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“ There is a need to align staffing workload and enhance productivity. widespread disparity in workload distribution with regard to teaching and administrative responsibility, research and community outreach activities.”

— Prof. Isaac O. Kibwage Ag. Vice-Chancellor

“ Speech by Prof. Isaac O. Kibwage Ag. Vice-Chancellor, Egerton University

Delivered on Friday, 18th June 2021, During the 43rd Graduation Ceremony of Egerton University

The Chancellor of Egerton University, Dr. Narendra Raval (Guru)

The Cabinet Secretary for Ministry of Education, Prof. George Magoha

The Principal Secretary, State Dept. for University Education & Research, Amb. Simon Nabukwesi

Governor, Nakuru County Government,

Chancellors of other Universities,

Chairman of Egerton University Council, Amb., HukkaWario

Council Members, Egerton University,

Chairpersons of Councils of other Universities,
Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Egerton University,

Members of the University Senate,

Senior Government Officials,

Members of Staff, Graduating Class, Parents and Guardians



Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am privileged to be part of this 43rd Graduation Ceremony of Egerton University, the second graduation held on a virtual platform. On behalf of the University Management Board, University Senate, Staff and Students, I welcome you all. Thank you all for taking time to join us.

Graduands, I congratulate you for your exceptional success in reaching this far. With the mentorship and dedication of your lecturers, you have exhibited the spirit of tenacity and determination in pursuit of your academic goals. You did not waver even during all the challenges you have encountered in your academic journey. You remained steadfastly focused and kept the faith until you accomplished the goal of graduation. I salute and congratulate you all.

Your parents, guardians, and benefactors also deserve our gratitude for guiding and supporting you in your quest for academic qualifications.

We are in the midst of the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The University closed twice following the Presidential directives meant to curb the spread of the disease. As a result, we had to resort to conducting teaching and learning on virtual platforms. Online delivery of academic programmes has now become an integral part of our way of life. As we move forward, we shall apply on-line and face to face learning.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Let me thank the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Professor George Magoha and his team for taking time from their busy schedule to join us today during this joyous occasion. I also take this opportunity to thank the Principal Secretary, University Education and Research, Amb. Simon

Nabukwesi for attending this ceremony. The University is grateful for the support you have accorded us.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Today, we are delighted to graduate **2,041** graduands. There will be award of **67** Diplomas and conferment of **1,868** Bachelors degrees, **83** Masters degrees and **23** PhDs.



As I send the graduands into the labour market, I note that unemployment in our country is a challenge. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have exacerbated this. Our economy has been hit hard. Businesses have been forced to shut down, rendering most people jobless

and others with pay cuts. Graduands take heart. The economy is poised to make a recovery. There is demand for health and life science professionals, primary and pre-primary teachers, accounting professionals, ICT experts and agricultural specialists. Despite the need for these jobs, every year, we graduate thousands of students, and it has become increasingly difficult to absorb all graduates into the job market. It is therefore paramount to seek opportunities for self-employment. We have armed you with skills, abilities, and aptitudes that make you dynamic

thinkers and doers. Do not have this mindset of graduating to get jobs. Use tools that are at your disposal, such as the internet and create meaningful opportunities for yourselves. Look beyond your discipline. Be creative, innovative and go-getters. Seek to solve the community's

problems and challenges, for therein lies the chance for creating innovative products, services and business opportunities that can lead to growth and success.



Mr Chancellor Sir,



I am glad that we are graduating students during these tough times occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic disrupted all facets of our lives, especially teaching, learning, working, and social activities. However, despite all these challenges, the University continues to make tremendous progress.



In the January 2021 Webometrics ranking, Egerton University ranked Number two (2) in Kenya and 37 in Africa. The Webometric rankings, the largest academic ranking of higher education institutions, scored universities on "Impact", "Openness", and "Excellence". In the ranking, Egerton University was assessed as the best University in Kenya and the 5th in Africa on "Impact". Impact measures academic web presence, open access initiatives, and transfer of scientific and cultural knowledge generated by universities to societies.



