

**SPEECH BY THE RT HON. REBBECA KADAGA, SPEAKER OF THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA ON  
THE 9<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION (SCIENTIFIC & VIRTUAL) CEREMONY OF CAVENDISH UNIVERSITY  
UGANDA**

**28 MAY, 2020**

The Chancellor – His Excellency Benjamin Mkapa,  
The Chairman of the University Council,  
Vice Chancellor and staff,  
Distinguished Guests (Present and Virtual)  
All Students, Graduands and your parents and sponsors  
Ladies and Gentlemen

I am honored to have been invited to Cavendish University Uganda as Guest of Honour on the 9<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony. This graduation is largely virtual because of the need to prevent the spread of the Novel Corona Virus. Covid-19 has disrupted society's usual way of doing. Almost the world over, all education institutions including universities went into a shutdown. Sadly, many of them also shut down their academic functions completely. However, a few universities that were already advanced in technology continued to teach their students utilising educational learning platforms. I am reliably informed that Cavendish University Uganda was already prepared with an educational online platform and I take this opportunity to congratulate you. This sets you apart as a university preparing students for the future.

Higher Education is recognized all over the world as an engine of national growth and development. This is because Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) including universities produce graduates with ready-to-use skills and competencies that are needed to manage various national institutions and development functions which move the economy forward.

The Government of Uganda seeks to increase the number of citizens who continue and finish tertiary education as a precursor to the development of *a modern knowledge-based society*. It is against this background that Government expanded Higher Education, allowing multiplication

of Public Universities from only one in 1990 to currently nine; and Private Universities from zero in 1990 to currently over 35.

As Parliament, we know that private higher education players are **servicing a public good**. Like public universities, private universities train children of Uganda, as well as the region. They contribute to national development by creating a knowledgeable and skilled cohort of Ugandans for the market. Besides, they complement government effort to reduce on the youth that dropout out of schools who would otherwise leave with broken dreams and become a liability to the country. We know that public universities cannot absorb all the students that qualify for university entrance.

Uganda's higher education is highly respected regionally, which is why we get students from countries such as the DRC, Burundi, South Sudan, Somalia, Tanzania, Rwanda, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gambia and others. That most of these students are in private universities speaks to your quality of teaching and contribution to the overall image of Uganda portrayed abroad. I am aware that there are thousands of foreign students in Cavendish University Uganda today. Their experience will determine what the outside world thinks of university education in Uganda, and will thus expand the exportability of our higher education. When these students are here, they contribute ideas, market to our products, entrepreneurship and foreign exchange which keeps our economy running. Thank you Cavendish University Uganda for supporting the Ugandan economy in this regard.

To you our graduands, congratulations! Anyone who has gone through university education knows that it is a struggle. To succeed, you need hard work, unwavering commitment, steadfast concentration, excellent collaborative skills as you study in teams and great intellectual abilities to satisfy stringent requirements of a rigorous academic system. You have satisfied all these and qualified yourselves for employment and entrepreneurship. Please, get time to celebrate this achievement in a manner that is consistent with scientific requirements of Covid-19. And as you celebrate, also note that this is only the beginning. Always challenge yourselves to excel, to do better and to abound in everything you set out to do. Always seek to add value by finding solutions to the challenges faced in your communities, countries and institutions where you will be employed. I wish you God's protection during this challenging pandemic time and blessings for a robust and successful future.