SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE AG. CHANCELLOR AND COUNCIL CHAIRMAN DR. JANE NYAKANG'O ON FRIDAY, 17TH DECEMBER 2021 AT THE DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY FREEDOM HALL

Acknowledgments:

Dr. Roselida Owuor, Representative of the Principal Secretary, State Department for University Education;

Members of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Council;

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

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

Members of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Senate;

The Alumni Association;

Parents and guardians;

All our graduands;

Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning,

Opening Remarks

I am glad to join you today as we honor the graduating class of 2021. Allow me to begin by congratulating each and every one of you graduating here today, for the determination that you have demonstrated during this difficult time of the COVID-19 pandemic. You have triumphed in spite of these extraordinary circumstances.

It is a momentous day as we crown you with degrees and diplomas in various specializations. It is the fruits of years of hard work and sacrifice. Well done.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This marks the third virtual graduation ceremony that the University has undertaken since the pandemic. I would like to thank the dedicated team of staff members who have worked tirelessly to enable and ensure the smooth transmission of this virtual graduation across the dedicated platforms.

Let me focus on 5 key issues:

1. **The shift in the Education Sector**

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are in a different era that has brought a shift and a new reality that we should all embrace. The education sector across the world has experienced a great shift that has never been seen before. In person learning, face to face interaction between a lecturer and students in a lecture room used to be the standard way of teaching and learning. Now it competes with online teaching and it has to be negotiated. Learning was defined by location, now a lecturer can teach from anywhere around the globe. Professors and students learning time used to be synchronized, now they can be asychronized.

I'm proud of the University for having been able to quickly embrace the changes and re-strategize to effectively enable students to continue learning and graduate on time by leveraging on technology.

2. Approved plans and policies

Ladies and gentlemen,

The University Council in her oversight role, approves budgets, human resource recruitment and development plans, approves policies and deploys resources to the various university activities and as an employer, negotiates CBAs. In this regard, the council has continued to approve the establishment of centres and accompanying policies geared at enabling the development of a research and innovation eco-system of the University. A vibrant Research, Development, and Innovation ecosystem is vital to the success of the Dedan Kimathi Science and Technology Park (DeST-Park). The Science and Technology Park will create high-tech clusters to serve as catalysts to technology development, economic transformation, and wealth creation with a link to university knowledge generation.

The Science and Technology Park will catalyze the development of new companies, attract international partners, and create high-quality jobs for young people. As it evolves, it will provide employment opportunities to some of you graduating today.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Council has approved the establishment of nineteen (19) specialized research and innovation centers most of which are already operational and a few are in the formative stages.

The Council has also approved a framework under which private companies and businesses can be established at the DeST-Park. As a start, the University partnered with the Semiconductor Technologies Limited whose operations at the University began last year of 2020 and was commissioned by the President in April of this year 2021.

3. **Staff Welfare and Development**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I take this opportunity to thank our staff members for their continued dedication to their work despite the pending issues on the implementation of the 2017/2021 National Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA). This matter is being handled by the Inter-Public Universities Councils Consultative Forum (IPUCCF) and the Ministry of Education, through a National Implementation Committee and we hope for a speedy conclusion and implementation of the recommendations.

As a council, we are pleased to note that through the support of the University, a high number of academic staff members have acquired their PhDs or are in the process of acquiring them. We are aiming at getting to the next level and growing this number by 90% in the next few years. Towards this end, we note that a number of staff members are in the advanced stages of Ph.D. studies and will conclude within the next three years.

4. **Government Support**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the government for its support through the Ministry of Education, State Department for University Education and Research. The University, being a government funded public university, has benefited from this support. It has grown in the last few years and continues to focus on its core business as a University of Technology. To continue growing, we require a funding mechanism that takes cognisance of the unique needs of a University of Technology. In the last four years that I have been in office, the student population at the University has grown tremendously from six thousand seven hundred and seventy one (6771) to nine thousand two hundred and thirty six (9,236) and with this growth comes an increased need for specialized training facilities, equipment, and human resource all of which will benefit from appropriate funding mechanism. We are committed to working together with the Ministry and all stakeholders to make this great university a world-class institution.

5. **To the graduands,**

We have given you the skills and competencies you require to adapt to the dynamic realities of the modern job market not only as an employee but also as an

entrepreneur and job creator. We look to thriving enterprises started by you in the coming years. Be assured of the University's support as you walk on this adventurous path. We are proud of you. And, as you pursue your dreams out there, be good ambassadors of DeKUT.

Once again, congratulations to the class of 2021.