

SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROF SHELLEMIAH O. KEYA, CHANCELLOR DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, DURING THE 4TH GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON 29TH APRIL, 2016 AT THE DeKUT GRADUATION GROUNDS

- **The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST), Dr. Fred Matiang'I;**
- **Chairman of Council, Prof. Dulacha Barako, and other Council members;**
- **Vice Chancellor, Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Prof. P. N. Kioni;**
- **Vice Chancellors of other Universities present;**
- **Deputy Vice Chancellors;**

- **Deans;**
- **Registrars;**
- **Teaching and non-teaching staff;**
- **Parents and guardians;**
- **Graduands and Students;**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Recognition of all the guests

Good morning? *Hamjambo*? *Muriega*? *Guten Tag*?

Yet again, this is a great day for us at Dedan Kimathi University. We thank God for bringing us this far. At this fourth convocation, we are ushering a new group of educated, gifted and energetic young men and women—who are rigorously prepared for the world. This is aligned with the philosophy of this University. That is, "attaining self realization of your dreams through creating extensive networks of people and establishing collaborations, here and around the world."

You, the grandaunts are prepared to develop, innovate and create solutions to problems facing Kenya and mankind. The time spent in this institution, has provided an opportunity for reflection on its values, history, and holistic education. We are certain, that you have a spirit of confidence and determination to tap into your inner strengths as you engage with others to embark upon the challenges of life.

We are grateful to the Government of Kenya, University Council, Senate, the academic and administrative staff, students, Alumni, the local community and business partners. I salute the parents and guardians too—they have invested time and resources to support you in your studies. The spouses and family members of the mature students have also made great sacrifice to be here. We commend you for this.

DeKUT outlook for 2015 – 2016

It is gratifying to note the tremendous progress made at the end of these four years since the establishment of the University—indeed you are the first group admitted when the University began under the DeKUT University Act 2012. Looking back, there have been many hurdles and experiences, and we can now assertively administer the forthcoming changeover in the fifth year. Allow me to commend the Management and Council for specific accomplishments such as the:

a) Accreditation of the engineering programs by the Engineering Board of Kenya. This was a mammoth step. We have now earned the status of being first among technological universities established in Kenya in 2012.

b) On consolidation of university campuses; the Nyeri town campus was closed in favour of the main campus and we relocated our Nairobi campus to a more spacious and favorable study environment.

c) The student union organization also held successful and peaceful elections, unlike your counterparts elsewhere. Well done, keep it up!

d) There has been outstanding and vibrant participation of students and staff in the national and county activities. This is an important step for social cohesion and for your civic responsibility.

e) You have demonstrated a willingness and capacity in convening international events especially academic conferences.

f) I note with satisfaction that the number of Masters and PhD graduands in this University continues to rise every year and this year we have the highest number ever.

Ladies and gentlemen,

May I take this opportunity to thank the University management, faculty and staff for the hard work they have put into training and mentoring graduands. I am aware that various efforts have been made to mould the character of our students by providing a multitalented and holistic education. In this regard, I would like to thank the Chairman of Council and the Council members for their contributions and leadership in the management of the University.

Other Challenges

We would like to see extensive collaboration particularly between Government and the private sector. In addition we need a contemporary yet flexible curriculum; international research; pedagogy full of impact; development of world class infrastructure and global exposure. These elements shall facilitate the delivery of quality education through qualified staff, using state of the art infrastructure.

Funding of the Institutions

We are grateful for the support we have received from the Government of Kenya. It has enabled us to consolidate our programs. Indeed on this fourth year there has been considerable consolidation particularly of the

undergraduate programs. However, a University of Technology requires a great deal of resources for its functions. Therefore we look forward to more support from GoK to sustain the growth and development of the University into an outstanding Institution of Excellence.

World over it is well accepted that knowledge is the foundation of a globally competitive economy. In her Vision 2030, Kenya plans to be a globally competitive economy, newly industrialized country and one with a high standard of living for her people—yet it is just 14 years away. Attaining this status, requires both broadening and deepening of the national knowledge base; hence, diversification of courses so as to cover the critical sectors of the economy at various levels of competence is essential. It requires increased access to education so that higher percentages of population attain university

and college level education. We expect to attract more women students and professors in the engineering programs.

The enhancement of knowledge requires high level specialization so that appropriate capabilities are available to the industry to play the leadership role in a globalized setting. The postgraduate programmers and research contribute immensely to development of specializations and the associated industrial capabilities. Continuing development of the postgraduate programmes and research requires more support from the government. As a chancellor, I am pleased that the Government has committed 2% of the national budget to research. This is an encouraging development and we look forward to this being realized.

A case for student aid

Top-tier universities worldwide recognize that attracting the best involves accepting and welcoming diversity in terms of financial difficulties. This should be a defining characteristic of DeKUT and reason for every student to choose DeKUT. In the last two years this university has developed a framework for raising funds to support its heartland. We need to mobilize financial resources to assist diverse, gifted and brilliant students who have been admitted to university but frequently drop out of their studies. An intelligent student with character and drive should not be barred from attending university because of their difficult financial circumstance. In fact this should be a founding value and a competitive edge in tapping into the pool of talent that exists in Kenya. Towards this effort to attract the widest spectrum of talent, we have launched a

program to support such young and gifted students. The case for student aid cannot be understated. I commend the University management and council for this commitment to financially supporting the most talented undergraduate and postgraduate students. I urge the congregation to support and strengthen the endowment fund to assit needy students.

To the Graduands,

Now, I would like, to congratulate our graduands on their success in qualifying for the degrees various diplomas and certificates to be conferred today. The certificate and diplomas you earn from here is not an exit from campus but an entry into a career.

I am reminded of some quotes by Thomas Edison the influential American businessman and inventor who is well known for his inventions such as the light bulb, the phonograph, motion picture camera, amongst others. But Edison is also better known for his hard work ethics and perseverance which is more relevant to you today. He said and I quote,

"The three great essentials to achieve anything worthwhile are first hard work; second, stick-to-intuitiveness; third, common sense."

What he meant was that celebration is a natural outcome of success of your hard work and commitment. It is not new; Edison noticed the same event in his day, and attributed it to our education system. He noticed that to stand out, you need perseverance or "sticking it out".

Let me break this down;

The world out there is not plain sailing, it is replete with hurdles and trials, you will starve, struggle, and even have to share food and accommodation with friends and relatives. But never give up, keep trying, you cannot succeed without taking a few losses. Whatever you decide to do—follow your dreams, make sure that whatever you do, is something you enjoy. In so doing, anything you do will be fun—and will not seem like work. If it pays you, it will even be more rewarding and you will work harder.

Edison was not only an inventor, but an entrepreneur; likewise at DeKUT, we have observed that many of our graduands have gone into the entrepreneurial space. No doubt, you have what it takes to make an impact in the world. The knowledge, skills and attitude you have acquired at DeKUT are world class and

will surely make you realize your dreams. The spirit of compassion and service that has been inculcated in you will serve you well as you grow into leadership roles in the society. Keep in touch with the DeKUT Alumni Association and with the University.

Congratulations and May God Bless You All!