



23rd GRADUATION CEREMONY,
(2ND VIRTUAL)

Saturday 24th April 2021

SPEECH BY
VICE CHANCELLOR
MOUHAMAD MPEZAMIHIGO, PHD

Recognition and Greetings

The Chief Guest, Prof Ronald de Jong, Chairman Philips Foundation

Hon Cabinet and State Ministers;

Hon Members of Parliament;

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Local and Central Government Leaders,

Chairman and Members of the Board of Trustees;

The Chancellor, Kampala International University;

Chairperson and Members of the University Council;

The KIU University Senate,

Vice Chancellors and Representatives of Vice Chancellors of Other Universities;

Deputy Vice Chancellors, other Members of KIU Management, and staff of KIU;

Alumni of Kampala International University (KIU);

Distinguished International guests and partners

Parents, guardians, donors and other sponsors,

Continuing students and;

The Graduands: our honoured guests for this ceremony;

Ladies and Gentlemen in your respective capacities, members of the Press and media houses; all other stakeholders of KIU, and the general public wherever you are in the World;

Welcome remarks

I take this opportunity to welcome you all to the 23rd Graduation Ceremony and the 2nd KIU Virtual ceremony, following the 1st one held in August 2020. We are thankful to the Almighty God for making this possible under the Covid-19 Pandemic challenges.

Chief guest

I warmly welcome our Chief Guest, Prof Ronald de Jong, the Chairman Philips Foundation, and a retired Member of the Executive Committee and Executive Vice President of Royal Philips, for which he served close to 10 years (2011-2019). Since 2017, he has been and still is a distinguished Professor of Practice in Business, marketing, services and innovation management at the School of Economics and Management of Tilburg University, the Netherlands.

Since its founding in 2014, Philips Foundation was set up to enable lasting social change in disadvantaged communities and to enhance access to health care through the application of innovation, talent and resources. Africa is so far the largest beneficiary, with projects aimed at enhancing health services provision. These range from inspiring and empowering people locally, combating Non-communicable diseases in under-served communities, deployment of latest digital technologies and equipment, to mention but a few.

You may wish to know ladies and gentlemen that Philips provided seed funding to KIU and her other partners for the VODAN Africa Project, which I will highlight in a moment. So in Prof de Jong, we have an important Chief Guest. You are highly welcome Prof Ronald de Jong.

Welcoming the Chancellor

Let me also welcome our Chancellor, Prof Mahmood Mamdani, and thank him for his continuous support and guidance in his oversight functions to the University.

I also appreciate the Chairman and Members of the KIU Board of Trustees for the unending support during the past months of financial scarcity. I remember meeting the CBOT, several times in the lock down and even when it was relatively relaxed, in which he emphasized his commitment to take care of two critical considerations for our staff: access to food and health care. On behalf of all the KIU staff, I thank the CBOT Al-Haj Dr Hassan Basajjabalaba and the entire Board of Trustees for that humanitarian spirit. We are hopeful that once the situation improves, more will be done to re-instate staff emoluments as was the case before.

Awards to CBOT

On this note and on behalf of the University Management, I wish to congratulate Al-Hajj Dr Hassan Basajjabalaba, Chairman BOT, for his recent recognition and Awards. The Swiss School of Business and Management, Geneva awarded him an Honoris Causa degree: Honorary Doctorate Degree in Business Management and Leadership.

In addition to the Honorary Doctorate, during a recent International Summit of leaders held in April 2021, in Abuja, Dr Basajjabalaba also won two additional Awards:

- a) “The African Quality Award” in recognition of his achievement and immense contribution to Human Capital Development” and
- b) “The International Outstanding Leadership Award 2020 Medal” in appreciation for outstanding and dedicated service to humanity and the society”. Once again congratulations Dr Basajjabala for those life time achievements. You deserve more!

Welcome to Council, Senate, management, staff, students etc

Distinguished guests, let me take this opportunity to welcome the Chairperson and Members of the University Council, Members of the University Senate and Management, Student Guild Leaders, continuing students, administrative and academic staff and all other distinguished guests.

On behalf of the Management of KIU, I sincerely welcome all of you to this great day of celebrations.

Coping with the Covid-19 Pandemic disruptions-

Our distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, since the outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic, and the subsequent lock-down, followed by the phased and staggered re-opening of educational institutions, KIU has lived through and gained a new experience.

