



**SPEECH BY PROFESSOR STEPHEN G. AGONG', PhD, FAAS,  
VICE-CHANCELLOR, JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY  
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DURING THE 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION  
CEREMONY HELD ON 22<sup>ND</sup> APRIL, 2022 AT THE UNIVERSITY'S  
GRADUATION SQUARE.**

- **The Representative of The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, Mr. Fredrick Ndambuki**
- **The Presiding Chancellor, Dr. Jonah Kangogo**
- **The Presiding Chairman of Council, Madam Joyce Karinge**
- **Chairpersons of other University Councils present**
- **Members of the University Council**
- **Vice-Chancellors of Sister Universities present**
- **Members of the University Management Board and Senate**
- **Parents**
- **Graduands**
- **Eminent Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is with a great pleasure that we welcome you to Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology's' 9<sup>th</sup> Graduation ceremony. A warm

welcome to our distinguished guests, parents, graduands and sponsors for participating in this event.

Let me congratulate the graduands for the hard work and determination that has made us gather here. I want to thank the parents and guardians for the support accorded to the students in enabling them to complete their academic studies successfully.

I want to thank the entire University fraternity led by the Council, Senate, Management Board and staff for the immense contribution towards this graduation ceremony thus directing the students to a successful conclusion.

**Dear Graduands,**

Each one of you gathered here today, both virtually and physically, have done so through your sustained hard work. You have needed courage to face the challenges of university learning. You have needed to develop certain qualities of character and mind to achieve this. These qualities include empathy, rigor, resilience, the capacity to think independently, to listen politely, and, when necessary, 'to disagree, without being disagreeable'.

One of the great joys of working and studying in a university is that you get to work with the very best people. As you graduate now, you have the opportunity to do your part, to help create a better future for yourselves

and your families, a better future for your communities, and, a better future for your country and humanity.

**To our Chief Guest,**

We would like to thank the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education and in particular, the State Department of University Education and Research for the enormous support, both technical and financial that has enabled the university to finance the bulk of its expenditure.

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

As we celebrate our 9<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony today, our resolve remains steadfast and unwavering. As the University Management, we are quite thrilled with the progress so far made in key strategic areas as set out in the University's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. We have made significant strides and our commitment to making this a university with a difference as the absolute focus. The University Management has remained a strong team under the guidance and direction of a strong University Council with carefully well-resourced expertise.

It is worthwhile to note that the University's 2021-2026 Strategic Plan is aligned to the national development priorities premised on the Government's economic blueprint Vision 2030 among other policy framework namely: The East African Community Vision 2050, African Union Agenda 2063, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In our pursuit to make the University to attractive, research critical research agenda has been on food security, natural resources, universal health and lacustrine ecosystem. Key projects that are being operationalized include but not limited to: 1. The World Bank supported African Centre of Excellence for Sustainable use of Insects as Food and Feeds (INSEFOODS), 2. Strengthening of natural resources, food security and health with the support of VLIR; 3. Provision of technical support for health services delivery in partnership with four counties within the Lake Victoria Basin supported by USAID.

The University has embraced transformations in the higher education sector to respond to the changing environment and expectations. In particular, we also alert that unless clear mitigation systems are put in place, the devastating effect climate change on the global ecosystem will progress unabated.

The University is expediting full automation of its processes for more efficient and effective service delivery and continues to enhance its capacity to manage the ever-emerging dynamics in the pursuit of providing market-driven academic programmes designed to meet Kenya's socio-economic needs.

Our core values have been strengthened to improve on service delivery with a clarion call to our internal and external service providers to embrace

‘responsiveness’. The Management with support from the University Council, will continue to create and maintain an environment of shared trust, motivation and equality where all relevant stakeholders will become fully involved in the achievement of these strategies, objectives and activities in the realization of this Plan.

### **To Our Chief Guest,**

We continue to offer quality education and training that meets industry expectations. This graduation marks another milestone in the history of this University towards its contribution to the national and global economy. We are churning out skilled manpower to spearhead the socio-economic development of the country.

We have also continued to re-align our academic programmes and research activities to the “Big Four Agenda” for National development to anchor them with the industry expectations. We have successfully launched new programmes that are in tandem with industry requirements. These include: Applied Insect Science and Agriculture under the Food Security pillar, Master of Sciences in Renewable Energy Technology and Management under the Manufacturing pillar and Master of Spatial Planning and Design under the housing pillar.

The University continues to distinguish itself due to its proximity to the freshwater ecosystem. Our clear vision is in the usage of the blue economy as a vehicle for improving the livelihood of the people in Kenya and beyond. Among the programmes that we have also developed towards this course include Bachelors in Fisheries and Aquatic Technology. We have also established, Pii Global Institute with focus in the fresh water ecosystem.

