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SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE CABINET SECRETARY MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, HON. EZEKIEL MACHOGU, CBS, DURING THE DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY 13TH 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-Chancellors 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. Opening Remarks

It is with great pleasure that I join you on this important occasion of the 13th graduation ceremony of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology. I applaud the University council and Management on successfully leading and growing this outstanding university to its current status. Its graduates are already making great contributions to the Kenyan economy as well as the global economy through their various professions as well as through innovation and entrepreneurship. We look forward to the great contributions that those graduating today will make to the development of this country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. Technology and Innovation

Technology 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. The government is dedicated to ensure this and has put in place several measures to support the above. As stated by the His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya, Hon. Dr. William Ruto, during the recent Jamhuri Day Celebrations, the government will build a 100,000 kilometer digital superhighway to allow internet access to homes, cities, towns and every part of Kenya.

The government is also looking to partner with technology and digital space leaders to provide one million tech jobs among our youths. The Kenya Industrial Estates will provide intensive coaching and mentorship to 100,000 entrepreneurs and provide information and networking opportunities to 250,000 youth.

I urge you as the youth of this country to position yourselves to take advantage of these opportunities.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

There are also a lot of job opportunities that are available to the youth through digital platforms. One such example is the Ajira Digital Programme which is a partnership between the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) and the Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology, Innovation. This initiative is among the government flagship programs to address unemployment among the youths. It seeks to bridge the gap between skills demanded by offering training and mentorship to

the youth.

I take this opportunity congratulate Dedan Kimathi University of Technology for setting up the Ajira Digital Club and urge the graduands here today to take advantage of the available opportunities not only in the digital spaces but also in the rapidly transforming world by empowering yourselves with the technological skills needed to sustain us in this digital era.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

3. Presidential Working Party for Education Reforms

The government has also established the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms to conduct a Public Engagement at the University levels, examine and make recommendations for a framework for TVET training and development, university education, research, and training, as well as one for governance and funding, and CBC.

The public participation will stimulate new ideas of making education more appropriate for the rapidly changing world of work.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. Visit to the University

I'm also delighted to report that during my recent visit to this university, I was impressed by some of the work done in support of the vision. The established research Centres of the University showed tremendous contribution to the Kenyan economy by providing innovative solutions to various technological and social challenges.

During my tour of the University and its facilities, I met Technology companies and SMEs who were there because they were getting solutions from the University for their innovations and machinery. I congratulate the University for its commitment to finding innovative solutions and maintaining its focus on STEM programmes, noting that 71% of the courses undertaken at the University are STEM-based, with 36% of the courses being in the Engineering sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

5. Science, Innovation and Technology Park

As part of the vision 2030, the Ministry has also embarked on the development of a National Science and Technology Park at Dedan Kimathi University of Technology. We are committed to supporting the development of the STP, and are working to get the construction of the Design Material and Manufacturing Hub (DMM) completed by the end of 2023.

Dedan Kimathi Science and Technology Park (DeST-Park) is the first national project being implemented by the Ministry of Education as a key enabler of the three pillars of the Vision 2030. To this end, we congratulate the University for the effort it has made to support the park through initiatives such as establishment of a Data Centre, Startup Centre, DeHUB, Film Animation and Gaming Hub, and hosting tenant technology companies such as Semiconductor Technology Limited that has already employed eighty (80) young people and trained over one hundred and fifty (150) young people. Notably the film and gaming hub has trained over 100 actors and actresses, 15 script writers, 23 PSC interns, 100 work-study students and over 50 young animators through animation workshops, short trainings and boot camps. The Film and gaming hub has been able to harness on the power of partnerships through its partnership with the Kenya Film Commission as well as counties most especially the Nyeri County Government which has sponsored film makers to undertake training at the hub.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

6. Dedan Kimathi Comprehensive Cancer Management Centre

The ministry is also pleased to note that the cancer center, which will specialize in oncology and biomedical engineering will make a significant contribution to the Kenyan health sector. The center will provide high-quality and affordable health care to improve the quality of life for Kenyans, is set to be constructed at the University and construction is set to start in 2023.

The establishment of the Dedan Kimathi University Comprehensive Cancer Management Center is in line with the Kenya Vision 2030. It is also in line with the Ministry of Health's Cancer Management Strategy.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

7. Conclusion

Finally, I am happy that this group has been able to complete their studies in time despite the Covid-19 pandemic, to graduate today. This is commendable effort by the University, highlighting the student centric approach that it takes to its affairs. By also holding a second graduation this year, the University has ensured that the graduands will enter the job market in a timely manner to allow them to make contribution to our economy and to the global economy too.

As the Ministry Education, we are also working hard to stabilize the national education calendar by next year, 2023. The calendar will stabilize, and we hope that by 2023 the KCSE calendar will stabilize enough to allow for the candidates to get their University and college admission results by April of each year like in the past.

To the graduands, congratulations. I urge you to use the skills and competencies acquired from the University to uplift yourself, your family, and also to sustain a Kenyan knowledge-based economy that is globally competitive.

Congratulations and God bless you all.