We are grateful that H.E the President and the government of the Republic of Uganda, allowed finalists to return and complete their studies, which has enabled most of today's celebrants and graduands to be able to graduate. I am sure that returning to studies after such an extended period of uncertainty has been a strange experience and not easy at all. We thank you for your positive attitude and hard work; and the support by your sponsors and guardians.

We also appreciate the staggered re-opening for all the continuing students, and hope and pray that as the situation gets better and safe to do so, government will consider full re-opening of education institutions in due course.

Appeal to staff

As part of keeping and attracting a committed workforce, we continue to empower both staff and students through capacity

building programmes on the use and application of digital technologies in teaching and learning, research and community outreach activities. My appeal to the university staff is to seek your continued understanding, as you interface with new approaches and methodologies to your tasks and job related activities. Please update yourselves with the required new skills and competencies in order for you to be able to continue to serve in these turbulent times. We remain hopeful that, this situation is only but temporary. Resisting the digital change will only quicken your exit from the already shrinking job opportunities.

[Appeal to continuing students](#)

On the student front, we continue to address all concerns and needs to sustain the blended format of education and training, under the prevailing circumstances. I call upon our continuing students, who are now faced with new realities in accessing university education, to be fast adapters to the integration of digital technologies and blended learning, open, distance and elearning in order to remain up to speed with the demands and in tandem with maintaining quality education and training. Of course, you may be faced with challenges such as internet access, acquisition of smart gadgets, and other social-economical constraints. However, you must remain positive focused to reach what I term: “your finishing line” in pursuit of your academic dream. The University will always be there for you and therefore do not tire in search of help and guidance from the appropriate academic and administrative units. You may also contact the Guild Union leadership to advance your needs and concerns.

[Speech continues on the next page...](#)

Covid-19 pandemic-turned into opportunities

We all know that, with ingenuity and courage, every challenge in life may be turned into an opportunity. and that is exactly the approach KIU is using, identifying opportunities within the context of the pandemic. I will highlight just a few:

1) Up scaling of the KIU online digital platform

As a forward-looking institution, we have continued to upscale the functionality of our digital online platform, which hosts the University Learning Management System. Thanks to the additional investment provided by the Board of Trustees and NUFFIC of the Netherlands, through the Digital Innovation and Skills Hub Project being implemented with KIU as one of the Core Dutch Partners. Using the same digital platform, KIU will be hosting various courses for training of youth and women in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Somalia and Sudan, a Project which will be running until the first quarter of 2022. We are indeed grateful to NUFFIC and the government of the Netherlands and all our partners for the support.

2) Virus Outbreak Data Africa Network (VODAN Africa)

Last August 2020, I announced the launch of the VODAN Africa Project, to which as Vice Chancellor of KIU, I am the President of the Implementation network. VODAN Africa is a partnership consisting of Universities and Hospitals in Uganda, Ethiopia, Liberia, Nigeria, Kenya, Tunisia, Somalia, Tanzania and Zimbabwe. It has recently attracted Asian partners, thereby becoming VODAN Africa and Asia.

Today, I bring you great news of the progress of Project and a landmark contribution by KIU and her partners in addressing the Covid-19 pandemic and strategically, other related current and future health challenges.

As part of the global efforts towards strengthening health care in Clinics and Hospitals in Africa, and with initial seed funding by Philips Foundation, and subsequent financial support by the Dutch Development Bank (FMO) and Cordaid, Hague Netherlands, VODAN has so far installed 10 COVID-19 Machine Actionable FAIR-Data Points in the participating Countries. VODAN Africa and Asia is pioneering the production of health data that are Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR) at local hospitals and clinics across Africa and Asia. This ensures that medical data are discoverable by computers and accessible under governance regulations and laws of the different countries. Such a flexible system will allow health professionals access data needed for research and clinical observations.

I take this opportunity to thank Prof Mirjam van Reisen, the VODAN Global Coordinator, Prof. Francisca Oladipo, the VODAN Executive Coordinator and all our partners that include among others: Tangaza University College in Kenya; the Great Zimbabwe University, University de Sousse, Tunisia, Mekelle University and the Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia. The partners in Nigeria are Ibrahim Badamosi Babagida University and the premier Artificial Intelligence hub, Data Science Nigeria. As I speak, the VODAN Africa and Asia project has been listed and gazetted by the UNESCO 2021 Engineering Report. We are very proud of this development.

3) The KIU- IGAD Partnership

Kampala International University has signed an Memorandum of Understanding with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) during the 1st IGAD Universities Forum held at Jigjiga University in Ethiopia from April 4 to April 5, to which I participated.

