

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. UHURU KENYATTA, C.G.H.,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-
CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES AND CHANCELLOR DURING THE
3RD GRADUATION CEREMONY OF KIBABII UNIVERSITY HELD ON
FRIDAY 23RD NOVEMBER, 2018.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to officiate at the 3rd Graduation Ceremony of Kibabii University. Today is a day of great celebration. A day of allowing our graduates the luxury of a heartfelt joy. Kibabii University has prepared you to deal effectively with emerging issues and provide solutions to societal challenges. This distinguished achievement is what will determine your relevance and ability to play this role for the sake of uplifting the standard of life for humanity.

I wish to convey congratulations to the parents, families, guardians and sponsors of those graduating today, for their sacrifice over many years to ensure the main players in today's ceremony received university education that has culminated in their graduation.

This would not have been possible without the contribution of Council, Management, Senate, Faculty and Staff. The Council, which has been in place for slightly more than one year, deserves commendation for their positive oversight role which is clearly evident in the gracious image of the University that we see and much more that is not discernible with our eyes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Education is the greatest national activity we can have. It is a means of transforming society. Therefore, the university educational curriculum should be designed in such a way that enables and helps the learner to educate himself, develop own intellectual

capacity, moral fiber, aesthetic capabilities and grow as a better human being. We depend on it as a fulcrum to nurture young leadership with requisite ability to drive the development agenda with regard to generation of wealth, provision of health care, reversal of poverty and sustainability of the environment. There is no doubt that every little encounter and experience while here, has been enriching and will remain within your memories for life. Each of you has a story to carry. Share this story with those you encounter as you contribute to shaping our universe.

Education is also a democratizing force, which should smother retrogressive practices including tribal feelings implanted by negative politics, greed, ethnicity, corruption, intolerance, and wanton destruction of the environment. We are confident that the young intellectuals trained in this institution can address challenges of such vices. All of us present here today will no doubt agree with this role as captured in the words of Jawaharlal Nehru who said: “A university stands for humanism, for tolerance, for reason, for the adventure of ideas and for search of truth. It stands for the onward march of the human race towards ever-higher objectives. If the universities discharge their duties adequately, then it is well within the nation and the people”. More importantly, go out there and strive to provide change that transcends the wasteful bickering of politicians.

I am aware of crucial strides Kibabii University has made in such important sectors as agriculture, commerce as well as Information Communication and Technology. I, particularly, commend the aspiration to establish Kibabii University Information Communication and Technology Hub (KICTH), which has already attracted funding from both government and non-governmental institutions. The University’s multidisciplinary research endeavours are both timely and appropriate.

As you are aware, our country is at the threshold of unprecedented accelerated growth and transformation, thanks to my government’s priority Big Four agenda that

includes Universal Healthcare, Manufacturing, Affordable Housing and Food Security. It may not be overemphasized that true and sustainable growth is only present where families are safeguarded against debilitating medical bills; when quality jobs, especially in manufacturing, are available to our skilled citizenry; where there is guaranteed food security and dignified, affordable homes. It is therefore a time of change for all of us. With collective commitment to the agenda, especially through appropriate research and channeling of resources, skills and ideas, we are sure to turn the fortunes of our economy culminating in broad, fulfilling and uninterrupted prosperity.

As we speak, we have increased the number of health facilities from 9,000 in 2013 to 11,000 in 2017. The NHIF coverage has continued to expand from a membership of 3.8 million in 2013 to the present 7.2 million. On food security, the Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) is cushioning Kenyans against hunger. Through it, cash is transferred to vulnerable households in arid and semi-arid areas giving them the choice of where and how to spend the stipend. All these efforts not only mean improved livelihoods for our people but also infinite opportunities and possibilities to be tapped.

In addition, we expect hundreds of thousands of affordable new homes across the country, occasioning a boost in job opportunities and incomes. We also envisage an increase in manufacturing from the current 9.2 per cent to 20 per cent by 2022, with an assured dividend of a bigger robust economy and thus decreased unemployment and much secure livelihoods and families.

As a hub for innovation and technology, Kibabii University should continue to set her sights on discovering new technologies of farming and food preservation, not to forget cheap housing, industrialisation and value addition as well as general healthy living.

The world is evolving every minute. It is changing in terms of climate, national boundaries, and social structures. It is becoming smaller due to the ability of the digital revolution but also creation and growth of a global technology. This unfolding events commonly referred to as the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) is characterized by a fusion of technologies in all aspects of life. It is marked by technology innovations in a number of fields, including robotics, artificial intelligence, green energy and the internet among others.

These technologies have great potential to connect billions of people across continents and reduce the geographical separation. The new technologies hold unique opportunities to improve human communication and interaction. You the youth embody attributes of a true global generation. No wonder you are living in a world where it is common to create a home, find employment, form relations, and have families across national boundaries, races and cultures in a continuously changing and increasingly dynamic world. The universities have a role to play in ensuring that they provide training that will ensure our graduates are not mere spectators but movers of these unfolding events.

To our graduates therefore, you are stepping out into an environment that is not only ready for you but also thirsty for your creative solutions and input. We encourage you to spare no effort in shaping a better Kenya. The credentials you have so gallantly fought for ought not be for individual gain or short term pleasures, but rather for pursuit of dreams that will make things work for both yourself and your communities. We expect you to accept the onus of being good examples and mentors to those coming behind you. I urge you to remain defiant in the face of uncertainty or lack of immediate headway, and ignore social media obsession with exaggerated pomp and opulence. Always remember that true growth is a result of focus,

perseverance and hard work. You will succeed not because you are lucky but because you didn't quit even when it seemed reasonable to be discouraged.

Above all, let your hunger for knowledge not end here. Constant learning will, without doubt, position you to play meaningful roles in the development agenda and also reap from the impending windfall.

Finally, I reiterate the government's commitment to quality university education. In this endeavor, the government has supported infrastructural growth, academic staff development and is behind the present change in curriculum. I support our efforts to continue improving Kibabii University infrastructure and overall academic environment. Your long term growth, as providers of higher education, is dependent on your agility and ability to build capacity. Therefore, I pledge to walk with the University Council, Management and Senate every part of the way.

To all of you, once again, thank you for coming. To our graduates, congratulations. God bless you all and God bless Kenya.