**SPEECH BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, DURING THE UNIVERSITY'S FOURTH GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON 29TH APRIL, 2016.**

- **Chancellor Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Prof. S.O Keya**
- **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**

I would like to begin by warmly welcoming all our guests, our granduands and their parents and/or guardians, families and friends to this fourth graduation ceremony. Graduation is a exciting time for us. It is an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of our young men and women following years of their hard work and resilience at the University to qualify for the

degrees to be conferred and diplomas/certificates to be awarded. It is also an opportunity for us so say thank you to our stakeholders and supporters of the University. It is also the time that we reflect and share with the stakeholders some of the key developments which have taken place and at the same time to set our at the horizon of things to come.

We are very pleased that we are graduating our students on schedule. Indeed, as has become the tradition in the University, our students are graduating exactly four years, for those in a four year programme and five years for those in a five year programmes after completing after high school. We are committed to ensuring that ours students do not lose time in their life particularly in their youth when they are most productive. The number of graduands has gone up to 1495 from 1274 last year. We also graduate the first group of undergraduate graduands in the Criminology and Security Management, Industrial Chemistry, Geospatial Information Science, Business Administration.

We are also proud of the many students who have qualified for postgraduate degrees at both the PhD and Master levels; the PhD granduands are double what we had last year. This is indicative of the University's progressive realisation of her research and knowledge generation mandate. Indeed, the growth

of postgraduate programmes is supporting development of research programmes and consequently, the growth of the annual publications outputs of the University. These are also contributing to the improvements in the visibility and global ranking of the University as measured, for example, by the global webometric rankings which has become a popular tool around the world for measuring a Universities' performance.

Four years ago, in 2012, DeKUT was hardly registering on the webometric radar. In 2013 we appeared in the maps and was ranked ... in 2013 it was ranked no. 293, last year we went to position 164, and in January we were at position 155 in Africa. By any measure, this is a rapid rise, and a good performance, more so in view of the fact that DeKUT's is mainly in technological programmes where publication and research requires more resources. We expect to get to the top 100 in Africa by steadily increasing our research outputs and improving the staff profiles.

There are other accolades received the last one year which are indicative of improvements in the University's performance. For example, a research connected by Kenya Education Network, ranked the University in position 1 in the country on the use of ICT in delivery of its academic programmes. Our students are also now increasingly winning top positions in a range of fields.

The University also achieved an important milestone of getting all the engineering programmes accredited by the Engineers Board of Kenya. This was an outcome of hard work by our staff, the logistical support by the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, and consistent guidance by the Council to establish this University as a leading institution of technology. However, we are aware that a lot more needs to be done for DeKUT to have an impact on the country's technological development. The University management and Senate are committed to this course.

The University also achieved the CUE accreditation of the Bachelor of science in Criminology and Security Management. (This programme is also benefiting from partnership with the Kenya National Police Service and the Partnership with the Korean Police Agency and the Korean Police University).

To this end, the University continues to explore ways of expanding opportunities for the young minds and particularly for their creativity and entrepreneurship. Thus, our incubation activities at the DeHUB, the Dedan Kimathi Innovation Hub have been expanded and consolidated. This has seen some 17 startup companies being natured to a level where they successfully operate as Commercial entities. Currently, most of these are

based on ICT. The University is developing a framework of expanding this to cover other fields which may involve manufacturing. This will give an opportunity for development of some patents into commercially available consumer products. The objective of the University is to develop this University into an innovation area, which will draw talented people from all over the country to come and develop their enterprises and in so doing increase the degree of exposure of our students to the high end innovations, entrepreneurship, and cutting edge technology.

The University management and staff are committed to creating an environment where the students benefit from holistic education. We are aware that employers today greatly value the character of their recruits as much as the quality of their academic qualifications; they want a good mind and and a great heart. In this regard, we have continued to invest time and resources in a number of unique programmes which promote this holistic development. Some of these programmes are also designed to inculcate the National Values in the Constitution. We are proud that the students community have embraced this concept of holistic and broad education and are investing their time and individual resources to acquire additional skills and qualifications whilst a the University. In this regard also, we are grateful to the various individuals who have partnered with us to

mentor our students. I here specially recognise Mr. Thobias Oltesh with us here today for volunteering to work with us in development of mentorship programmes.

These programmes have also immensely contributed to good relations between staff and the students and virtually eliminated disruption of studies in the University. In this regard also, I commend the leadership of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Students Organization, the DeKUTSO, for their constructive management of students affairs.

To this end, also we had the second edition of the "climb to educate" programme where students scaled the heights of Mt. Kenya with the the objectives of developing their leadership skills and contributing to the endowment fund to support the needy students in the University.

One of the key foundation pillar of the DeKUT's functions is linkages. We now have an extensive list of active partnerships and MoUs with a number leading firms in Kenya and educational institutions here and abroad. They continue to benefit the university by providing opportunities for staff and student exchange and development of joint programmes.

We also have very active partnership locally. Our coffee programme is now fully developed. With the support of the European Union we have established a coffee, seedlings nursery and we can now supply up to 150, 000 of high quality coffee seedlings per year. The nursery is certified by the Coffee research foundation. This is a key component of development the full coffee full chain in the value addition, that is from Seed to Cup. Within the next few months we shall have established a milling roasting, and packaging machine. These are meant to train our students and the human resource in the coffee industry on best practice. We believe that this initiative shall bring additional benefits to the sector and all the coffee growing regions in Kenya.

The Host Nyeri community is also supporting the University in unique ways. The Nyeri Golf Club leadership has offered to establish here at the University a mini-golf course for our students. This follows a the successful hosting of the First Annual DeKUT Charity Golf Tournament in support of the Endowment fund. We have also been working with the Ministry of Health Nyeri County, in the Maternal And Infant Support Health Advancement programme which we call the MAISHA, whose objective is to give the health workers the appropriate skills to reduce the Maternal and Infant mortality. The programme covers

Nyeri and Migori counties. The University has also developed a conference ping facility in our conservancy for purposes of training for the tourism sector in niche areas and promoting tourism in the region.

These are just a few highlights of the recent achievements at the University. At this juncture I would like to thank the Ministry of Education Science and Technology for providing the resources required, University Council for their support and guidance, the parents and guardians for supporting the students here, our partners in the industry who provide attachment opportunities, the Hostel providers, the the Alumni of the University, the University staff whose hard work, commitment, and team spirit has enabled us to achieve a lot, sometimes with very little, and finally to our students and now graduands, who are the purpose of our being here.

To Our Graduands congratulations and Best Wishes for Your Future Endeavours.

Thank you and May God Bless You.