

SPEECH OF THE VICE CHANCELLOR, DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, PROF. P. NDIRANGU KIONI, DURING THE SECOND GRADUATION CEREMONY ON 25TH APRIL, 2014

- Chancellor Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Prof. Shellemiah Keya
- Principal Secretary, State Department of Education Science and Technology, Prof. Colleta Suda
- Chairman of the University Council, Dr. Dulacha Barako and other Members of the University Council
- Chancellor of Karatina University, Prof. Kiptoon, Public University Present
- Vice Chancellors of Karatina University, Prof. Mucai Muciri, and of South Eastern University Prof. Godfrey Muluvi, Principals of Kirinyaga, Prof. Mary Ndungu,
- Deputy Vice Chancellors
- Deans of Schools, Directors of Institutes, Chairpersons of Department
- Registrars
- Staff and Students

- Parents and guardians
 - Graduands
 - Distinguished Guests
 - Ladies and Gentlemen
-
- All protocols observed

Good morning!

I take this opportunity to welcome the Principal Secretary, State Department of Science and Technology, the 2014 graduands, their parents, guardians and sponsors, and our distinguished guests to this graduation ceremony which is the second for this Institution in its new status as a Chartered University. I also welcome the Chancellor, Prof. Shellemiah O. Keya, DeKUT to this ceremony to confer degrees and award diplomas and certificates.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, The university continues to grow both in the number of students and range of programmes. Today's number of graduands is 721 compared to last year's number of 603. This is also the first that we have graduands for Master of Science in Industrial Engineering and Management; Bachelor of Science degrees in Nursing, Electrical and Electronic Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Civil, and Mechatronic

Engineering; and for Diploma in Building and Construction. Thus, this year's graduands are drawn from a total of 19 academic programmes.

Some of the graduands joined the University way back in 2009 when the Kimathi University College of Technology was very young and had to contend with many challenges typical of young institutions. They have, therefore, been in integral part of the transformation of this Institution to what it is today. By being pioneers in a young and growing Institution, the graduands have without doubt gained invaluable entrepreneurial experience, the value of continuous development, resilience, and innovation, alongside their academic pursuits.

They have contributed way of life whose development they have immensely contributed to will be cherished by the younger brother and sisters for years to come.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, we continue to pursue our vision to be a premier technological University excelling in quality education, research and community linkages.

Research Pillar

We consider international partnerships, particularly with Universities abroad, to be crucial to the attainment of this Vision. Very early, this University identified internationalization of her programmes as important in enhancing quality and also producing graduate who would be internationally competitive. Furthermore, we

recognized that we could enhance our capacities and do more by creating a framework where Professors in our partner institutions could participate and contribute to our academic programmes. We piloted this first in the school of business and this enabled us to graduate the four PhD students last year and another six this year. This has now been extended to three other programmes. The Master's degree graduands in Industrial Engineering and Management have benefited from the inputs of Professors of the University of Leuven for coursework and thesis supervision. This programme was started two years ago and has 30 students in the pipeline, of whom three are graduating today. In October last year we launched the Master of Science degree in Geothermal Energy technology under similar arrangements and with extensive involvement and support of the two main geothermal corporations in Kenya: The Geothermal Development Corporation and the Kenya Energy Generating Company (KENGEN). **There are already 20 students in this programme.**

Since last year, we have been collaborating with a University in Germany, the Technical University of Applied Sciences, Wildau, on developing and implementing a double Master degree programme in Mechanical Engineering, this collaboration got financial support from DAAD. This programme is anchored on our Master of Science degree in Advanced Manufacturing and Automation and will involve exchange of students and Professors between the two Universities. **The programme will admit the first group of students later in May this year.**

All the three programmes are being implemented in collaboration with the industry with a special focus on the needs of key sectors in Kenya's Vision 2030 development blueprint. In this regard, I would like to thank the Ministry of Education Science and Technology for providing African Development Bank Scholarships to support the staff in the Universities, Polytechnics, Technical Training Institutes, and Institutes of Technologies to enroll in the three Master of Science degree programmes.

