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Faculty of Applied Sciences
18 April 2013



Chancellor, Judge Vuka Tshabalala
Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Professor A C Bawa
Deputy Vice-Chancellor's
Executive Dean of the Faculty of Applied Sciences
Executive Deans of the OTHER faculties
And Most Importantly to you beautiful graduates sitting here,
our next future, our economy of our nation, and your proud family members

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With all protocols observed, it gives me great pleasure to address you here today

Today marks a significant milestone in your life journey. A ritual transition from years of being prepared for a socially productive, self-reliant life - to being defined as now ready to go and live it.

There is a sense of "delivery" and "deliverance" in a graduation ceremony that gives it its deeper meaning. For as you exit this remarkable institution, focused on landing and making the best possible career opportunities and achieving success in all your aspirations for further study, work, home, love and leisure, know too that as university graduating young people, you are a bridge that links past and future; that you embody society's reproduction and renewal of itself; a fresh injection into the body of our society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

You will all agree that education should be a lifelong journey, and I believe you all have a lot of work ahead of you *One of my first message to address you today, is for you to look after yourself. AS much as our nation needs all of you to support its growth, and that includes the demands imposed on your own success, my biggest fear is that your own health will remain a challenging compromise to the pursuit of success and hardships that awaits in front of you. In mark of your our future growth, a healthy living and a balanced mindset will help you achieve the desired success.*

This long journey requires that you ask yourselves: what does your own health really mean to you? Apart from finding pictures of infectious diseases exciting and scary, reading of the usual deadly pandemic like HIV and TB in newspaper articles on daily basis or bogged down with the same messages of Healthy life styles, nutrition, diet and exercise for routine diseases like Diabetes and Hypertension, how much does it really mean it to improve your own health and also the health of the people that are or will be associated to you. It really means to act as voices for the interests of people, of everyone around us, to make their lives a little easier, happier, and healthier. You are our nation's next managers, leaders, where you will be faced with your employees & colleagues battling similar challenges, where, It will require for you to speak up for those who are silent and help those who are in their most vulnerable moments in life. Your real success will be judged by people's conditions in your local, national and international communities.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The six common challenges for your own health system around the world.

First are the three major transitions that are changing the nature of health threats to one oneself: 1) demographic transition due to urbanization; 2) epidemiologic transition of the non-communicable diseases Diabetes/ hypertension and, 3) disability of mental, muscular-skeletal, and other impairments becoming common and common.

Second is the perennial challenge of insufficient financing, which compels our own health and general health system in total to prioritize and make choices.

Third is the core ethos of prevention, which is under-valued because the returns are invisible and long. Which for me you as new generation need to really look in seriously and prioritize

Fourth is the importance of communications as public health must educate the public. You are our hope to send the correct message to those vulnerable employees and colleagues you will be responsible for in your future work place, or communities you will be attached to and this will mark through you as our next generation of leaders in its true sense towards our society.

Fifth are team-work and gaining partners. AND Finally, sixth is global thinking matched by local action.

This clearly defines your role as future leaders to our society and the sense that our own health is growing increasingly more complex on daily basis. The changing environment, increasing barriers to healthcare access, medications, socio-economic as well as other cultural and behavioural factors all add to the increased complexity. There is a need for a more comprehensive and well-adapted systems-wide approach to developing feasible solutions to these complex public health problems. Hence, there is a crucial need from you all to transform your sound academic knowledge through this prestigious University to translate into evidence-based policy and programmes to improve our overall health outcomes and reduce the disease burden in our society.

Already now, nearly one billion people live on the margins of survival. It does not take much to push them over the brink

Ladies and Gentlemen

As the Director of the Higher Education HIV/AIDS Programme, your graduation today has deep and special meaning for me. Because by virtue of your very graduation, you fundamentally help mitigate vulnerability to HIV.

Research shows that among the groups of people who are most likely to be exposed to or to transmit HIV and/or TB, are young people who are outside of the education system. Ensuring that young people of school going age complete secondary schooling is deemed to be protective against HIV, especially for young girls, and young men and women with tertiary education are deemed significantly less likely to be HIV positive than those without tertiary education.

So education, in and of itself, is very important as a structural mitigating factor against HIV and AIDS, compelling us to ensure that access to post-school education is increased, that retention rates are high, and that graduate rates are optimum.

So I am deeply mindful of the significance of your graduation, over and above and beyond it being a transition from study to a life of independence and productivity.

I have no doubt too that the work of the HEAIDS programme, like that to which you have been exposed to at this excellent institution, enhances the role of educational enrolment in the mitigation of HIV and AIDS.

One of the critical programmes of HEAIDS is the education of students to make a contribution to the national HIV/AIDS response, in their homes, communities and in their future career fields. So as you take your leave of this institution to make the best possible career opportunities and achieve success in all your aspirations, know too that as university graduating young people, you embody society's reproduction and renewal of itself.

You are the children of the 1990s, an age that saw progressive shifts in HIV and AIDS mitigation, and you represent our hope for a renewal of society that may lead, in twenty years time as UNAIDS proclaims, to Zero new HIV and TB infections; Zero discrimination; and Zero deaths from HIV and TB.

As we bid you farewell, I look forward especially to that. We have hope therefore that you will make a contribution to not only the national HIV/AIDS response in your communities and future career fields but to also to all the other challenges: health and environmental that will face us in future.

Let me end by quoting Louis Pasteur that fits to you new graduates of applied sciences, "To him who devotes his life to science, nothing can give more happiness than increasing the number of discoveries, but his cup of joy is full when the results of his studies immediately find practical applications."

Thank you and God Bless!!!