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

The University continues to engage in strategic partnerships and collaboration in its niche research areas namely food and nutrition security and lacustrine ecosystem in line with its core mandate. We have enhanced collaboration with international partners, national and county governments, communities, industries, international organizations, peer institutions and other stakeholders towards meeting our core mandate of teaching, research and community outreach.

During the last financial year, the University partnered with various organization for advancing both student and staff exchange and joint research activities.

The University also brought onboard International Partners that included Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB), KU Leuven, Ghent University, and the University of Antwerp.

## **To Our Chief Guest,**

As an Oasis of Knowledge, we are committed to contributing towards Kenya's Socio-economic Development Blue-Print. We seek to achieve this by emphasizing technology transfer, scientific research, innovation and collaboration with the industry.

Our students continue to be the focal point of all our activities. This year the University welcomed the first cohort of postgraduate students of the European and Developing Countries and Clinical Trials Partnerships (EDCTP) program of the European Union. The fellowship in Master of Science Degree in Epidemiology and Biostatistics attracted students from Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Malawi. Upon completion, the successful candidates will be part of highly skilled applied epidemiologists who will be able to work with the National Health Institutes and National Ministry of Health Departments to improve their level of preparedness, field surveillance and response to disease outbreaks within the Eastern Africa Region.

## **Distinguished Ladies and gentlemen,**

The University continues to carry out resource mobilization by seeking funding support from both in-country and external funding sources. The University continues to build capacity in research by facilitating

researchers to develop fundable research proposals. The University's research, innovation and community outreach drive continue to gain prominence. The University signed a tripartite agreement with VLIRUOS and Vrije Universiteit Brussel (VUB) to implement a 6 million Euros grant program to strengthen capacity building, research and outreach in five strategic areas, namely: natural resource management, agriculture and food security, human health, ICT and climate change mitigation and adaptation. Other Flemish Higher Education Institutions that the University has partnered with include KU Leuven, Ghent University, and the University of Antwerp. This is a 10-year programme, expected to start with a Phase-In IUC Pre-Partner Programme for a period of one year.

Furthermore, the University won a South Africa National Research Foundation's grant of Ksh. 10 million towards strengthening research in the diagnosis of cancer as well as a Ksh 20 million grant from the National Research Fund towards monitoring and management of locust invasion.

**Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,**

JOOUST has collaborated with a local private company to promote sericulture. To-date, the university has established over 80 hectares of mulberry plantation which will be the source of feed for silkworms. The University projects to increase the mulberry cover to 1000 hectares, by partnering with the local farmers. This is a milestone project which will not



only create employment, but an environment friendly agricultural system which will help in fighting climate change.

Through the Pi Global Institute, the University is providing technical backstopping for the enterprise unit on fingerling production. Fingerlings production is part of the focus in addressing the dwindling fish resources in Lake Victoria and also the utilization of aquatic and fisheries resources. This is done by supplying quality fish seeds to cage farmers in Lake Victoria.

The University also in collaboration with the Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB) Foundations', *jiajiri* Programme carried out Capacity building on fish entrepreneurship. Through the Programme 95 participants were trained on Fisheries Policies, Legislation and Status of the Fishery Industry in Kenya & Globally, through the School of Agricultural and Food Sciences.

As part of the Corporate Social Responsibility, the University through a partnership with Equity Bank of Kenya Ltd was also able to plant a total of over 1,000 trees, an event that brought on board stakeholders from the Bank and the University's fraternity.

**To our Chief Guest,**

The University continues to construct a modern research complex at Miyandhe Campus, Tuition Block Complex at Achiego Campus, an

Administration Block at the Main Campus. These capital projects are geared towards positioning the University as a global centre of excellence in teaching, research and outreach as well as being a leader in university education.

There has been noted progress in the Capital Projects, however, due to several challenges; the projects are generally behind schedule. In addition to the prevailing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the projects have been facing inadequate and slow disbursement of funds hence significantly affecting the progress. The three new projects, once completed will greatly enhance infrastructural facilities and additional space required by the University to achieve its mandate.

We are therefore pleading with the Ministry of Education to intervene to have the projects completed on time.

**Finally, to our graduands,**

We have endeavored to bring you on a journey of experiences that help you to grow and transform. We are proud of your achievements. But there is much more to do, and today marks a new beginning. In conclusion, I call each of you to action, to go out from here, with confidence, with our blessings and best wishes.

**I wish you all the best, thank you and may God bless you all!**

