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SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PROF. P. NDIRANGU KIONI ON FRIDAY DECEMBER 16TH DURING THE 13TH GRADUATION CEREMONY AT DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREEDOM HALL

1. **Acknowledgments**

- The Chief Guest, Deputy President, His Excellency, Hon. Rigathi Gachagua
- Ag. Chancellor and Chairman of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Council, Dr. Jane Nyakang'o;
- Members of the Dedan Kimathi council;
- Deputy Vice-Chancellors of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology;
- Members of the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Senate;
- Distinguished guests;
- The Alumni Association;
- Parents guardians;
- All our graduands;
- Ladies and gentlemen;

Good morning and welcome to the 13th Graduation Ceremony.

1. Opening Remarks

I welcome you all to the 13th Commencement ceremony as we celebrate the graduating class of 2022. Graduation is a time in which we have the opportunity to not only celebrate our accomplishments but to also reflect, listen to the lessons of others, and look to the future with hope. I want to extend my congratulations to the 737 students graduating today adding to the 1346 who graduated in May of this year to bring the total graduands for this year to 2083. Kudos for your unrelenting determination to forge forward and complete your studies even as the world was battling with this global pandemic. You have completed this important phase of your career development journey and now you are ready to embark on the next phase, where you get to practice and apply the knowledge that you have acquired.

2. 10th Anniversary

Ladies and Gentlemen

This year marks ten (10) years since the University was awarded a charter on 14th December 2012. This is a significant milestone in the University as we celebrate a decade of academic excellence, significant strides in research and innovation, and a strong commitment to technology development and advancement for better life. The celebration coincides with the University's 13th Graduation Ceremony and we are proud to be releasing more graduates to join the rest of the DeKUT alumni in contributing to the development of our nation and beyond.

This is also the last graduation ceremony that the current council will grace and I will officiate as the Vice Chancellor.

3. Number of graduates since 2012

Ladies and Gentlemen;

With that in mind I would like to highlight the University's successes over the last decade.

Since the award of the charter, the University has up to this point produced 14,243 graduates. Many of our alumni are making waves in the industries, with a majority of them having secured jobs and those with an interest in entrepreneurship having created lucrative ventures. We are delighted by the positive feedback we get from the industry on the performance of our graduates and the impact they continue to make in society.

4. Awards

Ladies and Gentlemen,

During this period, the University has also received several awards for its exemplary performance. To name but a few, In 2022, the Film, Animation and Gaming Hub emerged the winners in the Best Kids Production Category Kalasha International TV and Film Awards, in 2021, the University was nominated as the Digital Brand of the year competing alongside other strong brands such as Safaricom, Government of Kenya, Jambo Jet and EABL. Some of our staff members have also been recognized at regional and country levels for their outstanding performance in research and innovation. They include; Prof. Jean Bosco, Dr. Fredrick Madaraka, Dr. Ciira Maina, Dr. Kuria Thiongo among others.

5. Establishment of Kenya Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (Kenya-AIST)

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Kenya-AIST was recently started as a constituent University College of DeKUT. The Institute has harnessed on the great human resource at DeKUT and is set to continue to leverage on this talent as it transforms into a specialized University offering STEM programs at postgraduate level.

Kenya recently signed an agreement with Korea to establish the Kenya Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (Kenya-AIST), which is being constructed at the Konza Technopolis. The Institute will be a replica of the Korean Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) and will provide specialized research and training in various cutting-edge engineering technologies. This will help the country fast-track modernization of its economy.

6. Establishment of the UNESCO Chair at DeKUT

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The University has also signed an agreement with the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to establish a UNESCO Chair on Anticipatory Socio-Technical Systems at the University.

The chair will disseminate the knowledge and methods of understanding anticipatory systems and processes used to imagine futures, advance future studies, and enhance societal resilience by cultivating conditions for a capability-based approach to well-being and sustainability. This will enhance an integrated research, training, information, and community management system to study anticipatory socio-technical systems.

It will also engage in research, teaching, and community engagement that enhances future literacy capacities and the integration of the discipline of anticipation to support the development of a resilient and sustainable Africa.

7. Science and Technology Park

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The University has established a Science and Technology Park to encourage cooperation and synergy between universities, research institutions, government and the private sector to create a favorable environment for innovation, renovation, and training. DeST-Park covers three thematic areas, which are: Agri-tech (Food bio-resources and natural products value-addition), Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Design, Materials and Manufacturing (DMM). So far, DeST-Park has attracted three anchor clients; Snowcap Development Limited, Asytec, and Semiconductor Technologies Limited which is already operational and has so far employed eighty (80) young people and trained over one hundred and fifty (150) young people. The company currently manufactures nanotechnology products such as integrated circuits and sensors used in electronic gadgets for the global market.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

DeST-Park is now on the world map after being admitted as a member of the International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation (IASP). IASP is a global network of science parks and innovation zones that brings together professionals who manage Science, Technology, and Research Parks (S.T.P.s) and other areas of innovation to provide services that help members grow and succeed.

