

THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF SOUTH EASTERN KENYA UNIVERSITY, PROF. LOUIS MUMERA, DURING THE 1ST GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON 23RD MAY 2014 AT THE MAIN CAMPUS, KITUI

- The Chancellor, Dr. Titus Naikuni,
- Chancellors from Other Universities
- Principal Secretary (Education), Dr. Belio Kipsang
- Principal Secretary (Science and Technology), Prof. Colleta Suda, CBS
- Chairman of the Council of South Eastern Kenya University, Prof. Louis M. Mumera
- Members of the University Council ,
- Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Geoffrey Muluvi,
- Vice Chancellors of other Universities present,
- Deputy Vice Chancellors,
- Principals of University Colleges
- Teaching and non-teaching staff,
- Parents, guardians and sponsors,
- Graduands and Students,
- Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentle men

I am pleased to attend this auspicious occasion when the pioneer students of this University are being conferred various degrees. I wish to take this opportunity, on my own behalf, and that of the University Council, to congratulate the graduands. I also take this opportunity to thank the lecturers who have trained them in the last four (4) years. This is indeed a historical occasion to the University since this is the first lot of students to graduate from this university.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Council of the South Eastern Kenya University was appointed last year following the upgrading of South Eastern Kenya University College into a full University Status. This followed the granting of the University Charter by former President of the Republic of Kenya His Excellency Mwai Kibaki. On behalf of the University Council members, I would like to thank the government for upgrading this institution of higher learning. This is indeed a major milestone in the development of this institution.

I also wish to once again thank the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Science and Technology for appointing us as members of the University Council. We are fully dedicated to fulfilling our mandate as the governing body of the University. We shall provide necessary strategic direction to this new university - a university with a huge potential of becoming one of the leading universities, not only in Kenya but also in **Africa**.

Mr. Chancellor Sir

The strategic plan of the University for the period 2010-25 that was approved by the University Council in 2010, lays an ambitious plan for the development of this University. The plan envisages development of a world class University - a University that is fully equipped and ready to produce highly trained graduates who can make a significant contribution in national development. I believe opportunities are there for the achievement of the vision of the University. Therefore, I call upon our development partners and the government to provide more financial resources to the University.

We are thankful to the government of Kenya for committing itself to the expansion of University education in the Country. We believe that expanding university education will be an important catalyst for rapid

economic development in the Country. Indeed, this has been demonstrated in other regions of the world, particularly in North America, Europe and South-East Asia. In these regions, Universities have contributed tremendously to generating new ideas, new knowledge and technologies and training of higher caliber work force that is a prerequisite for rapid socio-economic development.

Thus, Kenya is in the right track in as far as rapid expansion of University education in the Country is concerned. We must however be ready to properly equip our universities so that they produce quality graduates who **can make meaningful contribution in the development of this country.**

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

The Council jointly with the University Management will continue to recruit qualified lecturers to teach various degree and diploma programmes that are offered by the University. The Council will also strive to continuously improve terms and conditions of service of our lecturers as well as non-academic support staff. I would therefore like to appeal to the government to provide additional funds to the University so that we can achieve this objective. I must also thank the lecturers and staff for their commitments and dedication to this university despite the challenges that they have faced.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

I am glad to report that this University has also been in the forefront in promoting national cohesion and integration. The South Eastern Kenya University has been able to bring onboard staff drawn from all corners of this Country. Also, students admitted into this University to pursue various diploma and degree programmes are also drawn from various parts of the Country.

We have deliberately, as the university Council promoted this constitutional requirement because we believe national integration is the key to peace, security and stability in this Country. The Council will continue to ensure that constitutional requirements in this respect are duly adhered to in all

future recruitment exercises. We are however aware of the need to meet local aspirations.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The University with its 10,000ha land here in Kitui County, has an enviable opportunity of transforming itself into a world-class university with modern facilities befitting a 21st century university. We must thank the forefathers of this institution and Kitui County Council for setting aside this land for the university. The 10,000 ha land provides this country with an opportunity of establishing a University City in this land.

This dream must be pursued aggressively and all seriousness it deserves and all possible determination. Development of this University can indeed play a major role in alleviating the current shortage of space in public Universities, for a large number of secondary school students who every year attain the minimum university entry requirement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would also like to emphasize the issue of branding of this University. This University must establish its own brand- a brand that will be recognized, not only in the Country, but also at regional and international level. We must continue producing relevant academic programme – academic programmes that can make a difference in the development of this country. We must continue emphasizing on the quality of our academic programmes. We cannot afford to be satisfied by mediocrity. We can also, not afford to be laggards in the fast growing academic and technological world. We must strive to be the best.

Mr. Chancellor Sir,

I would also like to reiterate the commitment of the University Council in providing Strategic direction to the University. We as the university Council, we shall continue to discharge our duties faithfully and with dedication, to

the benefit of the University and this County. As it was noted by the Vice-chancellor, the Council is aware of the various challenges that the University is facing particularly with regard to the road connecting it from Kwa Vonza.

On behalf of the Council, I would like to appeal to the Central Government and the County government of Kitui to allocate funds for upgrading of the road to bitumen standard. This will be a major contribution that will drastically transform this University.

I would also like to appeal to the government to provide us with additional funds for expansion of the existing facilities. We need funds for the development of new facilities. We would in particular like to appeal for funds to construct an Ultra-modern library, recreational facilities and hostels.

In this respect, I would also like to appeal to private developers/partners to join us in the development and growth of this university. The Council is developing opportunities for Private-Public partnerships in this University. We welcome private developers/investors to come and put up facilities within the University, at very friendly and agreeable terms.

I would like to thank the Governor of Kitui, and the political leaders of Ukambani region for the support that they have continued to provide to the University.

Finally, on behalf of the University Council, I would once again like to congratulate the pioneer graduands of this university for work well done and for having completed their studies in this University successfully. I wish you all the best in your future endeavors.

Thank you.

It is now my pleasure to invite the Cabinet Secretary MoEST to address the congregation.

PROF. LOUIS MUMERA, PHD.

CHAIRMAN -SOUTH EASTERN KENYA UNIVERSITY COUNCIL