

**THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF KENYA
SPEECH BY
PROF. GEORGE ESHIWANI, CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL
DURING THE GRADUATION CEREMONY
ON WEDNESDAY 18TH DECEMBER, 2013**

The Chancellor, Dr. Manu Chandaria, OBE, EBS;

**The Cabinet Secretary for Education Science and Technology
(Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi and here represented by the Principal
Secretary, Prof. Colette Suda);**

The Vice-Chancellor (Prof. Francis Aduol);

Members of Council, the Technical University of Kenya;

Graduands;

Staff of the Technical University of Kenya;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wish to warmly welcome you all to the first Graduation Ceremony of the Technical University of Kenya. On my own behalf and that of the Council of the University I wish to heartily congratulate the graduands on this auspicious occasion. It is with much delight that we celebrate your exemplary achievement today as you receive your respective awards. It is gratifying to note that you have remained focused and true to your studies as evidenced by your presence here today. The knowledge and skills that you have since acquired should enable you realize your dreams in your respective careers of choice.

May I take this early opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Kenya for appointing me to lead the first Council of this very prestigious university as the Chairman. I have since accepted the appointment with great humility and pledge my commitment to provide effective leadership to the Council to make this institution a world class university.

When I took over as the Chairman early this year, the institution had just been awarded its Charter and attained the status of a fully fledged university. As all of you may be aware, the new status required the establishment of a corresponding management structure. It also required the recruitment of the requisite staff to support the functions in line with the new mandate.

Mr. Chancellor Sir;

I am happy to report that the Council has appointed some of the best minds in this region to join the top management of the University and therefore provide the necessary leadership. In addition, we have also continued to recruit new teaching staff with good academic credentials from reputable universities. At the same time we have engaged the various staff unions to develop among the best terms of service within the public university system so as to attract and retain the best in the market.

The successful establishment of the Technical University of Kenya is a great contribution of the Government of Kenya in the development in Kenya's higher education. I am aware that the Government of Kenya holds this institution in very high esteem. It has high expectations in the growth of this institution and every effort is being made for the success of the institution. It is because of this that the Government has gone out of its way to support the institution to invest in modern laboratory and workshop equipment. The University today boasts of the most up-to-date workshops for engineering programmes.

Through you, the Cabinet Secretary for Education Science and Technology (here represented by Prof. Colette Suda), may I express our appreciation to the Government of Kenya for the continued support to this great University.

We feel honoured with these investments and would like to assure the government that the facilities which have been installed have enabled our students and lecturers to blend theory with practice and inculcate in our students critical and innovative thinking desirable for industrialization and economic growth of our nation. We wish to request that the Government extends this noble support to the other programmes which are equally in need and deserving.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The Council of the Technical University of Kenya is committed to the principles of equity and justice and for this we have established an environment where women and men are treated equally and with dignity. We have entrenched the affirmative action for women, persons with special needs and people from the marginalized regions in our employment processes. We also actively promote the increased enrolment of female students into engineering and science courses. Council, in light of this has set aside some funds to support female students by award of bursaries to needy and deserving cases.

I now wish to salute the commendable work done by the predecessor Councils to attain this rare success. They were able to refurbish and renovate the existing facilities to bring them up-to standards commensurate with the new status. They laid the solid foundations from where we have taken off and upon which we intend to chart the path towards fulfilling our mission and mandate.

However, the institution continues to face the challenge of inadequate space for growth to accommodate the unique needs of a technical university. The Council hopes to fully develop the plots in South B and South C in due course. The development of these parcels would go a long way in addressing the space needs of the College. The current acreage of the University stands at about 31 acres.

Therefore, these efforts will still not be sufficient to fully mitigate the current space deficit as well as meet the demand of the Commission for University Education. The Commission requires universities to have not less than 50 acres of land within a radius of 4km of each other. The University has made several requests to the Government for assistance in this front but our efforts have not been as fruitful.

The unique nature of this University requires that we have enough land to provide space to accommodate the heavy and large laboratory and workshop equipment for practical learning. Practical and hands-on training and education is the hallmark of a technical university such as ours. Our current limited space therefore puts enormous strain on efforts to pursue our vision to be a top rated university of technology. In this regard, I wish to appeal to our good Government to substantially increase the capitation for capital development to enable my Council address these crucial needs of the institution.

To our continuing students, I am proud to be associated with you. Your admirable culture of maintaining peace in your study environment has continued to receive widespread acclaim. I wish to commend you on this and advice that time wasted in non productive engagements is lost and cannot be recovered. Your success and that of the education sector in contributing to manpower development require prudent use of time available which, as you all know, is a very scarce and non renewable resource.

May I urge you to continue being the good example to your peers in other institutions of higher learning. This is the culture that will continue to earn you preference in employment opportunities besides enabling you to manage your time when on campus. The structures of your programmes require that you enrol for more semesters than your peers in other Universities and therefore unnecessary breaks in your studies will increase your forgone opportunities.

To our distinguished parents, we appreciate your partnership with us. As has been mentioned, the University has a few challenges which you are aware of. In the current setting, we lack enough accommodation facilities of our own. We thank you for having accepted to meet additional cost of maintaining your sons and daughters in privately managed hostels. I nonetheless believe that you will reap the benefits of those sacrifices. We fully appreciate the difficulties associated to students staying in such accommodation facilities.

Ladies and Gentlemen, while at the University, please feel most welcome! We are delighted to have your company on this very important occasion. To the graduands, we have equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to enable you to address the challenges of the Real World, please remember that sky is no longer considered the limit.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen, I thank you!

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