Recently, Kenya, led by the Konza Technopolis Development Authority and Dedan

Kimathi Science and Technology Park playing a supporting role, won the competition to host the IASP Conference in 2024 during the 39th IASP World Conference, held in Seville, Spain. Hosting the IASP Global conference within the African continent, specifically in Kenya, will present many opportunities and advantages. The conference will draw players from the domestic, regional, and international ecosystems, sparking renewed interest in promoting and developing disruptive innovations that will ultimately accelerate the country's and the African region's transformative economic development.

8. DeKUT Centers

Ladies and Gentlemen;

To support the Science and Technology Park, the University has established nineteen (19) centers among which we have the Centre for Nano-materials and Nanoscience Research that creates capacity for research and development in thin film deposition, nanofabrication, and characterization. This center supports the manufacturing theme of the park and to work closely with the Semiconductor Limited – the STP flagship partner.

We also have the Center for Development of Electronic Devices that engineers designs circuits for various electronic devices depending on functionalities specified.

Center for Polymers and Mold Designs to support the development of plastic engineering and polymer technology required in the manufacturing of electronic devices.

Center 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.

The Start-Up Centre that promotes the development of prototypes and the establishment of spin-off companies and enterprises.

Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Management that offers mentorship support and entrepreneurship training to innovators and startup companies among others.

9. Launch of Kenya into the global semiconductor market

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Semiconductor Technologies Limited that was launched at the University in April 2020, is one of the most significant establishments at the University and globally. Almost every device we use has these important semicondutor chips from smartphones, fridges, laptops and many other devices. The chips are essential as they are the brains behind the operation of electronic devices.

Kenya is the first in Africa and one of the few countries globally with a chip manufacturing plant after the establishment of the Semiconductor Technology Limited at the University. The establishment of Semiconductor Technologies Limited (STL) in the University is a major milestone in the development of Dedan Kimathi Science &Technology Park (DeST-Park). STL will provide the Science and Technology Park and the University with crucial local and international linkages contributing to intellectual property outputs.

10. Robust and impactful programs at DeKUT

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The University has continued to provide relevant education and ensured that the graduates are employable and succeed in their careers. The programmes offered by the University are accredited by the relevant bodies such as the Commission for University Education (CUE) and the Engineering Board of Kenya. 71% of our programs are also STEM-based.

The number of programs has also grown since the University was awarded a charter. In 2012 we had five programs and now we have over 50 programs accredited by the Commission for University Education. The University is steadily increasing her postgraduate enrollment in Master of Science (M. Sc.) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) programmes to increase innovation and intellectual property output continuously. We have introduced a Postgraduate Diploma in Technical and Vocational Education (PGTVE) Training under the Centre for Excellence in Competency Based Education Training (CCBET). The programme aims at providing prospective trainers with pedagogical skills and strategies for Competency-Based Education and Training

(CBET) programmes in TVET institutions. Among other skills, the programme will equip the student trainers with the knowledge, skills and attitude required to train in TVET institutions.

11. Training of students in critical tech skills through strategic partnerships

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Over the years, the University has formed strategic alliances and collaborations with various like-minded organizations to ensure that we empower our graduates with superior skills and the requisite mindset that they need to deal with the challenges they face. The University has also signed various MOUs agreements with several organizations/institutions. To list but a few we have an MOU with Kenya Film Commission which we have trained over 150 youth on 2D and 3D animation, script writing and gaming. We have also formed a partnership with The Jitu company, a staff augmentation firm that offers scalable remote software engineers to businesses, to provide our students with career services, work-study programs, and attachment opportunities.

12. Talent development and exposure

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The University also offers Graduate assistantships and student exchange programmes to create a vibrant ecosystem for our students. We have a number of vibrant student exchange programmes which are in line with the University's vision of producing globally competitive graduates and building international linkages to grow its profile as a global premier university of technology. International exchanges are life-changing experiences gained by students that make such programmes critical to the institution's internationalization strategy.

DeKUT students have taken part in assignments inside leading laboratories and manufacturing facilities around the world, which have profoundly affected their students' technical abilities. In addition, living in a foreign country for two or three months at such an early age in their careers gives students invaluable insights and offers them new lenses through which to look at the world.

The university also sponsors its academic staff to attend global conferences and also host international conferences, in order to facilitate global exposure and gain access to new knowledge from peers from across the world.

13. Publications

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Our University repository was established in 2013. As of this year, we have 1267 academic papers, 63 books, book reviews and book chapters. This is a significant growth for the University.

14. Dedan Kimathi University Comprehensive Cancer Center

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Construction of the Dedan Kimathi Comprehensive Cancer Center is set to begin in 2023. The university will support the Center by offering specialized programs in oncology and biomedical engineering. We already have in place a School of Health Sciences where these programmes will be domiciled. The programs in biomedical engineering, medical physics, and oncology nursing have been developed to support the development of the necessary human resource in line with the Government's strategy for Cancer Management.

15. Message to the graduands;

The University has equipped you with the best education to tackle any challenge that you encounter. Go forth with confidence and embrace the journey with courage and determination needed to last the course.

Congratulations to the class of 2022!