

SPEECH BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PROF. NJENGA MUNENE
DURING ZETECH UNIVERSITY'S GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD
ON 11TH NOVEMBER 2022.

- The Chief Guest, **AAR Insurance Group CEO**, Dr. Patrick Gatonga.
- The Ambassador of Belgium Mr. Peter Maddens.
- The Chancellor, Zetech University, Prof. Susan Alfano Nkinyangi
- The Chairman, Zetech University Council, Mr. Hassan Mohammed
- Members of the Zetech University Council
- The Vice-Chancellor, Zetech University, Prof. Njenga Munene
- Members of the Zetech University Management Board
- Members of the Zetech University Senate
- Zetech University staff
- Students, Parents and guardians
- Distinguished Guests
- Graduands, Ladies and gentlemen

Good Morning,

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Zetech University and appreciate you all for convening here today to celebrate our Graduating class of 2022.

This year's graduation is anchored on the theme **“Digital Disruption: New opportunities and frontiers”**

Digital disruption is an effect that changes the fundamental expectations and behaviors in a culture, market, industry, or process that is caused by, or expressed through, digital capabilities, channels, or assets. Video Streaming/Web-Based Video. Netflix disrupted Blockbuster Video by focusing on DVDs instead of VHS tapes, Smartphones, Email, Online References and encyclopedias, Personal Computers and Hand-Held Devices. All Kenyans have experience with digital money Mpesa, Mkopa, Pesa Pap and others. Those familiar with medicine like our Chief Guest are familiar with telemedicine. However, I will leave the topic of discussion to the Chief guest who is more familiar with disruptions, opportunities and where we are going with the ever-changing digital landscape.

Reflections on the 2022 Academic year

Madam Chancellor the year 2022 has been an eventful year globally with the rising cost of living, precipitated by the COVID-19 pandemic from which we are yet to fully recover from, the war in Ukraine, the rising cost of energy and fertilizers and the global climate change crisis which have led to droughts, floods, typhoons and fires. Kenya has not been spared and we are experiencing the worst drought in 40 years, a very high cost of living precipitated by the unprecedented cost of petroleum.

There is a lot to thank God for that we held peaceful elections on 9th August and we have a new government in place. We congratulate H.E Dr. William Samoei Ruto for being elected president. We also want to congratulate Mr. Mohammed Hassan our Chairman of the Council for being appointed one of the economic advisers to the president. Chairman Sir, we appeal to you to advocate for equity in support of Kenyan students sponsored by the government in private universities who get around Kes 28,000 against Kes 70,000 given to their colleagues in public universities for the same courses. We hope that the Presidential Working group on Education Reforms will give recommendations that will be fair and those that will push education in the direction of growth and sustainability.

Madam Chancellor ladies and gentlemen, Zetech University has also been affected by the challenging economic environment, and 803 students out of 9433 students are on academic leave mostly due to financial challenges. This is a huge number of young brilliant minds getting wasted. I appreciate every individual staff and student of Zetech University, who have already contributed to the university scholarship fund. I also appreciate the BOT which has committed Kes 8M every year to support needy students by giving them scholarships. The University is appealing to individuals and corporates to support the scholarship fund to support these brilliant but needy students. You could also consider adopting one or two of these talented and needy students.

Madam Chancellor Ladies and gentlemen, Zetech University has continued to grow despite the many local and global challenges. Allow me to, in a nutshell, highlight the accomplishments since January 2022.

CUE-accreditation as on Open and Distant Learning (ODEL) Centre.

After a very rigorous inspection by CUE on 6th Dec 2021, Zetech University on 28th February 2022 was accredited as an ODEL center. We therefore can enroll, admit, teach, examine and graduate all our programmes.

Approval of 10 New Bachelors Programs

In April 2022, the Commission for University Education (CUE) Zetech University inspected the University for accreditation of 10 new degree programmes. The approval was given on 27th April 2022 and on 6th September 2022, we admitted 643 students as the first cohort of these new degree programs at the Mang'u Campus.

Award of Charter

On 25th April 2022, the CUE commission did the final inspection to determine the readiness of the University to be awarded a Charter. This was after several previous inspections and submissions by the University of detailed Self Assessment Reports which generated 4 volumes of Accreditation Reports. Previously the Council and Senate had approved the draft Charter and Statutes. On 2nd August 2022, the University was awarded the Charter by HE. Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta at the Kakamega State Lodge. I appreciate all the stakeholders for the individual and collective role each played in making this possible.