Likewise, in 2020/2021 University Ranking by Academic Performance (URAP), the University was ranked number two (2) in Kenya and number 1,945 in the world. The URAP ranking of the top 3,000 world universities is based on academic quality.

These noteworthy rankings are a testament to the fact that our staff and students are committed to academic excellence and are working very hard to maintain quality education and research. Nonetheless, we aim to be the leading University in Kenya and Africa.

Our Academic delivery has successfully transitioned from in-person learning and teaching to an online learning environment. The situation we are grappling with accelerated this change. This movement involved



several changes, such as the reconceptualisation of the classroom. This transition hasn't been without its setbacks. We are yet to fully realise the benefits and utilisation of online teaching and learning structure. I am sorry to the obstacles some of you graduands had as you transitioned

to the online classroom methodology. With time, we shall be more conversant with online teaching and learning.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

The School of Distance Learning will today graduate twenty-nine **(29)** E-learning students, among them two Assistant Chiefs. Mr Daniel Rotich, the Assistant Chief of Chelaba sub-location of Baringo County, will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Community Development. Mr Thomas Moragwa, Assistant Chief of Kerangi sub-location of Nakuru

County, will graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Criminology. Hongera to you!

The Center of Excellence in Sustainable Agriculture and Agribusiness Management (CESAAM), funded by the World Bank in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, supports students, faculty and partners across Africa through building their capacity for quality teaching and innovative research. In total, CESAAM has supported a total of 240 graduate students from eleven **(11)** countries in Africa. Today, five **(5)** PhDs and seven **(7)** Masters students are graduating, and some of them are on the Vice-Chancellor's list for doing exceptionally well. I convey my sincere gratitude to the World Bank and the Ministry of Education for the continued support.



I am pleased to announce that the Faculty of Law is graduating its first cohort of law graduates. A total of sixty-one **(61)** students have completed the programme and are graduating today. One of the students Mr Emmanuel Munene will be awarded a First Class Honours Degree and will give the valedictory speech. With the able leadership of the Dean, the Faculty worked diligently to ensure the success of the Law programme in compliance with Council of Legal Education requirements. The Faculty was founded in 2016.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery will also present eleven **(11)** Bachelor of Veterinary Medicine and Surgery graduands for the first time during this graduation ceremony. Veterinary medical professionals contribute directly to the economy of the country. Their contribution is seen through food production, food safety, identification and prevention of zoonotic infections, promotion of ecotourism and environmental conservation.

The Faculty of Health Sciences, on 23rd April 2021 made a significant milestone by enrolling with the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG). The enrolment will allow the University to authenticate the credentials of medical graduates who seek to join postgraduate residency programs in the USA, UK, Canada, Australia etc. Our wish that our medical graduates are able to register for United States





Medical Licensing Exams (USMLE) and be recognised for training entry by the General Medical Council UK
has become a reality. (/)  

In October 2020, the University joined the International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience (IAESTE) to expand international opportunities for our students. We will continue to open our doors to international linkages and collaborations as indicated in our Core Values.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

The Division of Research & Extension is currently overseeing **108** research projects and consultancies that are both internally and externally

funded, with a cumulative value of **Ksh. 2.1 billion**. Over 350 researchers and their students are involved in these projects.

From 24th to 26th November 2020, the Division hosted the 13th International Conference. It was conducted on a virtual platform and attracted 750 attendees drawn from local and international universities, research institutions, county and national governments, local and international NGOs, and private sector organisations.

The Division also supports innovations from students and staff through training and facilitates extension services to communities. In addition, there are various ongoing outreach programmes where the communities

involved have benefited from the technical knowledge of experts from Egerton University.

Through the National Research Fund (NRF), Egerton University has received grants that will enable it to contribute to the Government's Big Four Agenda. It is important that we find homegrown solutions to our problems and as a premier research institution, we are best placed to upscale research that is significant to the Country.

