DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY
P.O.BOX PRIVATE BAG-10143, NYERI
Telephone: 061-2050000, 0727088807
Email: pro@dkut.ac.ke; website: www.dkut.ac.ke
Public Relations Department

SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE CABINET SECRETARY MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, PROF. GEORGE MAGOHA, ON THURSDAY &FRIDAY 26TH& 27 MAY 2022 DURING THE DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY 12TH GRADUATION CEREMONY

- Ag. Chancellor and Chairman of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Council; Dr. Jane Nyakang'o;
- 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;
- Members of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Senate;
- Distinguished guests;
- The Alumni Association;
- Parents and guardians;
- Graduands;
- Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning,

1. **Preliminaries**

It is with great pleasure that I join you on this important occasion of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology's 12th graduation ceremony. I applaud the Dedan Kimathi University council and management on successfully leading and growing this outstanding university to its current status.

As a ministry, we consider this as an important milestone in developing the manpower needed for the development of this country and we look forward to the great contributions that you the graduands will make to the development of this country.

2. **Create local leadership capacity**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Universities are the think tanks of every great nation. They are institutions where great minds are nurtured and even greater leaders are born. I urge Universities to grow their staff members, especially those who show potential and talent in various fields. University management's should focus on capability and not rank when identifying those who they identify as capable of championing programs, innovations and research.

Once identified, university management should focus on developing and supporting these individuals to reach they full potential. This will go a long way in not only developing Universities but also creating a pool of talent which the country can tap into for national development.

3. **Recruit based on talent**

The success and sustainability of every great institution is pegged upon the caliber of its staff. Great institutions thrive due to the high quality of human resource they attract and retain. Universities should be the hall mark of excellence when it comes to this.

I urge all Universities to recruit purely based on talent and not tribal affiliation. This will ensure that they get the best talent from across the country. These people will in turn produce the best results in research, innovation and program development. Any University that recruits based on tribe or regional affiliation has lost its way and will soon enough lose its excellence and get overtaken by those Universities that focus on attracting the best talent regardless of their ethnic background.

4. **Focus on University mandate**

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Each University was given a mandate upon its charter. The race for numbers in student enrollment as Universities focused on their self sponsored programs saw many Universities move away from their initial mandate in order to attract more students. Over the years, this has lead to the dilution of the quality of education in some of our institutions as well as the loss of excellence in various fields by the same Universities.

I commend Dedan Kimathi University of Technology for standing firm in its mandate in the STEM field. I urge the University Senate and Management to ensure that they do not deviate from this mandate. Further, you should focus on the mandate as opposed to the numbers of students being recruited into the programs in order to guarantee quality of education. While I understand that the current funding model is not favorable for this approach, I urge you to be patient because in due time laws will be revised to allow Universities to focus on their mandates.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

5. **Research and innovation**

Research and innovation are essential components for improving Kenyans' lives, increasing our country's global competitiveness and economic growth, and creating much-needed jobs for our youth. Universities must continue to provide solutions to the country's problems.

I'm delighted to report that during my recent visit to this university, I was impressed by some of the work done in support of the Big 4 Agenda. The DeKUT Centre for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence that has developed diagnostics tools for medical imaging. They have also developed systems for natural ecosystems and water resources monitoring and also sensor systems and mobile applications for precision farming.

My visit to the workshops I met SMEs who were there because they were getting solutions from the University for their innovations and machinery. I was able to witness the partnership between the University and Laikipia County Government and innovators of Laikipia County in developing innovations. I was impressed by the level of collaboration that I saw.

This is a great example of how Universities can partner with innovators to push for the development of innovations that can compete at a global level.

6. **Challenging Universities to develop solutions to national problems**

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Our country faces challenges such as drought, food wastage and water management. It is my firm belief that Universities should be at the forefront of developing solutions for these problems. For example, our country has many water bodies and yet most of our country which is in arid and semi arid areas, faces challenges with water. This is something that Universities can come up with a solution to so as to support agriculture in those regions.
I am pleased that DeKUT, has taken the lead in developing solutions. Their partnership with the County Government of Laikipia and SME's in Laikipia County to develop the Industrial Scale Automated Maize Drier (ISAMD) is a solution to a big problem in agriculture and that is the preservation of grains and prevention of aflatoxin. This in turn will improve food security in the country and give farmers better returns for their grain since they will be able to wait for better market prices if their grain is well preserved.

7. **Transfer of skills to the community**

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I urge Universities to be at the forefront of transferring skills to the local communities. This can be done through short programs and well as community support programs. It is important that even as Universities focus on undergrdaute and graduate programs that they do not do away entirely with diploma and certificate programs. This is important because engineers and other STEM professionals need technicians who they can works with and by ensuring that Universities support these programs then these professionals are guaranteed well trained technicians who they can work with in the field.

I am pleased to learn that DeKUT has a Bachelor of Education Technology program as well as a postgraduate diploma program which is geared towards creating capacity in the TIVET sector by training tutors for TIVET institutions.

8. **University funding**

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Universities must aim at specialization and strategically invest in programs that will attract funding rather than mere duplication of programs. With the current issues that universities are facing as a result of a decreased in funding, I encourage universities to focus on research and innovation.

If Universities can aim to achieve at least get 30-40% of their funding to come from research grants then the current funding crisis will be averted. I urge University management to support and develop their staff members who show great potential in attracting research grants. As I previously stated about talent, such staff members should be supported regardless of their ranks in order to succeed in their fields. Their success will translate into the success of the University.

I also urge Universities to diversify and look for research funding from the global pool. While the government has set aside a research fund through the National Research Fund (NRF), I believe that this is hardly adequate for all research and ignoring international funding sources is unwise as they funds there are adequate.

9. **The ministry's commitment to supporting Universities**

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As I conclude, the Ministry of Education is committed to providing the appropriate support and an enabling environment to enhance the potential of universities to grow into credible Institutions that produce highly skilled graduates for the job market.

10. **Advice to the graduands**

To the graduands,

We are here today to affirm your successful education and the skills you have acquired. Utilize the skills and competencies acquired to uplift yourself, your family, and also to sustain a Kenyan knowledge-based economy that is globally competitive. As you go out to start new chapters in your lives, the government will

remain supportive of your endeavors. Be entrepreneurial and always search and respond to opportunities.

Congratulations.