



**SPEECH BY PROF. GEORGE A.O MAGOHA, CBS, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 9<sup>th</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY OF JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HELD ON FRIDAY, 22<sup>nd</sup> APRIL, 2022 AT THE UNIVERSITY GRADUATION SQUARE, MAIN CAMPUS, BONDO**

- **Principal Secretary, State Department for University Education and Research, Amb. Simon Nabukwesi**
- **The Ag. Chairman of Council, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Dr. Jonah Kangogo**
- **Members of the University Council**
- **The Vice Chancellor Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Prof. Stephen Agong'**
- **Vice-Chancellors of Sister Universities**
- **Members of the University Senate and Management Board**
- **Staff**
- **Graduands**
- **Parents and Guardians**

- **Distinguished Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

I want to join the entire Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology fraternity in celebrating its 9<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony. Congratulations to the graduands seated here today. We are gathered here to celebrate years of hard work and devotion as we reflect on your achievements and the prospect of your life and career.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

This blended graduation ceremony is evidence that the use of technology is no longer a substitute, but the new normal. I am glad that we have made great strides since the COVID-19 pandemic hit the country.

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

The quality of teaching, learning and research is great determinant of the quality of personnel and expertise produced by local institutions. In this respect, universities must remain focused on the relevance of the courses offered.

Universities must aim at specialization and deliberately invest in programmes that will attract external funding rather than duplication of courses.

As a Ministry, we shall continue to support the Universities Education Sector in ensuring that requisite quality and relevance are attained for the benefit of our economy. University Education must therefore also meet the set standards and guidelines to guarantee global competitiveness.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

As you know, there is a growing demand, from the labour market, for specialized and broad competencies required for a modern, globally-competitive and knowledge-based economy. There is also a need for continued professional upgrading.

Our universities, therefore, have a task to observe quality through review of the training curriculum that meets industry's needs. This should be done through regular consultation and improvement. It is also imperative to implement practical components so as to address the knowledge and skill gaps in the market in order to achieve the objectives of post-secondary training.

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

Universities should now more than ever, to streamline their academic programmes and make use of available resources to mitigate funding gaps.

The government has set aside funds for research available to the academic staff in universities on a competitive basis to be disbursed by the National Research Fund. I would like to encourage you to tap into these resources to support the government's Big 4 Agenda, Vision 2030, and the global Sustainable Development Goals.

In terms of prudent use of funds, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology continues to be among the few that has managed to have up-to-date in recording remission of statutory deductions without fail. I would like to congratulate the University Management and the Council for this remarkable performance.

I am also glad to note that Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology is one of the universities that continues to increase its research fund portfolio. The importance of research in higher education is evident from the way universities are ranked globally. The University increased the number of grant applications which saw it bag over 10 Billion worth of research grants. This is indeed exemplary performance.

We have continuously emphasized on research, innovation and technology as the key drivers of development in the world today. Given the scarce resources allocated to the University for expansion purposes, it would be important for the University to engage with private entities to attract investments towards supplementing the Government's efforts in the development of infrastructure.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Technology transfer is paramount for the growth and development of communities and the country as a whole. The Governments' emphasis on the role of STEM is based on its' focus on the economic transformation of the country. Universities need to provide the motivation necessary for such transformations.

There is a growing demand, from the labour market, for an increased level of skills and competencies required for a modern, globally-competitive and knowledge-based economy. Thus, there is need for continual professional upgrading. Universities need to produce graduands who are grounded enough to be fully functional in an ever-changing work environment.

The University has a task to observe the quality, through review of curriculum that meets industry's needs on the basis of regular stakeholder consultation, and to implement practical components in addressing the knowledge and skills gaps in the job market.

## **Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen,**

We continue to emphasize on the need for universities to tailor their courses in line with the Governments' Big Four Agenda. University graduates must now possess the knowledge and skills that will be able to propel a broader national agenda.

Our Universities need to remain focused on producing top-notch human capital that competes favorably and is relevant to current needs. The programmes developed by universities should be relevant and add value to our National Development agenda. Universities should endeavor to conduct cutting edge research and innovations that will put the country on the world map.

With the world, today becoming a very competitive global village coupled with the adoption of top-notch technologies in order to gain leadership in the job market the Government has therefore put the necessary premium on University Education because of the pivotal role it plays in creation, adaptation and use of knowledge that is crucial in transforming Kenya into a knowledge-based economy.

## **Ladies and gentlemen,**

The Ministry of Education is committed to providing the appropriate support and an enabling environment to enhance the potential of

universities to grow into credible Institutions that produce high caliber skilled labor into the job market.

With those remarks, may I wish you good luck in your future endeavors.

**Thank You and God bless!**