

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR KWASI KWAFO ADARKWA, VICE-
CHANCELLOR OF KNUST ON THE OCCASION OF THE 41ST CONGREGATION
(MORNING SESSION – COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES
AND COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING) HELD ON
8TH JUNE, 2007 IN THE GREAT HALL**

1. SALUTATION

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Ghana
Chancellor of the University
Chairman of University Council
Honourable Minister of Education, Science and Sports
Honourable Regional Minister
Honourable Ministers of State
Your Excellencies, Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Nananom
Colleague Vice-Chancellors
Past KNUST Vice-Chancellors and Pro Vice-Chancellors
Pro Vice-Chancellor and Pro Vice-Chancellors from Sister Universities
Registrar and Registrars from Sister Universities
Guest Speaker
Members of the University Council
Provosts
Deans and Directors
Heads of Department
Alumni of the University
Members of Convocation
Hardworking Faculty Members
Senior Staff
Junior Staff
Proud and relieved parents
Distinguished Jubilee Year 2007 Graduands and “KNUST Class of 2007”
Members of the Media

Distinguished Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

2. WELCOME

I would like to welcome all of you to this morning's function and to say that, we are extremely happy to have you attend this ceremony which is an annual ritual for those of us in academia. This year, once again, we will hold four different ceremonies to award degrees to deserving students; this session being the first one. I am indeed honoured and privileged to be presenting these students for graduation in this Jubilee year.

Congregations, commencements or graduation ceremonies are held to award university degrees to those who have followed a prescribed course of study and have also satisfied the requirements for the award of the various degrees. During such ceremonies, the University administration also takes the opportunity to report on some aspects of the conduct of the University's affairs during the period under review. This morning's function, which is being held primarily to graduate deserving students from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, College of Architecture and Planning as well as the School of Research and Graduate Studies will also follow the same pattern. Fortunately for all of us, my report will be a rather short one; because it is only 9-page double-line spacing, but is supplemented by a detailed report from each of the 79 Departments in our 20 Faculties under the six Colleges.

This morning, we are lucky to have a distinguished alumna to advise and encourage our students. Mrs Adelaide Ahwireng graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Building Technology in 1981. After practising as a Quantity Survey for a few years, she left the public service to establish Fio Enterprise Ltd for which she is now the Managing Director. Fio Enterprise Ltd is currently the largest single distributor of Unilever products in Ghana. Mrs Adelaide Ahwireng, welcome to your alma mater.

3. GRADUATES FROM COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES AND COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING

All the undergraduate students we see this morning in their smart turn out entered the University during the beginning of the 2003/2004 academic year with most of the graduate students enrolling later on for relatively shorter periods. Through the hard work of their lecturers, we have turned them into high value products who are ready to contribute their quota to national development.

These young men and women themselves have worked extremely hard during the past four years and have invested probably all they had into this venture which we all hope will yield fruit. For the four years, they have bought different ideas from different lecturers, sold a few to lecturers and indeed they have been buying, trading and selling everything they have in the market place offered by this University; the market place of ideas. This is what I call "*Nano-Economics*".

At this point, I would like to say what is appropriate. Heartiest congratulations to all of you who are graduating. It is a splendid achievement, and may I suggest we all congratulate them with a loud applauseThank you. Indeed, it is very well deserved, and I have no doubt at all that you are going to make a very significant contribution to tackling Ghana's many developmental problems including hunger, poorly constructed houses and human settlements to avoid re-occurrence of flooding in our urban areas, environmental sanitation, high cost of building, diseases and economic growth.

This morning, we will be graduating a total of 283 well qualified and motivated students from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and 392 students from the College of Architecture and Planning. This figure represents a decrease of 7.9% over last year's figures partly because of a depressed intake to these two Colleges during the 2003/2004 academic year. With modest improvements in academic facilities, we do not expect a recurrence of this in future.

We are, however, happy to note that of those graduating from the College of Architecture and Planning this morning, 18 students or 5% obtained first class degrees, 223 or 57% obtained second class upper degrees, 115 or 29% obtained second class lower degrees. The rest, that is, 5 or 1.3% obtained pass degrees. The number of postgraduate students from Architecture and Planning being presented for graduation this afternoon are 31 or 8% of those graduating this afternoon. You would also soon notice that there are significantly higher proportion of female students in the first class and second upper class divisions. Indeed, this demonstrates that our female students are rubbing shoulders with their male counterparts and strengthens our commitment to increasing female enrolment in our programmes to the 40% threshold over the next 10 years as outlined in our Corporate Strategic Plan (PLAN2K14).

