



**5TH MULUNGUSHI
UNIVERSITY
GRADUATION
CEREMONY
VICE CHANCELLOR'S
SPEECH by
Prof Hellicy C. Ng'ambi
Vice Chancellor
October 18th, 2013**

SALUTATION

MR CHANCELLOR SIR

- CABINET MINISTERS PRESENT
- DEPUTY MINISTERS PRESENT
- PERMANENT SECRETARIES PRESENT
- THE CHANCELLOR OF MULUNGUSHI UNIVERSITY
- THE CHAIRPERSON OF MULUNGUSHI UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
- MEMBERS OF MULUNGUSHI UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
- MEMBERS OF SENATE OF MULUNGUSHI UNIVERSITY
- PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF MULUNGUSHI UNIVERSITY
- VICE-CHANCELLORS FROM OTHER UNIVERSITIES
- SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS
- DEANS AND DIRECTORS OF SCHOOLS, INSTITUTES AND DIRECTORATES OF MU
- MEMBERS OF STAFF OF MULUNGUSHI UNIVERSITY
- STUDENTS
- DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
- ALL PROTOCOL OBSERVED

Good morning to all of you our distinguished guests and welcome to the 5th Mulungushi University Graduation ceremony. Mr Chancellor Sir , Professor Oliver Saasa, it is with joy, pleasure and honour that I deliver my speech at this 5th graduation ceremony. I thank you sir, and all of our esteemed guests for responding to our invitation to come and celebrate with us the success of our graduands. We are celebrating this year's ceremony under the theme '**Producing Demand Driven RARE Quality Graduates**'.

Background to the theme

We have chosen this theme Sir, in recognizance of the fact that unless institutions of higher learning can produce graduates that are relevant to the society, graduates that can contribute to the development of our beloved country Zambia and rich continent, Africa, all our efforts and resources will be wasted. Allow me to explain why this is so. Producing graduates that don't have the relevant skills, competencies, attitudes and value systems to meet our current and future industrial, economic and social needs adds to the unemployment pool. Africa is a continent of paradox at various levels. It records being one of the richest in natural and some processed resources; abundance of unused land; and records notable innovations by Africans and yet it is one of the poorest in the world; it records low skilled labour, few graduates and yet reports 70% unemployment levels among its graduates. Something is wrong in this equation Sir!

It was reported that graduates leaving university found it harder to get jobs in 2011 than students finishing A-level courses, as youth unemployment hit its highest level since the 1980s. According to figures from the Office for National Statistics, in 2011, 20% of 18-year-olds who left school with A-levels were unemployed compared with 25% of 21-year-olds who left university with a degree. Graduate unemployment rates were almost on a par with those for people leaving school with just GCSEs, with 26% of 16-year-olds with these qualifications out of work (Kate Loveys). Furthermore, some of the depressing statements one gets on the web including on **Daily Mail web, facebook or twitter** concerning graduates from different parts of the global village include the following;

- One fifth of all new graduates are on the job scrap heap as unemployment rates double during the recession. The latest official figures highlight the nightmare scenario faced by recent graduates who have saddled themselves with crippling debt for the sake of a degree.
- Gloomy prospects: The unemployment rate among graduates has hit its highest level for more than a decade.

- The number has almost doubled since the start of the recession in 2008 when it stood at 10.6 per cent and statisticians believe it equates to around 80,000 graduates.
- Graduates will struggle to secure a job at a top firm unless they undertake an internship while studying.
- 'Unemployed graduates' set themselves alight in Morocco. This is the worst undesirable outcome of the unemployable graduate.

There are no official statistics available but unemployment among college and university graduates is extremely high in Africa. It is unofficially estimated at about 70%.

Africa We Care, says, “How often have we heard or read that \$1 a day would feed an African child, and send him to school, and provide medical care; which is probably true. After your \$1 a day has sent a child to school; he goes back to his village, town, and environment that have nothing in terms of employment to offer him.

- **He is educated but unemployed.**
- He feels more despondent and disillusioned than his parents.
- He is very vulnerable and susceptible to all kinds of evil influences.”

In general, the unemployment rate in Africa is about 75% to 80%. Most of those lucky enough to be employed are either underemployed or redundant. The employment rate for university graduates in Africa is said to be about 1 in 100.

