

**Commencement Address to the 9th Graduation Ceremony for Cavendish University 28th May
2020**

Theme: Research and Innovation as Tools to Achieve Growth and Development

By

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The Chancellor HE Benjamin Mkapa

The Rt Hon Speaker, Hon Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga

Academic and Administrative Staff in your various capacities

Graduands

Local Leaders

All Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I start by congratulating the graduands for attaining this important milestone in your academic and professional lives. Congratulations!

As you embark on the next steps in your journey, the times that we are in present the perfect setting for you to ask yourself what am I here for at such a time as this. ---Because we could never have predicted what is happening globally, it is also true to acknowledge that life as it was is no longer optimal, relevant or even competitive in the new normal.

And this is why the theme of the graduation day is relevant – the need for innovative ways of thinking combined with behavioral adaptation for one to remain competitive, if we are to grow and not just grow but to thrive.

Innovation is the adaptation of new mindsets, new processes and new products; I would like to suggest to you therefore that you and I, we are all on Assignment! You all recall in from not so long ago what an assignment is; - A set of things to do with a time frame and expectations done in a regulated manner.

We are on Assignment to be a difference maker, to be a solutions provider to be positive oriented. For some this will require mind shift shifts and for others it will require mindset changes. For many of us it will require a strengthening of our already possibility oriented mindsets.

Imperatives of the Assignment

1. Timeframe
 - a. So set goals and these must be SMART goals. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic (because we are still living on earth and not yet on the moon) and Time bound.
 - b. Review your progress against the time. Ask yourself are you making progress? What are the milestones on your journey of progress to purpose? But remember that when you attain the milestone, do not camp at your milestones. Keep moving! There is always the next mountain to climb.
2. Purpose to excel at your assignment. This will require;
 - a. Preparation;
 - b. Motivation, especially self-motivation;
 - c. What is your definition of success? This must be crystal clear so that you can recognize it when you have arrived;
 - d. Keep your vision alive.
3. Own your assignment = Make it yours. This will make you be responsible and accountable for all your actions and outcomes.
4. Marry the Assignment – commit to it no matter what! Certainly there will difficulty, inconvenience, setbacks. Remember always – if there is one thing you take away from this talk is this “Your setback is your set up for your come back” so when setbacks occur, embrace them as setting you up for better things...but also they will enable you enjoy the exhilaration of achievement.
5. Excelling at your assignment leads you to qualification
 - a. Qualification for promotion. Three years ago or whatever time ago that you began you were not what you are today so you can see that because you excelled at your assignment, you have qualified to be at the 9th Graduation ceremony!
 - b. Qualification to be counted among... (choose what it is you want to be counted among). As for today you can be counted as successful graduands of Cavendish University. Uganda.
 - c. Qualification for higher assignments – new levels of contribution

As I conclude, I invite you to make a pledge to yourself before yourself and your God to be; **“The Best You can be”**

But first and foremost; commit **TO START**. Allow me to quote for Brendan Burchard who said:

"Doubt increases with inaction, clarity reveals itself in momentum, Growth comes from progress. For all these reasons, BEGIN!"

Procrastination is the thief of time. 99% of success is showing up!

I wish you bountiful success and fruitfulness in your endeavors. I Thank You!

Doris Akol