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 AG. CHANCELLOR AND COUNCIL CHAIRMAN DR. JANE NYAKANG'O ON FRIDAY, 16TH DECEMBER 2022, AT THE DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY FREEDOM HALL

Acknowledgements:

- The Chief Guest, Deputy President, His Excellency, Hon. Rigathi Gachagua
- Members of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Council;
- Prof. Ndirangu Kioni, Vice Chancellor of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology;
- Deputy Vice-Chancellors of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology;
- Members of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Senate;
- The Alumni Association;
- Parents and guardians;
- Graduands;
- Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning

1. Opening Remarks

It is my pleasure this morning to welcome you all to the 13th Graduation Ceremony honoring the achievements of our graduands. Indeed, this convocation is a testimony that you have successfully gone through academic processes and you are well equipped with relevant skills, knowledge and values commensurate with the demands of our economy. It is my sincere hope that the capacity and competence gained here will go a long way in solving the challenges facing our society. Well done.

2. 10th Anniversary

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This 13th Graduation Ceremony coincides with the 10th Anniversary since the University was awarded a Charter on 14th December 2012. The University intends to hold special celebrations early next year to commemorate the 10th Anniversary. This graduation ceremony is also phenomenal since it marks the last term of the current DeKUT Council, since her appointment on 10th March 2017. The term ends on 10th March 2023. During her tenure, the Council has been able to offer policy directives to the University, which has resulted in various remarkable achievements. I wish to commend my Council for these various achievements realized.

3. Approved Policies and Plans

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Council has approved 22 policies to ensure that the University is in compliance with national laws and to enable the delivery of her mandates. To name but a few, we approved the Graduate Assistantship Policy, which will give opportunities to top-notch graduates who wish to pursue careers in research and academia. The Graduate Assistantship program allows graduates who want to pursue their studies at DeKUT to come and enrol in the Masters Degree programmes while getting an allowance as they work for the University.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Constitution requires that the University, as a national institution, as much as possible have a significant representation of different ethnic groups that make up Kenya in the staff population. In order to comply with this constitutional requirement, the council approved an affirmative action policy. The other policies enacted by the Council include:

i. Policy of creation of Independent Centres,
ii. Incenting Research and Writing policy,
iii. Policy guiding on the relationships at the workplace,
iv. Science Park and Technology Policy,

4. Centres at the University

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Council has also approved the establishment of self-financing centres, currently numbering to 20, to build the human resource required and to generate revenue for the University. The Centres include; Siemens Training Centre, Center for Biomass Energy Studies, Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Management, Center for Data Science Artificial Intelligence, and Centre for Development of Electronic Devices.

5. Science and Technology Park

Ladies and gentlemen,

Further, the Council approved the establishment of the Science at Technology Park (STP) at DeKUT on 18th August 2017. The purpose of the STP is to bring rapid development in technology and knowledge-intensive areas and the creation of new enterprises. To this end, Council set aside 177.8 acres of the University land for the establishment of the STP; approved the incorporation of the STP Master Plan into the University's Master plan; and approved STP Legal Framework. Further, the Council has continued engaging the STP Partners and processing the various requests for the Partnerships. Currently, we have the following Partners at the Park:

- Semi-conductor Technologies Company;
- Komposite Kenya Nairobi Limited;
- Kenya Film Commission;

- Snowcap Development Limited;
- Asytec Company, and
- Kenya Industrial Property Limited (KIPI).

6. Dedan Kimathi Cancer Management Centre

Ladies and gentlemen,

Council also approved the establishment of the Dedan Kimathi University Comprehensive Cancer Management Centre at the University on 18th August, 2017 by setting aside 15 acres for the project. The Cancer Hospital is aimed at providing specific interventions across the cancer continuum of care to halt and reverse the burden of cancer as envisioned in the Kenya Health Policy 2014-2030. The Cancer Hospital will manage the clinical part, while the University will take the teaching and research component. The project was launched by former President Uhuru Kenyatta on 6th August 2022 and subsequently, the Commercial Agreement was signed on 5th October 2022.

7. Collaborations and Partnerships

Ladies and gentlemen,

Council also approved a total of 44 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and International partnerships, which have enabled the University to meet her teaching and research objectives. For example, the University has entered into MoUs with the County Governments of Laikipia and the County Government of Nyeri to train the employees of the County Governments on various work-related skills and programmes. Other partnerships involve exchange programmes, where DeKUT graduate assistants are trained in foreign universities/institutions. Other collaborations provide internship opportunities to DeKUT students.

8. Strategic plan 2017-2022

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Council also guided the launch and implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2017-2022. Through this Strategic plan, the University has been able to meet various achievements, including; increasing the built space for both offices and teaching, increasing the number of programmes, increasing the number of graduands, and equipping laboratories. Currently, the Council is developing Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and the DeKUT Vision 2040, both of which will be launched before the Council leaves office in March 2023.

9. Human Resource Development

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The council has also achieved a transformation of human resource from a small number to the current 551 comprised of staff trained in various diversified areas. It is noteworthy that at the beginning, the University was struggling to recruit MSc and PHD lecturers to teach some programmes, including ICT and computer science. The University had to embark on an intentional, continuous process of training lectures in universities outside the Country to ensure self-reliance. Currently, the University has the following academic staff members;

i. Ph.D holders 101
ii. Masters holders 112

10. Infrastructure Development

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Council, has also overseen the completion of various infrastructure facilities to provide conducive teaching and office space in the University. Notably are the Resource Centre Phase II and the Academic block. The Council has even approved the extension of the Academic block to ensure that there is more built space in the University.

11. Staff welfare

Ladies and gentlemen,

During her term, the Council has ensured that there has been a good industrial relationship with the Unions. I note with appreciation that the University signed the foundational CBAs with KUSU, UASU and KUDHEIHA and that, further, all the internal CBAs have been signed with all the unions. Currently, the Management is in negotiations with all the unions to ensure that all pending internal CBAs are successfully signed and registered. We would like to thank the Ministry of Education, the Treasury, the SRC, the respective unions, their local chapters, and the national office for these achievements.

While the University is cognizant of the role played by staff, it notes that number of staff recruited or promoted in the last few years was not high due to the financial constraints that the University was currently facing. However, the University has planned to conduct interviews for promotions of staff in due course to ensure continuous staff members' mobility and development.

To further safeguard the welfare and interest of the staff, Council spearheaded the establishment of a now successful Pensions Scheme, which has grown to Kshs. 1,077,512,681 as of September 2022. Staff members immediately receive their pension dues upon proceeding to retirement.

The council is also pleased to note that the University introduced a SACCO for its members. The SACCO has since grown over the years and was recently recognized by Sacco Societies Regulatory Authorities. (SASSRA)

12. Launch of DeKUTES

Ladies and gentlemen,

Further, the Council established the DeKUT Enterprises Company in 2017 as the commercial arm of the University, linking it to the industry. The

Company deals in goods made by the University and offers various consultancies. According to the audit reports for the last two financial years from the Office of Auditor General, the Company has indeed remained profitable.

13. To our graduands;

The University has confidence in your education and the skills you have been equipped with to deal with the emerging problems. I am sure that you will make the best out of the many opportunities and challenges you will encounter out there. I urge all of you to be good ambassadors of the University; carry yourself with dignity, discipline, and hard work as you build strong careers and enterprises to build the nation.

Once again, congratulations graduating class of 2022!!