendable. However, the university need to match the market demand for seedlings and packed coffee.

- I am pleased that the university has started the process towards collaborating with other stakeholders in the coffee sector towards promote coffee tourism and conservation. In this regard the DEKUT conservancy is an embodiment of this vision.
- One challenge remains and that is developing and strengthening research laboratories to incubation and up scaling innovations.
- Globalization is yet another challenge we face, as we continue to reflect on the consciousness of our liberation struggle. Globalization in the 21st century is a challenge to the creation of new knowledge and is making us more aware of what makes each of our nations and cultures unique, while also revealing the bonds we share. As a research institution, the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology aspires to become a leading institution, to engage at the national

and global level through the personal experiences and contributions of students and lecturers. There has never been a greater time for higher education to seek out new knowledge in new communities, because whether we are based in Nairobi, Lagos, Cape Town, Toronto or Cairo, we share the language of ideas. In this rapidly changing world, we have never had so much to learn from one another. Globalization necessitates that we “compete with everyone from everywhere for everything”.¹

5. Message to the Graduands

Congratulations, you have done very well and deserve to celebrate because today’s graduation mark the end of one journey and the beginning of a more important journey—the journey of life. New beginnings in life are full of immense promise. I know that some of you may be leaving the University while some may continue here or to another place to undertake further studies. No matter what choice you make, remember the important role that you could play as a DeKUT graduate and alumnus. I would like to draw your attention to a few areas that will be useful.

¹ See *Globality: Competing with Everyone from Everywhere for Everything* (11 June 2008) by Hal Sirkin, Jim Hemerling, and Arindam Bhattacharya.

Firstly, you can become good representatives of the University and be role models in your respective counties, places of work or the countries you will find yourselves in, more importantly live and uphold a sense of *high integrity and moral values*.

Secondly, one of the most important things you learn at university is promoting change while aiming for excellence and or, distinction. I would implore you to apply this principle throughout your lives.

Thirdly, as I have said before, the university is a place to test ideas and the truth. The human rights for which Dedan Kimathi and other freedom fighters fought, is now entrenched in the Bill of Rights, in the Constitution of Kenya (2010).² Academic freedom is part of freedom of expression. Let me remind you, that, it is among those fundamental rights which human rights fighters called for—it is not a right for the rulers, it is not a right for academia or the elite, it is a right for everyone—and we cannot deny the truth.

² Constitution of Kenya, 2010

As you go out there continue to pursue the truth and to test ideas—go and make the unthinkable, realism—as it does not end here. The mission of higher education must be to create and advance knowledge, and in consonance with our principles of the place of African liberation struggle, culture and national identity, we must always draw on our roots and our experiences.

Finally, be grateful to your maker, God, to your families, to your sponsors—to the county and national Governments and society. Be thankful to your lecturers, and mentors, who have sacrificed a lot to get you to where you are today. Go out into the world a much better person, ready with new knowledge and skills, willing to share and contribute to the improvement of your respective communities and our Country.

7. DeKuT and Future Developments

- Your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am pleased to say that the university has attracted research funding from various global organizations like the Belgium Flemish Inter University Council (VLIR-UOS) for teaching

and research development in postgraduate engineering programmes. There is also research funding for Geothermal Energy that extended to the Geothermal Energy Training and Research Institute by USAID, among others.

- The university should continue to encourage and support academic staff in attracting more research grants, to build and enhance the ability of the university to deliver its services to the community.
- We applaud the decision by the Government of Kenya for allocation of 2% of its GDP to research. Last year Kes 3 billion was set aside for research. And on 6th March the CS launched Utafiti Newton Fund and the second call is on now. Researchers should take advantage of this by teaming up with colleagues from UK, South Africa and industry.

8. Thanks and Appreciation

Our efforts to maintain DEKUT as the premier regional tertiary institution and drive towards excellence has received enormous goodwill and support from many quarters. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our national and county

governments, local partners, and our friends for their dedicated support. I also thank the University Council and its Committees, the Vice Chancellor, Senate and Senior Management, staff and students for growing the university from the time it was chartered in September 2012 till today. I wish to assure the founders of Kimathi Institute of Technology that DeKUT is in good standing as evidenced by the recent CUE Audit Report of February 2017. To this end I appreciate the sustained interest by the founders of this university as it matures. At this ceremony at least three or so of the founders are here (Mr Waibochi, Prof Godfrey Muruiki and Prof Francis Gichaga. The University has strong foundations to successfully implement its Strategic Plan for transforming DeKUT into an excellent institution engaged and contributing to the development of our nation and beyond.

At this juncture I wish to thank the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education Science and Technology for the solid support given. We also acknowledge the contribution of various donors and partners of the University.

9. A Final Word

Ladies and gentlemen,

In accordance with the Universities Act 2012, the Chancellor is appointed to serve for five years. This therefore is my last and final graduation in the position, and role as Chancellor of this University. I am grateful to the Government of Kenya for the appointment and to you all for the support you gave me over the past five years.

Once again I congratulate you all and wish you the very best in your endeavours. Much is expected of you; I have every confidence that each and every one of you will excel in your chosen paths. Be good role models of DEKUT. For continuing students emulate the graduands and identify with DEKUT and its ideals of a strong, innovative, ethical and excellent institution

May God bless you?

Asanteni Sana; Ne wega Mno; I thank you

Or as our distinguished guest would say in South Africa

Ke a leboga

Siyabonga

Enkosi

Ngiyabonga

Dankie

**Professor Shellemiah Okoth Keya Chancellor Dedan Kimathi University of
Technology**

(28 April 2017)