

SPEECH BY DR. FRED MATIANG'I, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE 3rd GRADUATION CEREMONY OF JARAMOGI OGINGA ODINGA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HELD ON FRIDAY, 27TH MAY 2016 AT THE UNIVERSITY GRADUATION COURT

Dr. Vimal Shah, Chancellor, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology,

Prof. Colleta Suda, Principal Secretary, State Department of Higher (Universities) Education

Dr. Belio Kipsang', Principal Secretary, State Department of Education,

Your Excellencies the Ambassadors, High Commissioners and members of the Diplomatic Corps and other dignitaries present,

Chancellors of other Universities present,

Dr. Bonfance Mwandoto, Chairman of Council, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology,

Council Chairmen of other Universities,

Members of Council of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology,

Members of Council of sister Universities,

Vice-Chancellor, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology, Prof. Stephen Agong',

Vice Chancellors of Private and Public Universities,

Senate,

Staff,

Graduands,

Parents,

Students,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I feel deeply delighted as I congratulate this 3rd group of graduands of Jaramogi Oginga University of Science and Technology.

At the same time, let me take this chance to also congratulate the Chancellor, Dr. Vimal Shah, on the twin achievements of his appointment to the position of chancellor, and award of honorary degree. Your appointment, Mr. Chancellor, to steer this young university towards achieving its mandate is a task that, I trust, you are taking up with utmost diligence.

I would like to thank the Council and Management of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology for honouring me with the invitation to be part of you in celebrating the success of your students who are graduating today.

I am confident that these graduands have been adequately prepared for the life ahead. The kind of education you have received is sufficient to tackle the socio-economic challenges ahead of you. Apply the skills and knowledge acquired for the good of the nation and humanity.

I urge the Council, Senate and the Management of the University to cooperate with the new chancellor to enable the University realise its development goals. We shall all look up to you collectively to provide exemplary leadership in meeting the stakeholders' expectations and fulfilling the mandate of the University.

Chancellor Sir,

Let me assure you of the Government's support. I urge you to harness the resources at your disposal to ensure that this University becomes a leading institution of higher learning in the region and beyond. The Government is also keen in supporting Public Private Partnerships by Universities. Given the scarce resources faced by Public Universities such Partnership opportunities supplement the government's effort in development of infrastructure.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the University for working hard and competitively winning the World Bank support towards the establishment of Africa Centre of Excellence for Eligible Insects. Keep up the good work and ensure diligence in the application of the funds.

The role of university education cannot be overstated. It is mandatory for creating a pool of skilled human capital in various facets of our economy and for enhancing productivity. Our universities must remain focused on producing top notch human capital for the purposes research and innovation for national development. To realise this goal, the universities should develop relevant programmes that add value to our national development agenda.

On the same note let me also offer a word of caution to our students. I have noted with great concern the frequent wanton students unrest and destruction of public property. Such unrests are not only a hindrance to your studies but may also have an impact in your life ahead as you seek a career path. Take note that you are here for a purpose, and that is to get an education that will open up avenues for you.

Students must learn to solve their issues amicably and without resorting to violence.

My Ministry through the Commission for University Education will remain vigilant on equity, quality and relevance in the provision of higher education in the country through the Commission for University Education. I appeal to our universities to carve out their identities and niches through specific areas of specialization.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

The Government has placed significant premium on education as the most suitable vehicle for the realisation of our development agenda under the Kenya Vision 2030. Provision of quality education is embodied in my Ministry's vision that aims at providing education opportunities to all for the elimination of illiteracy, poverty and disease in order to create a prosperous nation. Each level of education, namely, basic education, tertiary education and university education, is therefore expected to play its distinct role. In this regard, my Ministry will continue to formulate policies aimed at ensuring these levels operate in a manner that is complementary.

I recognise with satisfaction Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology's rapid growth which has enabled it to increase its student numbers. This is a significant increase which, if replicated in other universities, will assure us of enough places for university education. I urge the University to continue on this noble path without compromising quality.

Universities should remain focused on outreach, research and innovation. This will endeavour to conduct cutting edge research and innovations that will put this country on the world map.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Providing accommodation to students has proved to be an expensive undertaking bearing in mind that the universities are also required to provide critical facilities for learning. One practical way of achieving this is entering into Public-Private Partnership, particularly with regard to students' accommodation. I am pleased to note that JOOUST is a trailblazer in this area and has partnered with the local community who are providing student accommodation facilities. This has enabled the university to utilize its available resources in providing core education facilities.

The advantage of taking this route is two pronged: the university spares funds for priority projects while the local community gets a sense of ownership which translates to a perfect symbiotic relationship. I urge other institutions of higher learning to utilize similar opportunities to increase the much needed access.

The world today is Global Village and it has become a very competitive place demanding for adoption of top notch technologies in order to gain leadership in the market. As a result the government continues to invest in Universities because of the critical role its people play in creation, adaptation and use of knowledge that are crucial in transforming Kenya into a knowledge based economy. I challenge all universities to ensure that all their programs are relevant and internationally competitive.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me take this opportunity to challenge our graduands to uphold the ethical values acquired from this University as they endeavor to serve our fellow Kenyans with a lot of diligence. You should also make use of the entrepreneurial skills to establish enterprises and be good ambassadors of this reputable University. May I wish you

good luck in all your future endeavors.

Thank you and God Bless!