It would take a heartless, irresponsible, irrelevant and unethical (un RARE) leader with such knowledge not to do the best that they can to ensure that they contribute to addressing the challenge of an unemployed graduates. Everybody, with the government at the top of the list should be working hard to find solutions to the problem of unemployment, especially for graduates. But at the same time finding the root causes of unemployment, especially unemployed graduates, and addressing them is also a priority if we are to avoid a repeat of the situation for the future generation of university graduates after investing so much in their studies.

Guest of honour sir, Human capital lies at the core of innovation and a productive high income economy. It is the most important investment a country makes. No economy can succeed without a highly skilled talent base that is able to rapidly respond creatively to economic changes and challenges, and is centred on developing and utilising knowledge. I am glad that our government has one of its

priorities as education. For Zambia to achieve the 2030 vision, it is imperative to develop, attract and retain a first-world talent base. The talent base and workforce of high-income nations include a number of key characteristics, specifically around higher education qualifications to promote knowledge generation and innovation, high skill-levels in both technical and professional fields, and strong levels of productivity. Mulungushi University is determined to make its contribution in this regard as we present our graduates to the community to day and in future.

Why the Unemployed graduates in Africa

The paradox continues.... We cry about the brain drain, and even encourage those who have left our continent for greener pastures to come back; we say that we don't have enough educated people to be gainfully and productively employed; we are so rich with all the minerals and land; we have a number of very innovative inventors who are capable of translating our resources in creating jobs, and yet we cry to day of the 70% graduated who are unemployed and some even commit suicide! What is wrong with us??????????????

Some reasons for unemployed graduates:

- Unemployment among the graduates is the result of mismatches between the education on offer and what is in demand from employers.
- Economic meltdown dampened the prospects for job creation for graduates.
- Large youth populations continue to increase pressure on labour markets.
- Failure to use our resources to create jobs for Africans.
- A debased value system that emphasizes entitlement without taking responsibility and accountability for the consequences of one's actions.
- Inability to support and value the skilled talent and other rich resources that we have. Most developed countries will walk the extra mile to support and value anyone with a developmental attitude and anything that would contribute to sustainable development, but we Africans usually demonise such talent and destroy the very thing we need the most with the same hands that worked hard to build or develop it.

The way forward

Higher education is by nature a knowledge production engine room that requires the knowledge, skills and abilities of more than one person if it is to be successful. Achieving this success cannot be a function of a single individual; it requires team or shared leadership and responsibility. Among others, universities, the

government and industry, need to work together to create synergies that are mutually beneficial.

I submit that it is critical for universities to work closely with Government and industry to increase graduate employability and identify some areas where this is possible. In this speech I link these relations to what I have called Responsible, Accountable, Relevant and Ethical (RARE) value system that will contribute positively to sustainable economic development and production of employable graduates in Zambia specifically and Africa in general. A RARE person at whatever level will always attempt to address challenges and find solutions that will add value to society.

Mr Chancellor Sir, Mulungushi University is determined to deliver on its mandate to produce demand driven quality graduates who are responsible, accountable relevant and ethical in the conduct. As you know sir, the major objective for establishing Mulungushi University was to enhance national capacity to increase access to higher education in Zambia and to develop necessary skills to equip the labour market. This was said to be a critical development towards the realisation of the goal of the **National Development Plan**, which is: 'poverty reduction and wealth creation', which is in line with the **Millennium Development Goal one** (MDG1), as well as **Vision 2030** which seeks to make Zambia a medium income country by the Year 2030. The Government is desirous that Mulungushi University (MU) would develop into a self-financing centre of academic excellence which is international in character in both its staff and student profiles. The vision of the government is that MU should develop into a leading institution of higher education in Africa which will be renowned in specific area of academic pursuit and make a clearly identifiable contribution to the society at large. Mulungushi University was to be distinct from the other two public universities in that it would be a fee paying institution without government bursary scheme for students with an expectation that they would fully fund themselves in both tuition and living expenses. This therefore highlights the honour that it gives me to present such a high caliber of graduates who have gone through a very challenging time in a young university with limited resources and infrastructure. For an institution to produce demand driven RARE quality graduates requires that the requisite infrastructure, lecturers and others resources are available.