The Community Linkage Pillar

The University continues to benefit from our other international partners and to work with them to impact on the livelihood of ordinary Kenyans. We have a long term collaboration with the College of the Rockies, in British Columbia, Canada, with whom the department of Nursing are implementing a five year project: the Maternal Access and Infant Survival Health Advancement project; which is appropriately referred to simply as the MAISHA project, in Migori and Nyeri counties. The DeKUT Department of Nursing staff have continued to enhance their skills through the collaboration. The plan is to train at least 80% of the health workers in the target facilities in the two counties on Emergency Neonatal and Obstetric Care (EmOC). Three nursing instructors from DeKUT have been trained as instructors for an internationally-recognized EmOC programme, and are now on the national Ministry of Health (MOH) training roster. This has extended the reach of the department other regions of the country beyond the initial the MAISHA supported facilities. MAISHA is undertaken with the financial

support of the Government of Canada through the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development (DFATD).

In July 2013, the University embarked on a three year development plan to make the University coffee farm a demonstration farm that encompasses the entire coffee value chain from coffee seedlings nursery, through to harvesting and wet-milling. A pilot processing and packaging lab will also be developed to complement the existing quality lab. This will support courses offered on Coffee Cupping and Quality Management and advanced research into various coffee aspects. In this regard, we are grateful to the Nyeri County Governor for recognizing this capacity of the University, and giving the staff here an opportunity to contribute at various forums to the discussion on coffee. We also appreciate those cooperatives which are already sponsoring students in our coffee diploma and certificate programmes. In this regard I would like to thank the ... Fair , an international ... who have provided a number of scholarships to DeKUT for students to pursue the coffee diploma and courses at undergraduate and graduate levels degree for the coffee sector.

The university is deepening its collaboration with the key stakeholders in the coffee industry namely: the Coffee Board of Kenya (CBK) and the Coffee Development Fund (CoDF). With the support of key stakeholders, DeKUT hosted the Kahawa Youth Initiative aimed at attracting young people to be involved in the coffee industry and to make them aware of the various business opportunities available in the sector.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I would like to appreciate the role that is played by our immediate neighbors the Hostel providers. At the very inception of this institution as a University, we made a decision to partner with private hostel providers on the students' accommodation so as to free the University's limited funds to development of core educational facilities. This partnership has continued to develop and to grow. Indeed, the student accommodation capacity in the neighborhood of the university has grown significantly, and more importantly there has been a remarkable improvement in the quality of the services given. We are looking forward to having all our students accommodated in the immediate neighborhood of the University.

Even then, we are looking forward to the Nyeri County Government to assist in the macadamizing of the road networks, paving of the walkways in the accommodation places, erecting streetlights and floodlights masts to enhance the security in our neighbourhood. We are aware that they are working on these plans and we thank them for these positive considerations.

Education Pillar

Mr. Chancellor Sir, in September 2013, the University jointly with the Japanese Society of Electromagnetic and Applied Mechanics (JSAEM), and the Kenya Society of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and our visiting Japanese Professors and JKUAT colleagues, organized an International Conference, on applied Mechanics and

Electromagnetic, which attracted about 35 research papers. We also marked the International GIS day.

Again, in February this year, DeKUT hosted its first International Conference on African Liberation Heroes during the Kimathi week, which again attracted a wide cross-section of participants from Kenya and abroad.

We also launched the DeKUT Journal, for purposes of disseminating the University's research output and also promoting scholarship and publications by members of the University.

We mention a few of these activities as a pointer to where the University, which for all practical purposes a very young institution, is headed with regard to our Research and Linkages Pillar.

Technology Mandate

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University's interpretation of technology mandate is that the country is desirous of attaining industrial transformation as stipulated in the Vision 2030. We note that, technological development requires not only the mastery of techniques but the ability to establish and run successful enterprises. It is only then that the technology can contribute to wealth creation of a country. Our mix of academic

programmes- and spread over Engineering, ICT, Food Technology, Health Sciences, Applied Sciences, and Business Studies - is fit for this purpose.

