

**SPEECH BY PROF. GEOFFREY M. MULUVI, VICE-CHANCELLOR,  
SOUTH EASTERN KENYA UNIVERSITY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
6<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON THURSDAY, 27<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2019  
AT THE GRADUATION PAVILION**

Cabinet Secretary for Education, Prof. George Magoha, represented by the  
Administrative Secretary Mr. Okwanyo,

The Governor, Makueni County Hon Prof. Kivutha Kibwana,

The Deputy Governor, Kitui County Dr. Wathe Nzau, representing the  
Governor,

Chancellors from other Universities present,  
Chairman of the Council of South Eastern Kenya University, Dr. Swabah Omar  
Honourable Members of Parliament,  
Members of the South Eastern Kenya University Council,  
Vice Chancellors of other Universities present,  
Deputy Vice-Chancellors,  
Principals of University Colleges  
Parents, guardians and sponsors,  
Graduands and Students,  
Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to welcome you to this auspicious occasion that marks the sixth graduation of South Eastern Kenya University. Let me take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to all our guests who have spared time to be with us today.

Today, a total of 1768 graduands will be presented to serve the world in various disciplines. Out of these, are 2 students graduating with PhD degrees, 42 are master's graduands, while 1724 will get their bachelor's degrees.

This is a remarkable progress compared with our last graduation's statistics of 1069 graduands.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the graduands who are set to get their degrees.

Our Chief Guest,

The success we are celebrating today is the result of sheer hard work and effort on the part of our graduands as well as selfless dedication by our lecturers and other members of staff. Allow me, therefore, to congratulate and commend all those who have played a role in the realisation of this. My special thanks go to the parents, guardians and sponsors for the great sacrifices they have made to ensure that the graduands have completed this particular phase of their education.

Our Dear Graduands,

As you prepare to get the power to apply the knowledge, skills and competencies that you have acquired here, rest assured that we have adequately prepared you for your respective areas of specialisation.

I wish to further assure our Chief guest that we have adequately equipped you with the skills to be part of the solution to the problems and challenges facing the society today.

Madam Chancellor,

Our University is located in the arid and semi-arid region of Kenya. The ASALs are home to 25 percent of Kenya's population, accounting for close to 11.3 million people. With scarce and shifty rainfall patterns and over 70 percent of livestock population and the bulk of our wildlife, the ASALs are highly susceptible to massive land degradation, a situation that renders the residents very vulnerable in terms of food security.

As a responsible corporate citizen, SEKU feels duty-bound to devise and champion best practices in tackling and alleviating the suffering of local communities occasioned by perennial food scarcity, itself an offshoot of poor climatic conditions, environmental degradation and unsustainable natural resources. As a matter of course, therefore, our academic and research focus is on agriculture, livestock, health, environment and natural resources.

We remain alive to the reality that the making of any great University is dependent on its commitment to scholarly excellence.

South Eastern Kenya University has continued to endeavour to achieve its vision of being a globally competitive *centre of excellence in teaching, research, innovation and service* by ensuring that academic programmes are tailored to produce well-trained graduates with hands-on skills and competencies. This is a heritage that has been established by the University Senate and fully supported by the successive University councils.

As a young institution, we are immensely proud of the strides we have made since elevation to a fully-fledged university six years ago.

We have continued to focus on market-driven and community-sensitive academic programmes and research undertakings, with the aim of ensuring that we remain responsive to the needs of society. Our lecturers have continued to write grant winning proposals both at local and international levels.

Currently, the University is hosting a number of research and development projects which are making tremendous contribution to the improvement of livelihoods in the local community and elsewhere in the country.

I am glad to report that late last year, our University won the bid to host the African Development Bank project on entrepreneurship and technology for the youth. We are in the process of equipping our ICT laboratories and our staff are ready to kick-start the programme which will see youth in Kitui, and the neighbouring counties gain skills for self-reliance.

At the same time, we have continued to work with the local leadership to ensure that the University benefits the community within which it exists. Last year, the University partnered with the County Government of Kitui to mount skills development programmes in ICT and artisanal mining.

Early this month the University trained staff of Makueni County on environmental management. We are currently working with the two governments to develop other programmes, with a view to equipping the local residents, particularly the youth, with requisite skills and competencies to earn a living.

Madam Chancellor,

The University Senate has remained vigilant to ensure that our programmes meet and surpass the set minimum standards. We have strictly adhered to the Commission for University Education standards as well as the procedures laid down by professional bodies such as the Nursing Council of Kenya.

I am glad to report that our nursing programme which was launched last year is now fully on course and is one of the programmes that are fully subscribed.

Last year, the University was awarded the 9001:2015 Quality Management System, thereby exiting from the previous ISO9001:2008. The move was aimed at ensuring that our services and products meet the highest international standards.

In conclusion, I wish to sincerely thank the University Council for guiding and providing strategic direction to the Senate and Management.

My gratitude also goes to our Ministry of Education for the support that we have continued to receive.

We also appreciate the excellent working relationship and support the University has been receiving from the County Government of Kitui led by the Governor, Hon. Charity Ngilu and her counterpart Prof. Kivutha Kibwana of Makueni County.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now my pleasure to invite the Chair of the University Council, Dr. Swabah Omar, to address the Congregation.

***Prof. Geoffrey M. Muluvi, Ph.D***  
***Vice-Chancellor***