May I take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to the government, specifically our mother ministry of Education and the ministry of Finance who have now released the funds for the completion of the on-going infrastructure development which includes, hostels, lecture theatre, library and dining hall. These buildings should have been completed by 2010 and 2011. In this regard I applaud the focus of our current government on education and look forward to further funding for

some laboratories and faculty building in addition to hostels as alluded to in the 2014 budget speech of the honourable Chikwanda, the minister of finance in his parliamentary budget speech of 11 October, 2013. May I also assure our government that the university's vision, mission, strategic focus and value system is well aligned to the national imperatives, the code of ethics for the public sector, and zero tolerance for corruption which is reflected in our RARE (Responsible, Accountable, Relevant and Ethical) principle based value system.

Furthermore, you need quality lecturers to produce demand driven RARE quality graduates. I am glad to report that we have added in this year alone nine (9) lecturers and only lost two who left for greener pastures. All these hard working academics and staff have worked extremely hard to produce the graduates that we are here to celebrate.

Another major contribution to ensuring that we produce demand driven RARE quality graduates is the partnership with private and public stakeholders in the form of PPP.

Building partnerships between Universities and Industry (PPP)

The financial crisis of 2008-2011 has brought about renewed interest in the importance of PPP in both developed and developing countries. It is important for Universities and industries to work together with government to address the problem. Industry knows which skills it needs and what it takes to make someone employable. Industry must work with Universities to adapt the curriculum, so that graduates leave universities ready for work. Training and development programs must be tailored to demand. South Africa is among those that witnessed the success of one such effort, in which the five biggest construction companies partnered with the institutions to rewrite the syllabi of FETs (Further Education and Training) colleges to meet their industry's needs which resulted in an increase in the percentage of graduates who found jobs.

When Industry and Universities actively work together to leverage their comparative advantages we will begin to address the challenge of graduate unemployment. Industry and Universities need to own the unemployment challenge together with government; it is everyone's problem. It is not a problem that one group can solve alone. The solutions are not simple, but we have a common interest, and together we can do it.

Methods of Partnerships

For the reasons given above, industry rather than just being the consumers of university graduates need to become an active stakeholder and partner in progress throughout the student university journey. Industry need to proactively play an increasingly important role in activities of universities to incubate the talent they need. There are a number of avenues, through which universities like ours do to collaborate with industry. Some of the commonly used avenues that we at Mulungushi university have and shall endeavour to utilise are presented below:

1. Suggestions in curriculum and content designing.

There should be greater degree of collaboration to integrate employer's needs into the programmes on offer. Including industry inputs has been perceived quite beneficial in improving the quality of output and making universities competent and surviving in rapidly changing environment. This partnership must also build in assessments that will measure its effectiveness. That means whatever input included from industry into curriculum and course designing must be assessed for effectiveness. As a university we shall continue to solicit suggestions from industry to update our curriculum and include the topics of present day and future relevance. This is done with a view of imparting the knowledge and skills set, needed by graduating students in constantly changing global environment which would promote graduate employability.

2. Executive Education and Management Development Programmes and seminars.

These are important areas where universities can leverage the benefits of collaboration. These initiatives on the part of universities trigger industry's interest to collaborate by assisting them in development and training of their human capital, hence increasing the mind-share and enhancing the image of the universities and improving graduate employability. Furthermore, the joint seminars provide an opportunity for students to gain an understanding of the latest industry trends and a chance to gauge the university and its students for prospective placements. This we are doing through our leadership institute.

3. Consulting on management and related issues by universities;

Universities have to continue to take innovative steps towards strengthening this relationship including forming joint advisory groups with industry for collaborative consulting and organizing executive and management development programmes. Students could be assigned industry mentors for specific period of time, with an objective to groom them for the future challenges and hence preparing them for employability and relevance.

4. Universities generating ideas and acting as incubators to new business.
Universities-Industry interface can also be considered through providing of incubator services to industry for new start-ups by commercializing the ideas given by academic fraternity and helping corporate grow in initial years. Industry should also start including universities into their strategic decisions regarding new business ideas, increasing the chances of partnerships in this area. Our Mulungushi University business incubator will go a long in contributing to innovative ideas.

