**SPEECH BY PROF. FRANCIS J. GICHAGA**

**CHANCELLOR**

**JOMO KENYATTA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY**

**DURING THE 20TH GRADUATION CEREMONY**

**ON**

**FRIDAY 30TH NOVEMBER, 2012**

Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology,

Hon. Prof. Margaret Kamar,

Chairman, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology Council,

Eng. Julius Riungu,

Vice Chancellor, Prof Mabel Imbuga,

Fellow Chancellors,

Council Members of JKUAT,

Council Members of other Universities,

Cabinet Ministers,

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology,

Other Permanent Secretaries,

Your Excellencies, the Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Members of Parliament,

Vice Chancellors of Other Universities,

Representatives of Various Universities and Organizations,

Distinguished Guests,

Alumni,

Parents and Guardians,

Graduands,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I join you all as we celebrate yet another graduation ceremony this calendar year. Today’s auspicious occasion marks the 20th Graduation Ceremony since the inception of this institution and its development from college level to full University status. I take this opportunity to heartily congratulate our graduands for their achievements which we are celebrating today. I also wish to commend the parents, guardians, sponsors and mentors without whose support this achievement would not have been a reality.

Any country that wishes to improve the quality of life of its citizens needs to invest in the development of human and material capital. As a University, therefore, we are proud of the parents and other key stakeholders for their investment and contribution to the nation’s human capital development as attested by this ceremony.

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology has continued to develop new academic programmes and to review existing ones to meet national, regional and global needs. I am informed that this year the University has launched the following programmes:-

1. Doctor of Philosophy in Development Studies
2. Masters of Science in Pharmacology (Drug Design and Development)
3. Bachelor of Science in Applied Bioengineering

I wish to commend the University Management and Staff for their innovative approach and hard work in the development of these and other programmes.

PAUISTI

Previously, we had announced that the University had won the bid to host the Pan African University Institute of Science, Technology and Innovation (PAUISTI) regional institute. I am glad to note that about 51 Masters students from various African countries are already in session in Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. I am informed that these students are enrolled in the areas of Civil Engineering, Electrical and Electronics Engineering, Mathematics, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. I take this opportunity to heartily welcome those students and wish them every success in their academic and professional endeavours.

Thika Super Highway Collaborations

I note with delight that His Excellency the President, Mwai Kibaki recently launched the Thika Super Highway upon its completion. I also acknowledge with gratitude that the Kenya Government facilitated the upgrading of the link road between the Super Highway and University Main Gate. This has given greater visibility and easier access to the University. I am pleased to note that the University in collaboration with the local community is working towards the beautification of this link road.

University’s Role in the Devolved Governance

Following the inauguration of the New Constitution whose kingpin is the devolved system of governance, our University has broken new ground in training leaders to meet the demands of the new dispensation. The school of Human Resource Development mounted programmes in leadership and governance to address the needs of the newly established counties in line with the new constitution. Recently, I presided over the awarding of certificates on County Governance to over 600 civic leaders drawn from various counties of this republic. It is hoped that these leaders will vie for various elective positions in their respective counties in the forthcoming general election in 2013. We would wish to call upon all contestants and electorate to conduct themselves in a humane way that will promote justice, peace and social cohesion before and after these landmark elections.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I wish to note that today’s graduation ceremony is taking place against a backdrop of global economic crisis that has led to diminished job opportunities and investments. The government has limited resources to hire personnel and many private firms are indeed downsizing. I therefore challenge you graduands to remain innovative in creating employment for yourselves and others. And with those remarks, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to thank those who spent sleepless nights to ensure that this graduation ceremony is a success. In particular I wish to commend the Vice-Chancellor together with her management staff for a job well done.

Finally, I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous 2013.

Thank you and may God bless you all.