

**THIRD Graduation Ceremony of the University of  
Dedan Kimathi University of Technology on Friday  
29<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at the Main Campus of Dedan Kimathi  
University of Technology.**

**Speech by Mr. Duncan N Ndegwa**

Mr. Chancellor, Sir; Prof. Shellemiah O. Keya  
the Chair of Council, Prof. Dulacha Barako  
the Vice Chancellor, Prof. P Ndirangu Kioni  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am humbled by the recognition that you have bestowed upon me today. It is a great honour to me, personally. It is also a great honour to all those who endeavour to see our country, Kenya, achieve economic prosperity.

Thank you.

I will treasure this recognition all the more because, as a Gikuyu elder of the rank known as *matathi matura nguru*, society does not give me too many responsibilities.

Indeed, I am expected to move about, at the stately speed of the tortoise, which is the emblem, or logo, of the *matura nguru* status.

All the same, I can use the vantage point of this exalted position of an elder to call attention to the two things that I have found to be of utmost importance in this world – freedom and education.

As I grew upstrolling around these hills and valleys of Nyeri, in long ago colonial Kenya, my generation – the Maina Age-set – witnessed the pain of dispossession. We were torn from our land and from several of our treasured customs.

I was here, in Nyeri, on July 26 1952 when Jomo Kenyatta opened our eyes to the injustice of colonialism with these powerful words preserved in the *Dictionary of Historical Quotations by Alan and Veronica Palmer, Page 125*

God said this is our land, land in which we flourish as a people... We want our cattle to get fat on our land so that our children grow up in prosperity; and we do not want the fat removed to feed others.

*Bururi uyu witu wa Kenya  
Ngai ni aturathimiire  
Na akiuga tutikoima kuo*

The State of Emergency was declared all over Kenya 4 months later on 20th October 1952 which led the mushrooming of camps and the genocidal killing of our people in their thousands.

Jomo Kenyatta's words were words of protest. They defied the notion of an allegedly superior civilization. Our land was given to us by God to keep, not to interlopers.

These words ignited our freedom struggle because they gave us great self-worth. How I wish that you could all have been there with me that day, to see how the crowd reacted to Jomo Kenyatta's words: it was a moment of

pure rapture, echoed in loud screams and prolonged applause. Some rolled around on the soil with joy, as a significant sign of uncontrolled freedom.

Our freedom fighters ultimately reversed the course of colonialism and brought about change that has indelibly touched all of mankind. To those who would wish to read more on this subject, please read Chapter 16 and the Epilogue of my book, - "*Walking in Kenyatta Struggles*".

I am delighted to hear that this University has firm plans to establish a Mau Mau Education Centre and a Hero's Garden where sculptures and other artworks will immortalise all the heroes and heroines of Nyeri County who fought gallantly to secure the freedom of our people. These two projects will make Dedan Kimathi University of Technology a world-class leader in studies of African Liberation Movements. To this end, a contribution Mr. Amos Wamunyu and myself worth Shs500,000 has already been made.

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen. From my point of "*Matura Ngurus*", I look at the long arc of history and I see very clearly that freedom is always contested. Never will there be a shortage of people or things to hold a people or backdown. Hence why every generation must seek to contribute to the empowerment and liberation of the denizens of thier country.

We are now a nation of close to 44 million people. Our needs continue to multiply and the solutions for these needs must lie within us, within our African culture, which promotes the institution of family as the primary unit of order.

What will you, the young people graduating today with me, be remembered for? Your generation is faced with

many challenges – drug abuse, diseases of affluence, growing inequality and widespread insecurity from poverty and from the fear of horrendous acts of inhumanity like those that happened here in Mpeketoni, Baragoi, Kapedo, Mandera, and Garissa.

Is this a return to the old Cecil Rhodes philosophy of dominating the African people? What kind of civilization is being ushered in by the regime of fear that these attacks trigger? How will we overcome this fear?

A wise man once said “eternal vigilance is the price we pay for liberty”. We must take these words very seriously as the spread of terrorism threatens peace in every corner of the world today.

Global politics might be changing and new world powers may very well emerge, but the one thing that remains certain is the vicious competition for Africa's resources. We must ensure that neither external interests nor our own internal conflicts will stop us from doing what is just and right for Kenya. Exploiting whatever resources we have been blessed with for the good of our own people is the only just and right thing to do.

Whenever the society in which I have lived, I underscore the fact that the Tree of Freedom must always be watered by the bounties of education. Our founding fathers knew this when they linked the struggle against colonialism to the establishment of independent schools.

Later, at independence, we prioritised education as a key to economic prosperity because education gives more than hope: it begets ideas for progress. This is as true today as it was fifty years ago.

The advent of county governments has come ten years after the inception of Free Primary Education. Taken together, these developments are remarkable opportunities to cast the net of education even wider and guarantee the prosperity of all our people.

At the same time, Mr. Chancellor, Sir, the university must lead the way in this new dispensation by investing in new frontiers of research. For this purpose it is encouraging to learn you have initiated connections with business people in USA that may lead to links with much older university institutions there located.

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen, I congratulate the management of this institution for the tremendous progress it has made in a very short span of time. It has grown steadily from an institute of technology to a constituent college. Today, it is a fully-fledged university.

It cannot be gainsaid that without the selfless foresight of the pioneer technocrats and cash crop farmers of Nyeri County, this university would not exist. They are the ones who initiated and developed the idea of an institute of science and technology. They were 100 per cent committed to raising the standards of living in Nyeri; committed to empowering our youth and giving them self-worth.

You must not take for granted what they did to bring this university into being. As you expand the facilities and equip the study programmes, let the honesty and dedication of those pioneers be your guiding light.

With these remarks, I accept this degree of Doctor of Business Administration (*honoris causa*) from the Dedan Kimathi University of Technology.

Thank you.

Duncan N Ndegwa MA Hons.CBS EGH D.BA

Keremara Holdings Ltd

**NAIROBI**

*29th May 2015*