5. Collaborative and funding academic and applied research.
Africa needs to “catch-up” with academicians across the globe that regard Universities- industry partnership in case writing, applied research, and problem based consulting as one of the most favoured and value adding alliances. These areas need to be actively pursued by universities in Africa, so that they do not lose on effective collaborative methods and hence deny African education of critical and innovative knowledge and inputs. Also industry can provide financial and infrastructure support to universities for their development and skill building activities. Case writing, is another area of collaboration. Not only does it add to current knowledge pool but also enhances the learning experience of students. Innovations in teaching can only be brought about by in-depth understanding of industry processes by academicians and thought leaders. Formal relationship between industry and universities can definitely add to the research and knowledge generation. Industry, can therefore take up an initiative of generating knowledge by funding business and academic research.

Collaboration in research should go beyond exploratory to innovative, so as to improve its utility by industry. According to Rizvi (2003), Universities-Industry collaboration is a must if industry has to benefit from research and development activity. More and more opportunities need to be provided to the faculty through applied research, and case writing to keep them abreast of changes in the world and hence enhance the overall teaching-learning experience. The main strength of top universities like Kellogg, Harvard, Sloan, Wharton etc. is their strong relationship with industry through teaching, research, student placements, problem solving and case study preparations. This provides lessons for Zambian and other African Universities.

6. Universities essentially have collaborated with corporate to provide training and internships to students. This is seen as one of the best methods of giving

students both the theoretical concepts and their applications and enhancing their ability to relate the two for decision making purposes and hence their employability.

7. Industry participation in student mentoring. Mentors who are friends, philosophers and guides, are top professionals, who have willingness to impart knowledge & skills and hence bridge gap between classroom and marketplace reality. Mentorship as defined by Gupte (2004) is an interaction at the practice level through project of preferably a small group of seven to eight students with the mentor. This concept is necessary due to rapidly changing industrial needs in our country, Zambia and continent, Africa on one hand and growing requirement for industry ready individual after graduation. Collaboration can also be established through training and internships of students. This method is a self-feeding method which our university is actively seeking to employ.

These aspects would help us to have a RARE fibre in producing employable sought after graduate entrepreneurs.

Only when Universities, industry and government work together to leverage their comparative advantages can we begin to address the problem of graduate unemployment. As I have alluded to above, we must remember that unemployment at whatever level is not just a problem for government; it is a problem for everyone, inclusive of universities and industry. It is also not a problem that one group can solve alone. The solutions are not simple, but we have a common interest, and together we can address it and ensure that at least our graduates in whom we invest so much are gainfully employed or become employment creators.

Let me acknowledge, with gratitude the partnerships that we have with the Bank of Zambia that have sponsored a professorial chair in Banking and Finance with the aim to facilitate teaching and learning, research and consultancy in the industry. We are also in partnership with Mzuzu University in Malawi, Zambia Open University, and national university of Ireland-Maunooth to produce masters degree graduates in transformative community development (MTCD). This programme is producing professionals that will facilitate changes needed to develop greater resilience among vulnerable communities, especially smallholder farmers to cope with food insecurity and nutrition challenges due to climate change. As a centre of excellence in Disaster Management Training, Mulungushi University has partnered with Asia Africa Rural Development Organisation (AARDO) to provide international high quality disaster management short

courses to mitigate effects of climate change and other issues. We are also working with the local and international partners to improve our curricula for example in agribusiness and economics.

The last aspect that I would like to refer to as a pre-requisite to producing demand driven RARE quality graduates is the relevant curricula. In this regards Mulungushi University offers unique programmes including degrees in entrepreneurship, labour studies, land and water, Agri-business, disaster management, just to mention a few. Our degrees are professional in nature. That is, we produce a graduate for a purpose. Quality has been defined by many scholars in many different ways. The Webster's English dictionary defines quality as a high level of value or excellence. Quality is fitness for its purpose. The centre of excellence is what we are and our graduates will endeavour to exhibit excellence. Ladies and Gentlemen, today we have produced quality graduates that are of purpose to society, industry and the economy as whole. The graduates you see dressed uniquely are a product that have a value system that will distinguish them from other graduates from other Universities. We have cultivated a culture of responsibility, accountability, relevance, ethical, honesty, integrity, team-work, and hard work. Mr Chancellor Sir, we promise that these are not the only quality graduates we shall ever produce but we will continue producing more such graduates in the foreseeable future. Our degrees are designed differently, the programme qualification mix (PQM) is such that it responds to the ever-changing business and social environment. As outlined in our 2013 Operational plan, and soon to be launched 2014-2018 strategic plan, we shall endeavour to continue improving our education delivery system in order to continue producing high quality graduates that will be able to make a different in society.