Of the graduating class from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, 27 or 10% earned first class degrees, 132 or 47% had second class upper degrees, 55 or 19% had second class lower degrees and the rest of 2 or 0.7% securing pass degrees. The rest were made up of diploma students from our Sunyani campus and postgraduate students from the College. Indeed, there is the need to encourage postgraduate studies in this College given their rather low percentage of less than 10%.

This ceremony which we are witnessing, coming only four weeks after our end of semester examinations was made possible by the hardworking lecturers whom our graduating class of 2007 will forever remain grateful. What could these graduates have done without their lecturers? In addition, we had a relatively peaceful academic environment and even in spite of our difficulties with energy supplies, our general student body demonstrated an exemplary understanding. During the 10-day strike action by TEWU and FUSSAG, it was a joy to see our students take up various roles in the halls to ensure that the semester remained uninterrupted. For me, this demonstrates a very important phase in our collaboration with the general student body. There is tremendous potential for us to achieve a lot under this partnership. Congratulations all KNUST students; particularly our Jubilee year graduating class of 2007.

In the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and the College of Architecture and Planning, our student : lecturer ratios were 1:21 and 1:33 which were far in excess of the recommended threshold of 1:18. Our efforts to attract more lecturers were met with only marginal successes because we were only able to attract 15 new lecturers to the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources and four to the College of Architecture and Planning. We will continue in our efforts to attract more lecturers so we can improve on teaching and learning here at the KNUST.

4. FACULTY OF FOREST RESOURCES TECHNOLOGY – SUNYANI

The KNUST has now fully taken over the former College of Renewable Natural Resources under the Forestry Commission to become a Faculty of Forest Resources Technology. As a campus of this University, we are doing everything possible to ensure that it has the right mix of personnel required to administer a full fledged Faculty; bearing in mind its physical separation from the main campus. Very soon, the campus will have a wireless internet connectivity to enable us communicate constantly with our colleagues in Sunyani. In addition, it will offer the students unprecedented access to academic materials. We will nurture this campus the same way we nurtured our Tarkwa campus into the University of Mines and Technology. In all, 36 or 13% graduates from the Faculty are graduating with various diploma degrees in Natural Resources.

Our Sunyani campus will also become one of the learning centres for our Distance Education programme. With the introduction of the Executive Master of Business Administration and Master of Public Administration programmes, our Sunyani and Ho campuses will be developed over the next academic year to accommodate the patrons of these programmes and the existing ones. As a matter of policy, we will shift our focus in the design of learning materials from printed materials to the use of interactive communication technologies.

5. POSTGRADUATE STUDIES AT KNUST

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I trust that by now you would have noticed the rather small percentage of postgraduate students compared to the large number of undergraduate students. For the University as a whole, postgraduate students comprise only 6.3% of the student population, and as you can see, the proportion is even less than this threshold for this morning's function. As a University it is clear to us that our future lies in postgraduate education without which our relevance to the Ghanaian society will be severely limited. A lot of the break-throughs in research and the solution of industrial problems will come through the efforts of postgraduate students and lecturers working together on various research projects. To this end, over the next few years, the University intends to expand and invest more resources into postgraduate studies and we will be falling on Government and other stakeholders to provide additional resources to help us jump-start the process and sustain it thereafter. To our Jubilee year Graduands, please remember that when the time comes for you to consider postgraduate studies, your first choice must be KNUST.

6. AWARD WINNING LECTURERS

Distinguished invited guests, I would also like to report to Congregation that our Lecturers here at KNUST are indeed of world class because of the break-through and recognition they are gaining on the international scene. A lecturer, Mr. Rexford Assasie Oppong from the College of Architecture and Planning recently won a first prize for his research on "The Paradox of Landlessness and Housing Development at Abakam, near Cape Coast" at a Conference organised by the African Real Estate Association for which he received the "Appraisal Institute Prize for the best Conference Paper", an award of cash, a citation and other facilities to continue with his research agenda. Mr. Rexford Assasie Oppong, congratulations.

In the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, I am also happy to announce that the work of Professors Stephen Alfred Osei and Armstrong Donkoh continue to be

recognised internationally. They have attracted substantial resources from the Basic Environmental Systems and Technology Inc. of Alberta, Canada to research into the effects of direct-fed microbials on the health and performance of poultry in hot, humid environments. Professors Osei and Donkor, congratulations.

Time will not allow me to mention all other faculty members who have received international recognition. Distinguished Faculty members, we are very proud of all of you. More grease to your elbows so you can continue with your ground breaking activities to put the name of KNUST on the world map of academic excellence. Once again, Congratulations!!!

