



**OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRESIDENT**

**SPEECH OF H.E RIGATHI GACHAGUA, EGH, DEPUTY
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA, DURING THE
41ST GRADUATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN
AFRICA, BARATON, ON SUNDAY AUGUST 13, 2023, IN
NANDI COUNTY**

The Cabinet Secretary for Education Ezekiel Machogu;

The Chancellor and President, East-Central Africa Division of the SDA Church, Dr. Blasious Ruguri;

The Chairman Board of Trustees and President of East Kenya Union Conference of the SDA Church, Dr. Samuel Makori;

The Chairman, University Council and President of West Kenya Union Conference of the SDA Church, Dr. Samuel Misiani;

The University Council;

The Vice Chancellor of University of Eastern Africa Baraton Prof.

Phillip Maiyo;

Our Host Governor, Nandi County, Stephen Sang’;

Political and other Leaders;

Parents and Guardians;

Graduands;

Distinguished Guests;

I bring you greetings and best wishes from President William Ruto.

I join the University fraternity on this important occasion of celebrating the over 800 graduands, Class of 2023. It is out of sheer hard work, resilience and determination that you are graduating today.

Congratulations!

The 41st graduation is also a time to celebrate the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, for the phenomenal socio-economic contribution it has made to the country and the continent since 1978.

Happy 45th Birthday.

I have noted with appreciation that the University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, was the first private University to be chartered by the Government of the Republic of Kenya. It has since grown in size and scope. With a student enrollment of 5,000, this university has lived true to the spirit of Pan-Africanism, refining and churning out fine professionals and experts. The impact has gone beyond the borders of Eastern and Central Africa.

That is why today, there are also graduands from other countries in the region. We celebrate you for this milestone.

Besides education, the University recognises that God is the fountain of knowledge and wisdom. This is captured by the theme of this year's graduation: "*More than conquerors through Christ*" (Romans 8:37).

Graduands, Distinguished Guests;

This 41st graduation is significant.

A few days ago, President Ruto received the Presidential Working Party on Education Reforms Report. The report has set on course a raft of reforms that will re-engineer the Education System to meet emerging socio-economic development demands of the country.

It also happens when our nation is grappling with rampant unemployment as graduates from tertiary institutions compete for limited opportunities.

This was one of the reasons that the President sought inclusive and evidence-based reforms in the Education Sector, to refocus and retool our graduates from job seeking to job creation.

Graduands, Distinguished Guests;

Further, Kenya and the Globe are under the threat of emerging issues like climate change. A few months ago, more than 37 out of 47 counties were running dry as persistent drought swept through the country.

The Government took various measures, which were more short-term- meaning, we are still exposed to such vagaries as the weather becomes more unpredictable.

These challenges are extra ordinary. They needed extra-ordinary measures for long-term solutions. These solutions are founded on strong scientific research and corresponding innovation.

This is only possible with a strong Education System. In other words, universities and higher learning institutions can no longer boast of the courses they offer, but the quality of the versatile skills they impart to the graduates to solve emerging issues like climate change and enhance food security.

Graduands, Distinguished Guests;

As we recognise the remarkable impact of this University and other tertiary institutions, the Kenya Kwanza Administration also acknowledges that quality education is possible with sufficient funding.

This is to facilitate research and meet capacity needs of learning institutions.

In our first budget of 2023/2024, we have allocated a record KSh628 billion to the Education Sector, an increment of more than 84 billion from the previous year.

Accounting for about 27.4% of our total budget, is not an accident; we are implementing and igniting a system that is skill-focused for development.

We are no longer going to graduate people to learn on the job - we want finished products to support the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda.

In this regard, the tertiary institutions must re-align their priorities and invest in physical and technical capacity to deliver on the outcomes of the education reforms under the Competency Based Curriculum.

I commend this University for designing and deploying a curriculum focusing on enterprise, science and technology. It is also laudable that the University has incorporated e-learning to improve access to education.

And to the Graduands;

Gone are the days when a university degree was King. Today, you have to compete alongside highly skilled manpower from technical and vocational training institutions.

That is why we have invested in paid internships for fresh graduates to integrate academic skills with job demands. We encourage you to grab these opportunities and spark your moment to your dream career.

We are also investing in the digital economy under the 100,000km digital superhighway. The opportunities are unlimited.

In CONCLUSION, let me emphasise that the only limit to your potential, is YOURSELF.

ASANTENI SANA