SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PROF. P. NDIRANGU KIONI, ON FRIDAY, 27TH APRIL, 2018; DURING THE 7TH GRADUATION CEREMONY AT DEDAN KIMATHI UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY GRADUATION GROUNDS

- Our Chief Guest, Prof. Chacha Nyaigotti Chacha, Chairman of the Commission for University Education and Representing the Cabinet Secretary for Ministry of Education,
- Ag. Chancellor and Chairman of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Council, Dr. Jane Nyakang'o
- Other Chancellors Present;
- Chairs of other Universities Councils present;
- Vice Chancellors from other Universities;
- Deputy Vice Chancellors of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology;
- Deputy Vice Chancellors from other universities;
- Esteemed County Government Executives and representatives present;
- Members of Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Senate;
- The Alumni Association;
- Graduands, Parents, Staff and students;

Good Morning?

It is my great pleasure to welcome all of you to this seventh graduation ceremony of this great Institution.

We extend special welcome to our Chief Guest, who is the current Chairman of the Commission of University Education, and who served as the Chief Executive Officer of Higher Education Loans Board (HELB) for … years, during its the formative stages, a renown Swahili Scholar and a Professor of … at … University, and distinguished University leader in the region: Prof. Chacha Nyaigotti Chacha. Prof. Chacha Nyaigotti Chacha is also here as a representative of the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Amb. Amina Chawahir Mohamed.

I welcome the families, guardians and friends of the graduands who have come to be with their loved ones as they are conferred degrees or awarded diplomas. I also welcome our many guests and partners who have come to witness and salute you the graduands. Our guests re-affirm to you that your achievements are recognized and cherished, and that in some way what you have accomplished here is a shared achievement of the wider education sector and many players. This celebration remind us that: to you a lot is given and that from you a lot is expected.

All said and done, today is a day for you the graduands, it is a day for you to celebrate the efforts and hours you have put into your studies during the last few years that you have been a student of this University; it marks the sacrifices and hard choices you had to make to be successful in your studies. It marks an important milestone in your life. You therefore deserve these moments and you deserve to relax and celebrate and be merry.

Student statistics

Today, we confer six Doctor of Philosophy degrees, 19 Master degree, 1366 Bachelors degree, and award, 91 Diplomas and 46 Certificate making a total of 1528. Our graduands are concentrated in technological programmes, and hence in the so called STEM areas: Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics.

This demonstrates the University's commitment over the years since its establishment and becoming fully-fledged in December 2012 to remain true to the stipulations of her Charter. We are proud of this achievement and always pleased of feedback we continue to receive of our students getting absorbed in the productive sector and applying the education, that they obtained from this University.

The competitiveness and relevance of our programmes is indeed reflected in the results of the 2018 Kenya Universities and Colleges Central Placement Service (KUCCPS) admissions. The University filled

100 % of all places declared for 22 programmes and had challenges with only two programmes that are new and, therefore, not yet well known. Thus, for DeKUT,92.3% of places declared were filled; this was the highest percentage for public Universities. These new students are expected to report here on Wednesday next and we look forward to welcoming them.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The University has strategic alliances and collaboration with like-minded institutions across the globe. The University has formal and active collaborations agreements with over 42institutions in Kenya and abroad. These alliances facilitate, the staff and students exchange, joint research and capacity building, and resource mobilization. through training at post graduate level. In this regard, we are developing a formal collaboration framework with universities in this region. These are University of Embu, Chuka University, Meru University of Science and Technology, Kirinyaga University, Laikipia University, Karatina University, Murang'a University of Technology and Garissa University. This framework will enable the Universities participate in the upcoming Dedan Kimathi National Science and Technology Park.

It also provides a platform for creates synergy in the development of joint programmes, grant applications, and will accelerate generation and commercialization of intellectual property for the STP.

Research

The University is continually promoting a research culture. There have been significant gains in publications, number of graduate programmes and students, number of research grants applications and awards. In the last one year, the faculty published in referred journals over …. Papers. In addition, 4 patent applications have been filled; one of our researchers has also achieved international recognition in data science research on Bio-acoustics.

We held a very successful 3rd international conference on Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (STI&E) in November, 2017who's theme was Harnessing Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship for Sustainable Development. The conference also featured both local and international guest speakers, researchers and exhibitors from Japan, Germany, Ethiopia, Mozambique and Rwanda.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Late last year, the Commission for University Education (CUE),visited the University for re-certification to ensure that our institution continues to provide the required quality and to comply with standards of

University education. I am pleased to inform you that the university met CUE's requirements and after the process the University was found compliant to the University Standards and Guidelines for providing quality education.