7. APPRECIATION OF PARENTS' EFFORTS

At this point, let me say a few words of appreciation to parents and guardians who are here to witness your wards' graduation ceremony. As I acknowledged in my salutation, you may be relieved, but only for a while because you may have to continue nurturing your wards to adulthood. We all appreciate your sacrifice and devotion as parents which have brought these young men and women this far. Without your support, they will not be here. We want to tell you in no uncertain terms that we really appreciate you. I would like all of us to show our appreciation to all parents and guardians by giving them a standing ovation.....Thank you!!!

The above achievements may not have been possible without the tremendous support we received from many benefactors who supported our academic programmes in these two Colleges.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF BENEFACTORS

At this stage, it is appropriate to recognise the contributions by our benefactors which facilitated the smooth running of the University; particularly the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources as well as the College of Architecture and Planning. We are

extremely grateful to the Government of Ghana for providing a substantial portion of the funding required for the conduct of academic activities in the two Colleges and the School of Graduate Studies. Lecturers' salaries and funds for administrative and service functions were provided by the Government of Ghana. The Ghana Education Trust Fund provided nearly all the capital investment funds required by the two Colleges but while we are extremely grateful for these gestures, we would, like Oliver Twist, politely plead for more to enable us provide more lecture rooms, relocate our experimental farms and laboratories to Anwomaso and beyond.

Apart from government, we also received generous assistance in cash and kind from the following, amongst others; to support academic work in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources:

- i) Ghana Oil Palm Development Company Ltd;
- ii) Agricare Ltd; and
- iii) Basic Environmental Systems and Technology Inc.

The College of Architecture and Planning received donations from several institutions including the following:

- i) Ministry of Lands, Forestry and Mines;
- ii) Land Administration Project;
- iii) Royal Institute of British Architects – Northwest Wales Chapter;
- iv) Messrs O. T. Asafu Adjaye and Mr. Jamil Odun Ogde; and
- v) The Rotary Club of Kumasi East.

We are all now convinced that funding of tertiary education should be a partnership between various stakeholders since Government is unlikely to be able to provide all the required resources. At the KNUST, we have done our possible best to better utilise our limited resources. However, we will be able to enhance the quality of our programmes if we could be allowed some further flexibility to charge appropriate fees for the various

services we render. It is our hope that sooner than later, opportunities will be made available for us to commence a national debate on funding tertiary education in Ghana.

9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF SUPPORT TO 41ST CONGREGATION

I would like to acknowledge with immense gratitude, the support offered by some organisations to make this Congregation, a success. These organisations offered some financial support to this year's Congregation by way of advertising in the Congregation Brochure.

These organisations are:

- CAL Bank;
- Sambus Company Limited;
- KEK Insurance Brokers Ltd; and
- University Press, Kumasi (UPK).

We believe that this cordial relationship will flourish and develop from strength to strength for our mutual benefit. We thank you most sincerely for your support.

10. CONCLUSION

As I bring my speech to an end, let me offer some words of encouragement to our Jubilee year graduates of this prestigious institution. Remember that you become automatic members of our Alumni Association and do not forget that your contribution can go a very long way to enhance the fortunes of KNUST. Join this association and participate in all its activities.

As you go out into the real world, please remember that as products of KNUST, you are unique and, therefore, need to shine wherever you find yourself; whether as an agriculturist, forester, architect, quantity surveyor, planner or land economist. Remember

that you are the only one who can perform the job for which you have laboured for the past four years. You need to distinguish yourself by flying high and I would like to demonstrate this with the story of the farmer who raised chicken in his backyard with one rather odd looking chicken. It behaved like a chicken and never knew there was a blue sky overhead and sunshine until one day when someone knowledgeable about these things, perhaps an animal scientist, came along and said to the farmer: “Hey! that is no chicken. That is an eagle”. The farmer never believed him because he argued that the strange looking bird behaves like a chicken.

The expert requested that the strange looking bird be given to him. He then took the strange looking chicken and climbed the mountain and waited until sunrise. Then he turned the strange looking chicken towards the sun and said, “Eagle fly, eagle”; and the strange looking chicken shook itself, spread out its pinions and lifted off and soared and soared and flew away, away into the distance.

And God says to the class of 2007, you are no chicken; you are an eagle. Fly, Class of 2007, fly. And God wants you to shake yourselves, spread your pinions, and then lift off and soar and rise, and rise toward the confident and good and beautiful. Rise towards that compassionate and the gentle and the caring. Rise to become what God intends you to beeagles, not chicken.

Congratulations and Godspeed to all of you.