KIU joined a host of other African Universities like the University of Khartoum; the International University of Africa based in Khartoum and Jigjiga University in signing the MoU with IGAD. Twenty universities from IGAD member countries were represented by their

Vice Rector/Chancellor/President for Academic Affairs and their Vice Chancellor/President/Director for Research and Community Outreach. The forum was inaugurated by the Executive Secretary of IGAD, Dr. Workneh Gebeyehu, who also used the event to officially launch the IGAD Scholarship and Award Programme. KIU will be one of the Universities that will offer selected scholarships to IGAD as part of our social corporate responsibility and a key player in the IGAD region.

The IGAD Universities Forum aims to enhance inter-university and regional cooperation in higher education, science, technology and innovation and will play a role the implementation of the Nairobi Declaration on Durable Solutions for Refugees, the Djibouti Declaration, the existing IGAD Regional Education Policy Framework and the IGAD Regional Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Strategy, and the IGAD Regional Qualifications Framework which is under preparation. KIU will have the opportunity to participate in higher education interventions in the IGAD countries.

4) Research and Publications

I take this opportunity to congratulate all our staff who continue to publish their works and contributing to global knowledge. Our research output continues to improve significantly and recognized on the global scene. The University hopes to increase its research budget to meet the research budget demands, especially for Covid-19 related interventional research.

The graduands

Today we are graduating 3,521, out of which 61% (2,135) are males and 39% (1,386) are females. 47% (1,672) will be receiving science based awards, an increase of 4% compared to the August 2020 graduands. 53% (1,849) awards will be in arts, humanities, business

		Charle	10552				
10	Oguta	Christopher	1162-06044-05414	Male	Ugandan	4.50	BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
11	ARUHO	Gerald	1173-05054-10718	Male	Ugandan	4.49	BACHELOR OF TOURISM AND HOTEL MANAGEMENT
12	MIGADDE ELIAS		1173-04054-10810	MALE	UGANDAN	4.48	BACHELOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
13	MUTONYI HARRIET		BBA/42839/133/DU	Female	Ugandan	4.48	BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
14	NANGOBI BWIRE DENISE		1173-04054-12434	FEMALE	UGANDAN	4.45	BACHELOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
15	JUMA	SAMUEL KHAMSIN	1165-06044-10213	Male	Ugandan	4.45	BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
16	Ndagire Laila		1173-06044-11493	Female	Ugandan	4.44	BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
17	SEKEY JACKLINE		1173-06404-11744	FEMALE	UGANDAN	4.43	BACHELOR OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
18	SSENTAMU SAM		1173-06034-10540	MALE	UGANDAN	4.42	BACHELOR OF SOCIAL WORK & SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION
19	KAMAGARA FRED		1173-05194-13123	MALE	UGANDAN	4.41	BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN STATISTICS
20	ATUTO EMMANUEL		1173-04054-13077	MALE	UGANDAN	4.41	BACHELOR OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
21	Abbo Veronic		1173-06044-13624	Female	Ugandan	4.40	BACHELOR OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES
22	NAMUTEBI JACKIE		1173-05014-13638	Female	Ugandan	4.40	BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

I once again congratulate all the graduands for reaching this day. Please remember that you are graduating during very unpredictable times, in which there are global crises of all sorts. This calls upon each one of you to adequately prepare to be: reasonable, flexible, adaptable, logical and understanding. As you look around for a job,

endeavour to retool yourself to fit in the World of work. If you ever get opportunities to upgrade, the doors of KIU remain widely opened.

As KIU Alumni, we invite you to visit the directorate of Human Resource, to check for any opportunities of either employment or joining our vibrant staff development programme, where there may be openings to upgrade your academic qualifications. Stay safe and protect yourself against Covid-19 as you join the world of work.

Conclusion

As I conclude, the University appreciates the Government of Uganda, Federal Government of Nigeria, Foreign Embassies, local, regional and International government and non-government organization for the collaborations and partnerships with KIU.

I thank the visionary Board of Trustees (BOT), led by the Chairman, Al-Hajj Dr. Hassan Basajjabalaba, the Chancellor, the Chairperson and members of the University Council and the management team, Academic, Administrative and Support Staff. Your contributions have made the difference in the advancement of the University. We also thank all our other partners including Phillips Foundation, Go-FAIR Foundation, EPA in Belgium, and universities and other institutions that form a very long list. We appreciate each one of them.

Thank you and all the best.

Mouhamad Mpezamihigo, PhD

VICE CHANCELLOR, Saturday 24TH April 2021