We have noted that unemployment in Africa is one of the challenges that the continent is currently facing. To stay abreast of the modern economy and the present trend towards globalization, the African economy, like many other economies in the developing world, is on the path of natural development with structural shifts in production towards more skill- and capital-intensive industries.

There seems to be a perception among employers that current educational subsidies are causing institutions to focus on enrolling large numbers of students rather than concentrating on the quality of education. Related to the skills deficit is the issue of a lack of soft skills. Many firms feel that graduates lack soft skills such as communication and general language skills; they feel they are lazy but

demanding which cause them to be unsuccessful in interviews. Often students are not emotionally ready for the workplace and must struggle to adapt to a corporate environment. Mulungushi University has proactively responded by introducing a signature course called “Ethics and sustainable behavior in society”, that address such concerns and will ensure that we produce demand driven quality RARE graduates.

The overarching purposes of this signature course is to remind MU students of their humanity, and to present them with a primer to a lifetime of critical thinking. These objectives are pursued by: a) introducing them to selected ethical traditions and value systems in society; b) equipping them with methods of interacting with others through effective communications; and c) providing them with opportunities in the form of case studies to apply these to the contemporary social themes of ethics and sustainable behaviour in a responsible, accountable, relevant and ethical way.

The absolutely key words in this course are:

- One’s humanity
- Critical thinking
- Ethical traditions
- Effective communications in nonviolent way
- Sustainability
- And of course, personal leadership that espouses a RARE (Responsible, Accountable, Relevant and Ethical), principle based value system.

Mr Chancellor Sir, allow me to applaud all members of staff, management and council who contributed tirelessly in one way or the other to the teaching and learning process. Without their contribution we could not have managed to achieve what we have achieved today.

The graduands

To the graduands; many people including your family and organisations have invested their time, money and other resources to support you in your studies. The long term survival and well being of our organisations and nation at large depends on how effectively you apply the knowledge, skills and competencies you have obtained to manage yourselves and others. To this end, it is incumbent upon you to realise that even though you now possess the degree or diploma, it is not these qualifications alone that will lead to success, but your attitude and emotional intelligence which are critical factors for sustainable success. Many

studies indicate that people who rise to the top of their field - whether it's psychology, banking, law, medicine or engineering - are not just good at their jobs. They are affable, resilient and optimistic. In other words, it takes more than traditional cognitive intelligence to be successful at work. It takes "emotional intelligence", which is the ability to restrain negative feelings such as anger and self-doubt, and instead focus on positive ones such as confidence and congeniality. Goleman and others argue that the cognitive skills we have obtained through formal education will get us in the door of an organisation, but emotional skill, which we will have to develop as lifelong learners will help us thrive once we are hired. You need to have an unwavering faith in your dream. That is having hope against all hope. Examples are many, Nelson Mandela – after being sentenced to life incarceration never lost hope; Hellen Keller – the deaf, dumb and blind, yet have risen above her physical disabilities to become one of the recognised authors. Remember always to walk in integrity. Short-cuts will cut short your dreams and career. Integrity is not a slogan. Be teachable and learn to respect and value others without whom sustainable success is not possible. And always remember if it is all about you and nobody else, you will fail. But you have proven to be a rare breed of graduates in all your conduct so, I am confident that you will add value and make a difference in society whether as an employee of employer!

I wish you the best in your RARE walk of developing a winning and positive attitude to become a winner you were born to be as demonstrated in your achievement today! Again congratulations!!! I thank you.

Prof Hellicy C. Ng'ambi, PhD.

VICE CHANCELLOR