

**ADDRESS BY CABINET SECRETARY, EDUCATION
AMB. (DR.) AMINA C. MOHAMED, DURING THE 59TH
GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON FRIDAY,
SEPTEMBER 14, 2018 AT THE CHANCELLOR'S
COURT AT 7.00 A.M.**

Madam Chancellor, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi

Principal Secretaries,

IGAD Delegation

Members of the University Council

Vice Chancellor, UON

Chairman, University of Nairobi Alumni, Dr. Isaac

Awuondo

The Senate

Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps

present

State and Public Officers Present

Industry representatives

Chancellors from other Universities Present,

Other Vice- Chancellors Present,

Members of academic Community,

Partners of the University of Nairobi,

Members of the Press,

Parents and Guardians,

Graduands,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be part of the congregation of the 59th graduation ceremony and to join the University of Nairobi Community in this celebration.

Congratulation to you all the graduands!

We all share in your happiness, and pride of having successfully completed your studies and attained qualifications that will put you in good position to make your contribution in nation building, to change the fortunes of your families and community and your own personal growth and development.

Our continent is currently facing a lot of challenges. It is in such times that the society calls upon you as the elites and the universities, being centres for knowledge generation, to provide leadership and provide solutions.

Madam chancellor, allow us to reflect on some of those challenges. Despite being the richest continent with vast natural resources, youthful and resourceful population, most favourable climate, Africa has continued to lag behind in development.

Africa today accounts for less than 2% of the global GDP. Our share of global GDP has stagnated since 1970's even as we continue to produce more and more graduates and experts in various fields.

Poverty has continued to be a challenge! Africa accounts for more than 50% of the global population in extreme poverty.

Our continent still remains the leading continent that is ravaged by internal conflicts leading to loss of life, property and human capital flight to other continents. Africa imports tonnes of food from other continents.

You will agree with me that enough research has been done. Enough theories and development models have been generated. What remains is for us to develop home-grown solutions/models of development.

I believe the universities should lead in providing more creative, bold and innovative approaches to development than we currently employ.

We can leap frog the process of development by leveraging on our strengths – taking advantages of our youthful population and disruptive digital revolution to create more opportunities. In this era where talent management is so critical to the development of economies, I want to throw a challenge to universities to review their curricula and teaching methods! You should focus more on nurturing talents and to ensure you produce graduates that are competent, marketable and globally competitive.

We recently launched the policy framework for the office of career services in universities to reinforce your engagement with the industry and the government to build the synergies in fulfilling the aspirations of both the graduates and the industry.

As the government continue to implement the Big 4 agenda, I challenge the universities to position themselves and find roles in the implementation of projects related to Big 4 projects.

You have a lot of idle capacities which need to be put into productive use to generate much needed capitation.

I also want to challenge the universities to streamline, simplify and create awareness on commercialization of knowledge.

Research has shown that harnessing of research outputs and assets can easily transform the economic health of our institutions.

My ministry will continue to support research activities in universities and I expect to see significant growth in your IP Portfolios – including growth in IP Assets and their commercialization.

Very soon, we shall be filling vacant positions in the University Councils. As leading institutions of higher learning, your councils have a higher calling not only to espouse the principles and values of

exemplary leadership but also to demonstrate the ideals of good governance in your institutions. As such I wish to see an end to perpetual squabbles between councils and Vice Chancellors in our public universities.

The role of council members, whose secretary is the Vice Chancellor, is to steer the universities to achieve their mandates and create impact to society. We cannot achieve that in an environment that is marred with conflicts and members working at cross purposes. Council members should work as a team.

In the same respect, I also want to beseech unions to embrace dialogue even as they engage us and the councils in improving the welfare of their members. Let's dialogue and be part of the solution.

Finally, I want to appreciate all the graduands once more and wish them prosperous and fulfilling life in their future careers.

Amb. (Dr.) Amina C. Mohamed, EGH, CAV

Cabinet Secretary

Ministry of Education