Many of our academic staff have increased Egerton University's visibility by publishing in reputable and prestigious international journals. To mention just a few, Professor Paul Kimurto, a researcher in the Faculty of Agriculture, recently published an article on chickpeas in the Journal of Nature (Genetics). Professor Wilkister Moturi, a researcher in the Faculty

of Environment and Resources Development, recently published in The Lancet Global Health. Professor Moturi, an Associate Professor of

Environmental Health and a Global Burden of Disease (GBD) collaborator, is the most cited researcher at Egerton University.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

In line with the Ministry of Health directives on curtailing the spread of COVID-19 disease, the University has constructed hand washing facilities at all Campus entry and exit points and strategically at lecture halls, hostels and other public areas. We have also ensured that there are adequate isolation and quarantine areas





to be notified if some members of the University community test positive for COVID-19.

On 15th March 2021, Egerton University commenced the COVID-19 vaccination campaign, first targeting staff members from the Medical Department and the Faculty of Health Sciences. A total of 1,271 people comprising lecturers, administrative and support staff, students and teachers from local schools have been vaccinated with the first dose. The second dose vaccination resumed on 9th June 2021.

On a sad note, since July 2020, the University lost five **(5)** academic staff members, four **(4)** administrative & technical, and three **(3)** support staff through various causes, a few due to COVID-19 disease. At the same time, eleven **(11)** students passed away due to various causes.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

Since January 2021, the University has completed two **(2)** projects; the Science Complex that allows an increase in teaching space and the Security Control Complex at the Main Campus entrance. The Complex which houses reception offices, security offices and a minimart that will enable us market our products.

On the University's status, I took over as the Acting Vice-Chancellor on 13th January 2021 with a financial debt of **Ksh. 4.45 billion**. The debt includes unremitted statutory deductions to government agencies, pension schemes and unpaid expenses. It continues to grow monthly.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

To open the University space for discussions and enlighten staff members on the University's current status I addressed academic staff on 1st March 2021 and administrative & technical staff on 10th March 2021 on status of the University and especially on its financial health. This will continue as and when necessary. I look forward to restoring the University to its rightful place in our country and the world.

Besides the financial deficit arising from insufficient capitation, I noted the haemorrhaging of funds brought about by weaknesses in internal financial controls. To this end, the University has ensured a strong internal financial controls system with clear guidelines and procedures where approvals and authorisations are tracked and enforced appropriately.

Implementing financial reforms at the University is an uphill task and, at times, a contentious one. Let me assure all of you that these reforms are vital to the survival of the University. The reforms have started to bear fruits in the short term, and I am confident that the University will have a strong and sustainable financial system in the long term. To bridge the budget deficit, we have adopted strategies geared towards increasing revenue and minimising unnecessary expenditure.

Council and Management has reviewed our strategic plans to infuse a new trajectory for resource mobilization through revamping of Income Generating Units (IGUs), partnership with County and National Government in establishing an industrial park, Chemeron, Facilities for

ecotourism & Conferences, snake park and venom harvesting. Indeed the Council Members are committed to use their own resources to finish the required snake house.



We assure our foreign students of quality education, security and accommodation. This allows for their timely transition.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

We are proud of our Alumni across the world who have continued to transform lives in their various professions and careers. It is worth noting that some of them are coming back to support various programmes through our Alumni engagement initiatives. These efforts and achievements of our Alumni should be testimony to you graduands that Egerton University produces graduates who are top professionals. I challenge you to remain active members of the Egerton University Alumni Association (EUAA). At the opportune moment, please find time to return to your alma mater and give back some of what God blesses you with.

Mr Chancellor Sir,

There is a need to align staffing workload and enhance productivity. There is a widespread disparity in workload distribution with regard to teaching, administrative responsibility, research and community outreach. To address some of the issues and as part of austerity measures, There has been an increase in the teaching load for academic staff from eighteen **(18)** Credit Factors to twenty-four **(24)** Credit Factors per staff per academic year. This increase will also contribute to optimum use of our workforce and reduce expenditure.

Let me thank all the stakeholders and partners who have continuously worked with us in **Transforming Learning through Quality Education**. My appreciation goes to you all and especially the Egerton University 43rd Graduation Ceremony Committee.

Thank you and God bless you.

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