

SPEECH BY DR. BEATRICE MUGANDA INYANGALA, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, DURING THE DURING THE 14TH GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON 27TH AND 28TH APRIL 2023, AT DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

- The Council Chairman
- Members of the University Council;
- Vice Chancellor,
- Deputy Vice-Chancellors
- The Senate
- Members of staff;
- Parents and Guardians;
- Distinguished Guests;
- Graduands;
- Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good morning!

I would like to begin by congratulating all the graduands of this 14th DeKUT graduation ceremony. I join your parents and guardians in celebrating your achievement.

It is always gratifying to witness the successful conclusion of the education journey of young people; as we usher them into the world of work, a world full of opportunities; a world for them to solve problems and shape their future.

I would also like to congratulate and extend a warm welcome to the New Chairman of the University Council, Dr. James Kariuki, and, the other Council members, all of whom we appointed only a few days ago:

- Linet K. Muganda
- Pauline Jeruto
- Esther Nyamoko, and,
- Dr. Davidson M. Mghanga,

We are confident that you what it takes to maintain this young University on a rapidly growing trajectory. We have entrusted you with an important and enormous responsibility.

Indeed,DeKUT was among the best public institutions that got an excellent score in the just concluded Performance Contract Appraisal; confirming that this

university has cultivated a culture of excellence in delivering on its mandate. We are confident that you will shepherd the Universityto mark its territory globally as a leader in scholarship as well as research and innovation.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I am informed that majority of the graduands today started their studies in 2019, just before the COVID-19 pandemic. I congratulate you for overcoming the many disruptions caused by the pandemic. I appreciate you and your faculty and University for the many adjustments and indeed innovations you made to ensure continuity of your academic schedules in-spite of the COVID-19 challenges. I want to thank your parents and the community at large for nurturing you to be truly resilient.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

One of the silver linings of the COVID-19 pandemic was the mainstreaming of ICT in academic programme delivery.

Our education programmes embraced technology and learning continuedagainst a strong wave of odds and despondency.

The emerging pedagogical transformation demonstrates the depth and breadth of opportunities afforded by Technology.

The Kenya-Kwanza administration is committed to harness the digital dividend to serve you better in all aspects of your lives: education, health, food security, business, among others.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The Government's efforts to enhance its manpower resource is evidenced by heavy investments in education. This investment is bearing fruits by improving the literacy levels in the country; and expanding the reservoir of expertise for realizing our national development priorities as well as our regional and international aspirations.

I therefore urge all of us to support the sustained effort by the Government to make tertiary education accessible, affordable, relevant and high in quality.

We are all our aware of the challenges facing our universities today. I want to assure our universities that they are not alone, we all lay awake at night thinking of innovative mechanisms of resolving these issues.

Our President, His Excellency Dr. William Samoei Ruto formed the Presidential Working Party on Education Reformsin September 2022. The task force has collecting critical data and gathering views of the public. We are confident that the recommendations that will be made will offer sustainable solutions that will galvanize our universities to show their true mettle.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The Ministry of Education remains a key pillar in the exponential growth of Dedan Kimathi University of Science and Technology. We are supporting DeKUT to implement several flagship projects.

I would like to applaud the management and the Council of this University for the excellent progress made in implementing these projects.

Allow me to mention a few of these projects:

First, the Dedan Kimathi University Comprehensive Cancer Management Centre;

Second, the Dedan Kimathi Science and Technology Park;

Third, the Kenya- Advanced Institute of Science and Technology.

I note with appreciation that the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) selected the University to host a unique Science Park, the Origin Research and Innovations Labs Physical Hub of East Africa. Origin labs is designed to catalyze solutions for Africa's problems by Africans at home, and, Africans in the diaspora.

The project is a melting pot for innovative and pioneering African ideas. Indeed, this project speaks volumes to this University's entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem.

The Origin labs also presents a great opportunity for this University to be a hub for providing solutions to the myriad of problems facing Kenyans and other Africans.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

The Government through the Ministry of Education is also supporting the establishment of the Dedan Kimathi Science and Technology Park (DeST-Park). We are convinced that this project is a perfect exemplar for

unveiling the strongest linkages and benefits accruing from the nexus of academia and industry.

This project has given us the impetus to mobilize additional resources and to foster useful networks to facilitate further development. Specifically,completion of the construction works under Phase I of the project.

We recognize and appreciate the new Dedan Kimathi Science and Technology Park Company Ltd which will add great value and assure the sustainability of DeST-Park.

The world over, Universities are increasingly called upon to ensure employability of their graduates.

I commend the University Council, Senate, Management, staff, students and alumni of this great university for demonstrating leadership on this front.

As a Ministry, we would like the sub-sector to thrive along these lines so as to enhance their profiles and global rankings.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

DeKUT has a special place in my heart because it climbed out of the historic ivory tower and connected

with the common mwananchi. The university is addressing problems that afflict our people in their daily lives I a very practical way.

Its work with Mukurweini Wakulima Dairy Ltd (MWDL) for industrial-scale production and retail distribution of natural coffee yogurt (Royal Coffee Flavored Yoghurt) is enhancing incomes and restoring hope among members of the community.

I also recognize the University for training Youth in Coffee value addition through its coffee technology programme.

The University has also empowered youth to contribute and benefit significantly from the leather value chain as well as the creative industry - film production, script writing, acting and animating.

These are good and life changing initiatives. I encourage DeKUT and other universities to replicate these great ideas across disciplines in their areas of comparative advantage. This will be a critical step for universities to identify and develop their niche areas, and to maximize the outcomes of their programmes.

Indeed, practicums, internships and industrial training for students are key building blocks in the Competency Based Curriculum.

These tenets must be aligned in the curriculum and its delivery to empower our graduates with the skills and competencies for the 21st Century World of work. Our graduates must be prepared in every way to steer this country towards a middle income country by the year 2030 as articulated in our development blueprint.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I cannot end without appreciatingthe partnership that the University has with theSemiconductor Technologies Ltd, under the auspices of the DeST-Park.

This partnership is a powerful demonstration of the high quality of ourgraduates and their readiness to work in cutting-edge technology areas.

The country requires many more such partnerships so as to modernizeand industrialize Kenya.

Please join me in giving a round of applause to Eng. Tony Githinji and Prof. Ndirangu Kioni for their visionary leadership and for fostering a unique and productive partnership.

To Engineer Tony Githinji – Congratulations for being selected for conferment of the Doctor of Engineering, *Honoris Causa* degree. This is a well-deserved honor!

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

You are all aware that this University is transitioning its leadership. Prof. Ndirangu Kioni will conclude his term in another few weeks.

I would like to thank you Prof. Kioni – most sincerely – for your outstanding work that has shaped this university from a TVET college to a top performing University.

Your reward for the pioneering and innovative hard work will come specially wrapped!

To the out-going members of the University Council, I thank you for the strong foundation you build for DeKUT and for the many milestones you achieved. You leave behind a strong legacy and a permanent imprint of your wisdom.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to congratulate the graduands once more – congratulations, you have made us truly proud!

You are competent and capable of making a difference in the world of work in this country and internationally.

I urge you to stepout with confidence and to claim your space.

You only have three options – Success! Success! Success!

I thank you all!

God bless you!

God bless DeKUT!