SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE Ag. CHANCELLOR AND COUNCIL CHAIRMAN DR. JANE NYAKANG'O ON FRIDAY, 28TH MAY 2021 AT THE DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Acknowledgments

The Chief Guest, Chief Administrative Secretary, State Departments for Early Learning & Basic Education and University Education and Research, Ministry of Education, Ms. Mumina Bonaya

Members of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Council,

Vice Chancellor of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Prof. Ndirangu Kioni,

Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Prof. Esther Magiri

Members of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Senate,

The Alumni Association,

Parents and guardians,

All our graduands,

Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning,

1. It is my pleasure this morning to welcome you all to the 10th Graduation Ceremony honoring the achievements of our graduands. And I do this in my duel roles: My role as the Chairman of DeKUT Council and my temporary role as an acting Chancellor for this graduation ceremony. I want to extend my congratulations to the 1314 students graduating today. Years of your hard work and sacrifice have culminated in this auspicious occasion that has made us very proud of your accomplishments. Well done.

Ladies and gentlemen,

2. This marks the second virtual graduation ceremony the University has undertaken since the pandemic. To this end, we are delighted by the increasing positive feedback we get from the industry on the performance of our graduates and the impact they continue to make in society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. We are in interesting times. The coronavirus pandemic that hit the country in March last year has brought about a paradigm shift in the education sector. As we did last year during the first lockdown, we are once again holding a virtual graduation ceremony. Further, traditional methods of teaching have been challenged. The University had to migrate from face-to-face in person teaching to remote teaching. And this was employed for some time before students could report back on campus. Indeed it has been extremely challenging for the university to discharge her mandate of teaching. But, I am pleased to note that despite this, the programmes are running almost on schedule and because of this we are able to have this 10th graduation ceremony in May in keeping with our tradition.

4. The University remains committed to providing an academically stimulating, culturally, diverse and quality learning environment that fosters research, innovation and technology

development towards producing relevant technical and managerial human resource and leaders to contribute to the attainment of national development goals.

Ladies and gentlemen,

5. The University is spearheading the establishment of a Science and Technology Park to encourage cooperation and synergy between universities, research institutions and the private sector and create a favorable environment for innovation, renovation and training. The proposed Science and Technology Park aims at creating high- tech clusters that serve as catalysts to technology development, economic transformation, and wealth creation with a link to university knowledge generation.

6. Among the key responsibilities of the University Council in her oversight role, is to ensure that there is proper corporate governance, that the University complies with the law in her activities including efficient and effective utilization of resources. I note with appreciation that the management continues to record high levels of compliance with the law and necessary statutory provisions including obtaining unqualified audited accounts.

7. An additional critical function of council is to oversee the development of a University and approve plans and policies. In this regard, the council has a special responsibility of shepherding the establishment of a Science and Technology Park. The Science and Technology Park, which has been named the Dedan Kimathi Science and Technology Park is a national project of the Ministry of Education, under the State Department of University Education and Research.

   World over, a good Science and Technology Park is a platform where University, Industry (business) and government come together in the same physical space, and an increasingly virtual space, so as to accelerate the transfer and application of knowledge to create new products and companies with a goal of creating wealth and employment.

8. To this end, the Council has to contribute to the development of a Research-Innovation ecosystem that is going to produce the intellectual property, and human resource at a level sufficiently high enough to create the required number of start-up companies and new products for a thriving science and technology park.

   The Council has approved the establishment of seventeen (17) specialized research and innovation centres. We now have, among others,

   - ✓ The Start-Up Centre that promotes the development of prototypes and establishment of spin-off companies and enterprises.
   - ✓ Centre for Development of Electronic Devices that engineers designs circuits for various electronic devices depending on functionalities specified.
   - ✓ DeKUT/KFC Film, Gaming and Animation Hub that builds local capacity in animation, game development and film production in readiness for the establishment of a digital media city within the park.
   - ✓ Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Management that offers mentorship support and entrepreneurship training to innovators and startup companies.
   - ✓ Centre for Nano-materials and Nanoscience Research that creates capacity for research and development in thin film deposition, nanofabrication, and characterization.
   - ✓ Centre for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence that develops diagnostics tools for medical imaging, develops systems for natural ecosystems and water resources monitoring and also develops sensor systems and mobile applications for precision farming.
   - ✓ Software Development Centre that provides local software solutions.

We note with appreciation that these Centres are already operational.

The Council has also approved a framework under which private companies and businesses may be established at the park.

Already, we have partnered with semiconductor Technologies Limited. and other companies in electronic manufacturing. The activities of Semiconductor Technologies limited were commissioned by the President last month and more companies are coming on board to take up the manufacturing space.

9. I take this opportunity to acknowledge the support of the government and the Ministry of Education by establishing and funding the Science and Technology park at our University. The government through their support in the science and technology park has made it an engine for economic development through different companies that have come in, and as a University we need to rally behind it. We also appreciate the government for sharing resources and supporting the development of the park making DeKUT an ideal set up to grow businesses.

10. The Government has supported three (3) projects; the Freedom Hall, Resource Center Phase Three(3), and the Academic Block. We thank the government for this generous support even as we seek support for new projects when funds will be available.

Ladies and gentlemen,

11. I would also like to thank the community for their support of the University. Over the years they have hosted our students in the private hostels around the University and even sometimes in their homes. They have created an enabling environment for the institution to grow and thrive. I pray that the symbiotic relationship that has developed over the years will continue to grow stronger in the future even as new developments come up in the University. Thank you very much from the bottom of our hearts.

To the graduands,

12. The world is competitive and tough; as a university, we have given you the best skills and equipped you with tools to take it on. Be good ambassadors of the university; carry yourself with dignity, discipline, and hard work as you build strong careers to build the nation.

I wish you well.