Even then there is the additional demand that a University of Technology should provide a route by which persons who initially have diploma qualifications can attain higher qualifications. DeKUT has made provision for this. Indeed, all diploma programmes developed at DeKUT enable a candidate to transfer some credits to the corresponding degree programme.

We welcome the recognition by the Ministry of Education of our potential to contribute to technological education by one of the three Universities to operate as Technical University and anchor the higher the higher level development of technical human resource in the country for attainment of Vision 2030 through Science Technology and Innovation. We shall continue to diversify and strengthen our programmes in this direction.

Furthermore, as a University of Technology we train people to recognized and duly licensed Professionals in their field of study. For this purpose, the University continues to embrace the inputs of various professional and statutory organizations. I make special mention of the Nursing Council of Kenya who have worked with the University in the

development and subsequent implementation of the Nursing Degree programme so that the graduates from the programme may be registered.

I also mention the professional guidance of the engineers under the auspices of the Institution of Engineers of Kenya (IEK) and the considerations and recommendations made on our programmes by the Engineers Board of Kenya and its predecessor the Engineers Registration Board. The University has responded to them and prepared the graduating students in engineering accordingly. We are eagerly looking forward to the formal conclusion of the accreditation process, and subsequently, registration of our graduating students as graduate engineers. We also welcome the recently released accreditation guidelines by EBK.

We have also encouraged and facilitated students to seek wherever possible, and as early as they can, professional qualifications in their respective areas. I note that a number in the school of business have completed their CPA papers and others in actuarial science have already successfully completed Actuarial Professional qualifications papers.

Academic Model

Mr. Chancellor Sir, It is to be noted that the best known Universities in the world are known – because of the quality of their graduates and research outputs. Thus, during these formative years we are giving special attention to the development of a research and innovation culture, and provision of holistic education. These things take time and results may not be obvious in the short term. We have already established the necessary support structures such as the Directorate of Quality Assurance. In a number of graduate programmes have been developed and more are scheduled to be developed. The strategy is to introduce undergraduate students to high level being undertaken by Masters and PhD students. This is expected to considerably enhance quality of teaching and learning and the ability of students to solve practical problems. In this regard we embrace the guiding philosophy of **University education as expounded on a long time ago by William Von Humboldt; that a University student should be researcher by themselves a seeking knowledge and only being guided by the Professor in this process.**

DeKUT has greatly embraced ICT technology in every aspect. DeKUT invested heavily in broadband connectivity. As shown by the KENET survey last year, it was rated as the University with highest internet connectivity per student among public universities.

Even then, we still do require physical facilities to create the right environment for the implementation of the programmes. We request the parent Ministry to add some resources to train and produce quality graduates.

Alumni

To the graduands: I know that this has not been an easy journey and that you have worked hard and long hours to meet the demanding requirements of your respective programmes. I heartily congratulate you for your achievement. Our best wishes to you as start you chosen careers.

We shall releasing you to the Society but now become members of the Alumni Association of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology and through this it is expected that you will continue you involvement and association with the University. This Alumni association will foster a good networking ground for you graduands and also enable you to contribute to the development of DeKUT and yourself. The University will play its part in supporting the growth of the Alumni Association. Indeed, the University has been facilitating the establishment of the Association to help ensure a well connected alumni community which will go a long way to boosting the growth of the University. I take this opportunity to welcome you to Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Alumni Association.

Graduands you may register from this link (<http://dkut.ac.ke/alumni/index.php/online-registration>) on the university website.

In conclusion, today's graduation is yet another great milestone in the history of this University. For some of the students it has been a five year journey. It would not have been achieved without the **full** cooperation of students, the commitment of staff, the guidance of the University Council and support of the Ministry. We also appreciate the role of our co-trainers, the various hospitals, industries and business enterprises which support us by opening their doors to our students and guiding them through the complex world of work. Most importantly, there are the parents and guardians who facilitate the students to be here.

Apprciation of

Chancellor

VCs and

Principals

EBK Chairman,

HELB Chiramn

HELB Chairman and former Chairman of DeKUT Council Wachira,

and all other guests who am not able to mention individually by name but have come to support us in this graduation ceremony.

We say a great thank you to you all.

God Bless the University! And God Bless you all