



MURANG'A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

SPEECH

BY

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DURING THE 5TH GRADUATION CEREMONY

HELD VIRTUALLY

WEDNESDAY, 15TH DECEMBER, 2021 AT 9AM

- **The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, represented here by the Chief Administrative Secretary, Hassan Noor Hassan**
- **Chairman of Council, Prof. Joachim Osur**
- **Members of the University Council present**
- **Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Dickson Nyariki**
- **Vice Chancellors from other universities present**
- **Members of the University Management Board**
- **Members of the Senate**
- **University staff**
- **Students, parents and guardians watching virtually**
- **The Graduands present and those watching virtually**
- **Distinguished guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning

I am pleased to welcome you to our 5th graduation ceremony, the second one to be held virtually. Today's is an important occasion for the University as we celebrate the culmination of years of hard work by our graduands. I join the speakers before me in congratulating the graduands who are set to receive their various awards.

I also take this opportunity to acknowledge and commend the University Council Chairman, Prof. Joachim Osur, together with his team, for their oversight and leadership role, which has steered the University to achieving substantial infrastructural and academic developments. I additionally acknowledge the efforts made by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dickson Nyariki, the University Management Board, the Senate, the Academic and Administrative staff in ensuring that the Vision and Mission of the University are kept in focus.

Further, I wish to thank the Government of the Republic of Kenya for the tremendous support it has accorded this University since its inception in 2016.

I take pride in the tremendous growth it has experienced in my five-year tenure, basically in areas of academic growth, infrastructural development; and enhancement of information technology, research, innovation capacity, collaborations, linkages, and partnerships.

Growth in Academic Programmes, and Number of Students and Graduands

Ladies and gentlemen, in cognisance of the University motto ‘innovation for prosperity,’ the University is imparting the necessary skills to our young men and women to enable them play a critical role in the development of this nation.

When I was appointed the Chancellor of this University in 2017, the student population was just over 4,000 and this number has grown to over 8,000 in 2021. It is also worth noting that the academic programmes have increased from 51 in 2017 to 80 in 2021. These consist of a broad spectrum of courses that resonate with the market needs, ranging from Diploma to Ph.D. programmes in various fields. The University introduced TVET Diploma courses and is currently offering 15 such programmes. The number of graduates has also increased from less than 400 in 2017 to over 1,000 that are graduating today.

Infrastructural Development

Ladies and gentlemen, in 2017, we identified the need to develop and enhance basic infrastructure for effective service delivery. I am delighted to report that we have since seen major

transformations in the University. Some of the milestones include the following:

- i. Construction of a Modern Science Complex and equipping the Analytical and Imaging Laboratories;
- ii. Construction of two hostels with a bed capacity of close to 1,000;
- iii. Construction of the perimeter wall to enhance security and safeguard the University land against encroachment;
- iv. Acquisition of 50 acres of land at Kenyatta Farmers Training Centre for the establishment of the proposed Mariira Campus of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences; and
- v. Overseeing the construction of two Technical Training Institutes at Kandara in Murang'a and Kamukunji in Nairobi, among other developments.

The outlined achievements have indeed transformed the University's landscape.

Enhanced Information Technology Environment

Ladies and gentlemen, information technology (IT) is now an integral part of any modern university. The University's technological environment is important, as it is an indispensable presence and fundamental enabler of educational practices, research, innovation, and the operations of our globally integrated university community. There has been a strong cultural shift in the acceptance and use of IT across our University community. Since 2017, the University has invested heavily in the enhancement of the IT infrastructure and facilities. For example, the University has procured a state-of-the-art server equipment, installed and commissioned an Integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

system, Internet Protocol (IP) Telephony and structured data cabling system, progressively increased internet bandwidth capacity, and automated most of the offices and computer laboratories. The installation of a closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance system in all our critical buildings and installations as part of our commitment to providing a safe environment for the University community is also underway.