The University continues to strengthen its partnership with the industry. This year, DeKUT, working closely with Siemens AG-Germany, established the Siemens Mechatronic Training Centre where it now offers a Siemens Mechatronics System Certification Programme. Siemens is among the top 50 companies in the world and its automation products are found a vast majority of automated plants in the industry. Thus, the training offered will considerably enhance the employability and effectiveness of our graduates.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

DeKUT is inclusive in her leadership and the student fraternity continues to enjoy a well represented student-body that took office on 23rd November, 2017. The students' body operates under the new University Students' Leadership Constitution following a successful Dedan Kimathi University of Technology Students' Organization (DeKUTSO) election held on 17thNovember 2017. This has enabled student representation and engagement of student leadership in continuous dialogue. I would therefore wish to thank the DeKUTSO leadership for ensuring that the University continues to enjoy unprecedented tranquility that has enabled academic programmes to run uninterrupted.

Holistic Education

DeKUT lays great emphasis on provision of holistic education that provides a good balance of intellectual, cultural, spiritual, and physical well-being. Our now popular "Climb to Educate" programme in which students climb Mt. Kenya is now in its sixth season- … conquered the Lenana peak. In addition, the year was packed with of co-curricular activities. The students participated in a range of sports events organized by KUSA and other National Sports Asscociations. In December, last year, the University hosted the bi-annual KUSA games which were attended by 25 Universities with about 2000 student participants.

In this regard also, the University is partnering with World Tae Kwon Do Association, KUKKIWON to promote Tae Kwon Do in Kenya. We signed an agreement with KUKKIWON to establish a Tae Kwon Centre for Africa here in Kimathi. Tae Kwon Do originated from Korea and KUKKIWON is also a Korean institution. This development will support our Criminology and Security Studies programme in which we are introducing Kinesiology courses.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year, members of the DeKUT Alumni Association participated in the election of nominees for appointment of a Chancellor. In this exercise, DeKUTAA adopted an electronic voting system which allowed them to vote online without having to physically come to the voting venues. Furthermore, the electronic voting software was developed in the DeHUB by our own students. I take this opportunity to thank the alumni for their continuing interest in the University and urge today's graduands to join their colleagues and be active in the DeKUTAA.

Meanwhile we are eagerly waiting for the appointment of a substantive Chancellor. We also thank our Chairman, Dr. Jane Nyakang'o, for filling in the gap to serve as the Acting Chancellor as provided in law. We also thank our former Chancellor Prof. Shellemiah Keya for serving the University with dedication since award of Charter.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The University is working closely with the government, also the Nyeri County government towards the establishing a National Cancer Hospital in the University that will not only serve as both a teaching and referral hospital.

To our graduands,

Finally, to the graduands: I wish you well in your future careers and life. But as you celebrate your achievement and plan for the next life stage, I hope that you will reflect and draw from some lessons from heroes that this University embodies and whom we continue to honour in our heroes garden. 62 years ago Dedan Kimathi was executed for gallantly fighting for freedom for African people. In our heroes garden we have words of His Excellency Thabo Mbeki on a plaque written "I am an African". We have some quotes on selfless service to others from a Catholic Sister Stephanie Nyaatha. On Wednesday, the nation's political leadership congregated in All Saints' Cathedral, Nairobi, to pay homage to Kenneth Njindo Matiba, for his fight for a democratic society. On second April, Winnie Madikizela Mandela, another African heroine passed on and the whole world stood in recognition of her contributions to fight racism. We honour and remember the life of these people not because of anything they did for their own benefit but because of their gallant, brave and audacity to serve fellow human beings. This year, the world marks the centenary of Nelson Mandela. In Kenya, South Africa will partner with DeKUT to host a range of events to celebrate this world icon. But Nelson Mandela's wish was that if anybody was to celebrate him, then they should just commit only 67 minutes of their time serving a fellow human being free of charge to mark the 67 years he spent fighting for a non-racial democratic South Africa.

I hope that each one of you will join us in this season and identify 67 minutes of service to fellow human beings in need and we continue to honour these great heroes, whose spirit is embodied in this University, by incorporating self-less service to others in our plan. Congratulations and Best Wishes.

Thank you and May God Bless You