Chairman's speech - 2013 Graduation

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY
22ND GRADUATION CEREMONY OCTOBER 4, 2013
SPEECH BY THE MOST REV. DR. ELIUD WABUKALA
CHAIRMAN OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL

- Our Chief Guest, His Excellency Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta, President and Commander in chief of the Defence Forces of the Republic of Kenya
- Cabinet Secretaries, H.E. the Governor, members of Parliament and Senate present
- The University Chancellor, Dr. Samuel Kobia.
- The Chair of Our Board of Trustees, The Rt. Rev. Moderator David Gathanju
- Our Council members and Board of Trustees
- Vice Chancellor, Prof. Joseph Galgalo
- Faculty, Staff and Students
- Distinguished Guests, graduands, parents and all present here today

It is a great joy for us and indeed a high honor to welcome you here today to our 22nd graduation ceremony. This momentous occasion marks a significant milestone in our annual calendar, and we celebrate it with deep sense of gratitude to our God by whose grace we have continued to partake of this event year after year. This year's graduation falls in the 110th year of our dedicated service to God and humanity. This institution began way back in 1903, but transited into becoming a fully fledged chartered University, only some six years ago in 2007.

Your Excellency the President, on behalf of the University Council, the staff and the students of this University, allow me to express our deep appreciation for your kind consideration and honoring us with your presence as our Chief Guest. We gladly present to this great country hardworking men and women who are well trained and ready to take their place in society and render service in and beyond our borders. This year's graduation theme: *'nurturing talents for a greater Kenya'* underscores our conviction that these graduands who we honor today will go out and impact their world in many varied ways in applying their talents for the development of a greater, better Kenya, and indeed global service.

Please allow me to express my sincere gratitude to the University Chancellor for his continued support and service to this University. Allow me also to sincerely acknowledge the good work of our university Council and the Board of Trustees. May I also equally commend the efforts of the Management Board, the Senate, as well as the administrative and academic staff and of course our students for another successful academic year.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen

Today's graduation is not just another joyous occasion, but also marks an important milestone in the history of St. Paul's University. The six years of our existence as a University has been intense and focused. We have quickly positioned ourselves as a competitive, high quality and a serious ecumenical Christian institution of higher learning. The increasing number of graduands year after year is evidence of our continuous growth and commitment to excellence. Our goal is

not only to contribute to the expansion of higher education space in the country and our region, but more so to provide high quality, affordable and practically relevant training that can deliver transformative, holistic education. To support the increasing numbers of our student population, we have continued to expand our physical and human resources capacities. In the just ended academic year we invested over 250 million in construction of a state of the art student Centre, a modern TV studio, a post graduate tuition facility and a training Centre.

We have also continued to increase tuition space, library resources and ICT infrastructure for all our campuses including here in Limuru, Nairobi, Nakuru and Machakos. In this new academic year (August 2013 to July 2014), we plan to do more; with the construction of student hostels being on top of our list of priorities. We are determined to sustain this continued expansion of our resources and facilities because we intend to always match the growth in our student numbers and our programs with appropriate support infrastructure. Getting such a crucial balance right gives us the confidence that our graduates are well prepared to take on the world and able to make a difference in many positive ways.

And now to those graduating today -
When you first applied to St. Paul's University; and eventually joined us; you made a wise decision because this is the place to be if you are looking for a transformative, holistic and empowering education. I commend you for surviving the rigor of our academic discipline, satisfying the senate of this university and having finally earned your qualification. I imagine that the journey could not have been smooth all the way. Expected challenges aside, I would imagine every step of the way has been fulfilling in providing a great learning experience and affording opportunity for personal growth. I will be astonished if your success came easily.

You must have had to burn midnight oil to beat deadlines, study hard to make the grades, write assignments or complete a research project, read so many books or searched computers to make it happen. Well done, and now please put to good use your hard earned qualification. In all these, we cannot forget to thank God. I know there could be some of you who have had to struggle to pay your fees; but by God's grace and through your relentless efforts you have made it! You are a testimony to the truth of the saying that, 'hard work pays.' As Psalm 128:2 puts it, 'you will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours'. Lt praise be to God as you celebrate the fruits of your labor.

My call to young people has always been that there are numerous opportunities out there and that there are infinite possibilities of what you could do with your kind of training, talent, diligence, passion and character. I must, however, add that you need not just wait for what opportunities the world may give you, but that you must be imaginative enough to create opportunities. God is blessing our country Kenya and the region at large and the future is brighter than ever before. You are going out at a very promising time. You must be part of the equation and take your rightful place in contributing to our national aspirations in working towards the attainment of the vision 2030. Go out and productively exploit your innovative skills and knowledge to become great innovators, pathfinders, employees and entrepreneurs.

The parable of the talents as expressed in Matthew 25: 14-30 is relevant to this year's graduation theme. The parable narrates of three people who each received different measures of talent. Each

recipient was then tasked with the heavy responsibility to decide, invest, manage and account for the returns. Each one of you have been endowed with skills, talents, time and space to decide responsibly, invest productively, and prudently manage what you have got; and make good returns. If you are creative, determined, passionate and resolute, it is only a matter of time before you get ahead of the pack. The result will be rewarding and your commendable abilities will be spotted, and the returns will be handsome. Remember that success is one of those rare gifts in life that is never given but always earned and sustained. That also means, if you burry your talent, you will die without having accomplished anything. Don't just let life pass you by – make it count by putting to good and productive use; your God given talents.

Without a doubt, our world is one that is full of all sorts of challenges, but also one that has immense opportunities too. The University has given you the right kind of knowledge and skills but please know that as someone wise said, "Rising people to a higher level and helping them be successful is more than just giving them information or skills…". The ball is now in your court to actively commit to serving God and humanity, and to grow your gifts and add value to your communities.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen
As I conclude I appreciate the support of the parents, guardians, sponsors and spouses to us and to the graduands. May God richly bless you all and once again thank you very much Mr. President for being here today.