Research and Innovation

Ladies and gentlemen, the importance of research and innovation to find solutions to the many challenges that face mankind cannot be gainsaid. Innovations have also been used to provide alternatives that make life easier and better. Research and innovation are part of the core mandate of Murang'a University of Technology. Since I joined the University as a

Chancellor, we have made a number of strides in Research and Innovation. In addition to providing internal grants to young researchers within the University to build their research skills and spur innovation, a number of MUT academic staff have participated in several external research grant calls in the fields of community development, environmental conservation, hospitality, ICT, Engineering and robotics; a number of which have been funded. The University researchers have also participated in the National Research Fund infrastructure call and have won an infrastructure fund for establishment of the Analytical and Imaging Laboratory. The laboratory has a well-equipped preparation room which will open a new window for scientific consultancy in soil, water, mineralogy, agricultural chemicals, pharmaceuticals and food quality analysis.

Further, I note that the University held its International Conference on “Technology and Innovation for Sustainable Development” in

November this year with the broad theme of “Harnessing Technology and Innovation to Address Emerging Issues.” The Conference attracted many participants from the academia and industry, across the country and other parts of the world. I encourage that the findings be taken to the next level in-terms of their application to address a myriad of problems in our society.

Improved Collaborations, Linkages and Partnerships

Ladies and gentlemen, institutions of higher learning continue to be a catalyst in addressing societal problems through collaborations, partnerships and linkages that impact positively on the development of the community and the nation. In recognition of this, Murang’a University of Technology operates with a full understanding that the purpose of a University goes beyond just offering teaching, training and research. Since 2017, the

University has signed numerous MOUs. The associated partnerships and collaborative ventures will enable the University align itself towards achieving the commitments made in its 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

COVID-19 Pandemic

Ladies and Gentlemen, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly changed the way university operations are carried out. Universities globally have changed their focus and ventured into new and innovative teaching, learning and examination modes. Murang'a University of Technology has continued to use innovative modes of teaching and learning, as well as administering online examinations. At present, e-teaching and e-learning are the new normal. I therefore commend the University Management, staff and students for embracing these new ways of carrying out the business of the university.

We believe that the introduction of blended teaching and learning in universities is a major shift, which, in the long run, will enhance the creation of professional networks of people and research collaborations beyond our borders. With this kind of change, our University will require huge human and financial resources to strengthen its digital component. I wish to express our gratitude to the National Government, Murang'a County Government and other stakeholders for supporting the University in addressing the challenges brought about by COVID-19. I appeal to the Government and other stakeholders to continue supporting the University financially to enable it achieve its academic and development goals.

Turning to the Graduands,

I once again congratulate you for realising your individual academic dreams. Today's graduation marks the end of one

journey and the beginning of another. New beginnings in life are full of promise and surprises. I encourage those of you who wish to pursue further studies either in this University or elsewhere to do so. I know that whatever choice you make, you will continue to play an important role both as a graduate and an alumnus of this University.

I wish to draw your attention to three areas that are critical. Firstly, you are the brand ambassadors of Murang'a University of Technology. I encourage you to represent the University well wherever you will be. You can easily achieve this by upholding good moral values and a high sense of integrity. Secondly, I challenge you to become agents of change, aiming for excellence and distinction. I implore you to practice these principles throughout your lives. Thirdly, the University has given you skills to use to test ideas and to challenge the status quo. As you go out there, continue to apply what you have acquired and pursue

excellence. Go out into the world as refined graduates, equipped with new knowledge and skills, willing to share and contribute to the improvement of your respective communities.

Above all, be grateful to God, your families, your guardians, your lecturers, and to all those who have sacrificed to get you to where you are today.

I wish you the very best in your future endeavours.

I finally want to wish you all safe and enjoyable Christmas holidays and a prosperous New Year, 2022.

Thank you, and May God bless you.

**PROF. JUSTIN IRINA
CHANCELLOR**