Academic Promotions

The growth in our academic portfolio has seen us increase the number of staff from 230 to 277. Moreover, 3 senior lecturers have been promoted to associate lecturers namely Prof Alice Njuguna, Prof Owen Ngumi and Prof Geoffrey Gitau. We congratulate them on this achievement. I appreciate the University Council for the promotions of these professors. We also congratulate 2 of our faculty members; Paul Mwangi and Samuel Kihui Chege for successfully completing their PhDs who are due for graduation in December 2022.

Research and innovations

Our faculty and students have continued to excel in innovations such as green energy, software development and robotics. Prof Geoffrey Gitau has innovated the conversion of petrol motorcycles to electric using Lithium batteries. Our staff Nathan Muturi has developed 2 software Sajiri and Shahada which are already in use.

Our student Florida Korir and her team represented Kenya at the First global robotics competition held in Geneva where they emerged the second globally. The incubation hub iZET has 30 incubatees working on different innovations. One innovatee Emmanuel Rono a BSc. IT students here is working on carbon footprinting to tame global warming by accurately calculating carbon emissions.

Between 24th to 28th October 2022, the University held its Research & Innovation Week. We hosted 70 internal and external exhibitors and held many panel discussions in areas pertaining to sustainability and digital disruptions.

Partnerships, Collaborations and CSR

To increase opportunities for industry exposure for our students, expand opportunities for joint research, consultancies, and international student attraction, the University has signed 11 MOUs with different organisations namely Wylde international, University of Juba, Mpesa Foundation, e-mentoring Africa, Atlas College, Light for the World, Craydel, The Tamarind Group, Standard Group PLC ComTIA and EDUKANS.

The University as a responsible institution has been participating in CSR activities with partners like tree planting in Ruiru, school feeding programs in Tharaka Nithi, offering free medical camps, blood donation drives, improving road safety, reducing drug and substance abuse and offering free career advice and guidance to high school students. I greatly appreciate the Corporate division led by John Mwai for these activities.

Graduation

Madam Chancellor ladies and gentlemen today marks the biggest number of graduands in one graduation. A total of 1993 students finished and qualified for different awards, not to mention the 207 certificate qualifiers who are not included in the booklet. We congratulate all graduands regardless of what they pursued. Today, we release the first cohorts of Bachelor of Arts in International Relations and Bachelor of Education Arts. We congratulate them on this achievement. The reason for inviting the Belgian ambassador was to give hope and encouragement to BIRD graduates that there are many opportunities. It is my sincere hope that these graduates will excel in the job market and become trail brazers not just in employment but also in job creation.

Madam Chancellor ladies and gentlemen let me with your permission say a few things about determination and power of focus. Juliana Kiloko Mutei was my tea girl when I came to this university in 2018. I challenged her to register and progress in her studies. She said she cannot afford but I encouraged her to put her priorities right. Today she is graduating with a degree in Business Administration and Management. Husna Shaffi Said, a 1st class honours student embodies the

spirit of entrepreneurship. She runs a bakery that has employed 4 of her coursemates. The Belgian Ambassador needs to consider offering this great lady an opportunity to hone her skills.

We thank you, your parents and your guardians for trusting us to train you. We hope we have given you the best that we could. We appreciate the Academic division led by Prof Alice Njuguna and her team for ensuring quality teaching and preparation of the graduates we are releasing today. You will always be connected with this University. You will succeed if you apply all the positive things you have learned here. Be students for life as the world will keep evolving and you need to keep pace with changes.

Madam Chancellor Ladies and gentlemen, as I conclude, I want to appreciate the BOT, you Madam Chancellor, the University Council, the UMB, Senate, staff and students, our service providers our partners and collaborators for the team spirit that has made Zetech University excel. My deep appreciation to the Chief guest Dr. Gatonga for accepting our invitation and for the great words to all of us. Our many guests and members of the press. My deep appreciation to the COO, DVC and DCAM for organising this great graduation. I appreciate parents and guardians watching us online. I appreciate our very special guests the graduating class of 2022. May God bless you and light your paths to success. **Invent your Future!**

Madam Chancellor Ladies and gentlemen Since this is the last major event of Zetech University with all stakeholders I wish you all a great festive season. Have a safe merry Christmas and a prosperous 2023.

Prof. Dr. Njenga Munene. J, (BVM, MSc, Ph.D.)

**Vice-Chancellor And
Professor of Clinical Veterinary Medicine**