

Speech by the Vice Chancellor, Prof Kelvin Onongha

Good morning everyone. We are grateful that we can have a celebration in the midst of the pandemic. I know that the graduands have not been very pleased, they wanted to make a loud noise, and have loud fun. You know what? We need to be grateful that we still can have a celebration of whatever sort in these unprecedented times. This is the first ever virtual graduation that has been conducted in the Adventist university of Central Africa, and we may never have another.

And so, like I said for those who were connected yesterday, you have a story to tell your children and grandchildren, that at such a time and a such date, we had a unique graduation that was transmitted online to everyone across the world. And so, we celebrate with you these times, that against all odds, even the pandemic could not hold you back. That is why we appreciate the motto that you have “Resilience, Determination and Trust”, and we believe that these qualities will help you soar, help you rise to heights that are as unprecedented as the times we are living in.

You know, this graduation ceremony is for 2019/2020 set, so the pandemic slowed your graduation, but it could not stop it. It delayed it, but it could not derail it. It postponed it, but it could not put it off. That’s why we are here celebrating what God has done for you. And so, graduands, we congratulate you, but also celebrate you; because you are survivors, because you are overcomers, because you are victors. And these same qualities that helped you persevere, and endure to the very end, will take you to heights where you can shine with the glory of God.

Yesterday a thought came to me. As we celebrated those of you who were here, and those of you who were connected online, the reason I have a certain [settled] conviction in my heart that you are going to become captains of industries... The ones who will be the movers and shakers of economy of Rwanda and beyond. Those who will become the policy makers, whose faces will become recognizable on radio, on TV, in magazines and journals. The reason I have this confidence, 10 years 15 years from today, that’s where you are going to be. Why do I have this confidence? Because of the AUCA advantage. What is the AUCA advantage? Others go to school, wherever universities, I am not going to name them; they teach them professional skills. But we give you other skills. So, there you learn perseverance, you learn hard work, discipline, morality, honesty...

All these are values you cannot leave AUCA without. And to top it all up, we give you faith in God. With these qualities, how can you but excel? How can you not rise to heights that will make you shine with the glory of God? And so, we congratulate you. We congratulate you today but also those who have been behind you, behind the scenes, providing the resources, the encouragement and support, the parents who were there... and before I sit down, I am going to offer a prayer not only for you, but also for those parents who have dreams, aspirations, desires that they hope to see realized as go out into uncharted waters.

And so, friends, we celebrate with you, but also you parents, sponsors, guardians, friends, all those networks that have provided for you all that you needed to endure to this point. I would also like to congratulate our faculty, our staff, our deans, who have worked, who have taught, who have ensured that you did not drop behind. Deans, faculty, we celebrate you and we want you to know that this is also your achievement. Congratulations!

We will not fail to thank the owners of this university, the proprietors led by the Council Chair Dr Hesron Byilingiro who is going to speak after I sit, and his team at the union, executive secretary, the treasure, and of course our own Dr Roger who is now at the education department there. I want to thank them for their support which has made AUCA to be where it is.

And then I want to thank those who are above, in the governing Council of this university. We have the indefatigable support of the Chancellor who opened the ceremony, who opens and closes every graduation ceremony, Dr Blasious Ruguri. I want to thank him for his support and also his team: Dr Alain Coralie who is the secretary at the East-Central Africa Division, also we have elder Jerome Habimana. We also have the other directors who have contributed in various ways to make AUCA to get where it is today. Dr Andrew Mutero, but also Dr Fesaha who is responsible for the school of medicine.

As we thank God for this, and welcome them to this ceremony, I would like to pray, graduands, that as you go out, may the Lord go with you. May His presence be with you. May His hand lead, guide and direct in all that you do. May those open before for you, may opportunities come your way, may you find jobs and may promotions come. May you be able to see your dreams realized. May you be able to rise to the heights that you never ever imagined. Let the presence of the Lord go with you. And may His peace be your portion. And also for your parents, your sponsors, your guardians, I pray that their investments will never be in vain; that the fruits of their labor they shall see. That the desires of their hearts concerning you God shall excel and God shall exceed.

And so, we congratulate you. And welcome our viewers from around the world and a few who are gathered here today to the 26th graduation ceremony of the 2019/2020 set, and for the 4th master's class; you are welcome and congratulations. God be with you.