

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY AGYEWODIN ADU GYAMFI AMPEM II CHAIRMAN
OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL AT THE 34TH CONGREGATION CEREMONY
OF THE KNUST ON SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2001 AT 9:00 AM**

Your Excellency, The Vice-President,
Otumfuo Asantehene,
Honourable Minister of Education,
Ministers of State,
Regional Minister,
Your Excellencies of the Diplomatic Corps,
Members of the Clergy,
Nananom,
Members of University Councils,
Vice-Chancellors,
Members of Convocation, Staff and Students,
Alumni,
Graduands,
Members of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The University is especially honoured and privileged to have in our midst the Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana to preside over today's Congregation. This being the first Congregation by any state University in this country since Your Excellency assumed office fifty-five days ago it gives me great honour and pleasure to welcome you on behalf of the University Council and on my own behalf to the 34th Congregation of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi.

Though the University has already sent you a message of congratulation we would like to take the opportunity of your gracious presence to congratulate you, once again, on your election which has received wide acclaim not only in Ghana but throughout the peace-loving world.

It is my pleasure to welcome to this ceremony the Honourable Minister of Education Prof. Christopher Ameyaw Akumfi and other honourable Ministers of State including Mr S. K. Bofo, the newly-appointed Regional Minister for Ashanti who is attending in that capacity for the first time.

Fortuitously, His Excellency the Vice-President and some Ministers of State including Honourable Hackman Owusu Agyemang, Honourable Mr. Yaw Osafo Maafo and Honourable Dr. Anane of President Kufuor's Cabinet are alumni of this University and this is a homecoming for them.

I am also privileged to welcome Otumfuo Osei Tutu II. You have always been a source of support and inspiration to the University. We are sure you will always be available when we need you. Nana you are cordially welcome.

It is my pleasant duty also to extend a hearty welcome to all of you assembled here - Members of Parliament, Nananom, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Chairmen, Vice-Chancellors and Members of University Councils, Members of Convocation, Staff, Alumni, Graduands and Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, to the ceremony.

Your Excellency, the Vice-President, Otumfuo, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, at the last Congregation I announced that the University Council had, without rancour or favour, appointed Professor J.S.K. Ayim, as Vice-Chancellor of this University. It is gratifying to observe that the performance of Professor Ayim to date has vindicated Council. He enjoys the support of his peers, students, and workers alike. The workers presented him with a gold chain of office at a ceremony held only eight days ago. There is remarkable peace and stability within the University. He has implemented the innovations and the positive changes introduced by the University Council in the University Statutes promulgated just on his assumption of office with alacrity and professionalism. He has, by his personal goodwill, been able to mobilize the alumni of this University nationwide and overseas in support of this University's impending Golden Jubilee Celebrations scheduled to commence in the middle of this year to late 2002.

Of particular interest is the development and technical support he has been able to muster within his 18 month tenure so far. I am sure the Vice-Chancellor would like to elaborate on some of the attractions he has brought to this University in his report to Congregation.

Also, at the last Congregation, Council promised to find a suitable replacement for the outgoing Registrar. This, we have done in appointing Mrs. Sophia Quashie-Sam, the first female Registrar we, believe, of any University in Ghana.

Your Excellency will be very proud of her, knowing the importance your Government attaches to women's issues as manifested in your creation of the new Ministry of Women's Affairs and a whole Minister having among her schedule the education of the girl child innovations which this country has needed for a long time.

Mr. Vice-President, Otumfuo, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, nobody can deny the fact that good people form the foundation of any good nation. It is also true that the quality of people is determined by the quality of their education. Quality education is, therefore, a sine qua non to development and advancement.

Our nation faces numerous basic problems, not least among them, the poor and deteriorating state of education at all levels.

Everybody knows what it takes to bring about quality education. The problem is that successive post-colonial governments have brought about too many radical changes in education. There has been too much experimentation in education. Governments have used their superior numerical parliamentary strength or executive powers to bulldoze their way towards implementing the theories or unproven hypotheses of some so-called experts. The results are what we are witnessing now.

We would do well to remember the saying of our elders, “The reason why nobody blamed another when the nation perished is that everybody was party to it” (Oman boe a obi annun obi no na efiri se obiara nim ho bi). In matters affecting the quality of life there should be extensive if not exhaustive consultation with the people concerned.

The approach that ought to be adopted by Ghanaians in dealing with reforms is well expressed in the ideal that “Life is not so much a matter of discovering something new as it is a matter of rediscovering what has always been present.”

The lesson of consistency may be learned from this - a consistency which does not regard circumstances. Let us try to cultivate a culture of consistency.

With the appointment of Professor Christopher Ameyaw Akumfi, an educational guru, as the Minister for Education, it is our conviction that the government is determined to take the necessary measures to restore Ghana's education to the enviable and unbeatable position it occupied in Africa in the early post-colonial period.

I take the liberty to quote a passage from the University Teachers' Association of Ghana's congratulatory message to you on your assumption of office.

'We assure you that we will continue to contribute our quota to the task of nation building. In return, we expect that our efforts will be appropriately rewarded and that facilities, equipment and other necessities will be provided so that we can work efficiently. We need not remind you of your own commitment to the upliftment of educational standards in Ghana.

In addition to our academic responsibilities, we are also available to contribute in any other responsible capacity that you deem fit. We have the highest concentration of brainpower in this country and our members have been hurt in the past by the unfortunate practice of governments preferring expensive foreign experts when we could have done the job at a fraction of the cost charged by foreigners.

This is, more or less, a mission statement.

And now a word to you Graduands for whose graduation we have gathered here this morning. I congratulate you on your achievement.

Welcome to the Real World.

By the nature of your training you have, to a considerable extent, been sheltered for some years from the harsh realities of the world you are entering. You are about to enter an economic environment with considerably restricted opportunities for employment.

Although it is the wish of every government to enlarge the job market of the public sector the stark reality is that Government alone cannot foot the whole bill of employment in the country. The second job market is the one established by the private sector. It is noted with appreciation the increasing number of job-seekers being absorbed by this sector and other non-governmental organizations to supplement government efforts. Both the public and the private sectors cannot provide job openings for the ever-increasing number of graduates.

I believe there is a third potent employment sector for the graduate to consider. It is self-employment.

Dear graduand, it would be sad if your university education has equipped you only to serve as someone else's employee.

I, therefore, recommend self-employment as a viable option for the economic survival of our unemployed graduates and others. As a matter of fact, many less-academically-endowed citizens of this nation - farmers, artisans, restaurateurs - to name but a few, are among those who are moving the nation economically and socially. It is believed that with some measure of a sense of initiative and a spirit of enterprise, which a sound university education should endow, a graduate of this technological university should never be out of job for too long.

Last year I advised the graduating class not to rely on luck when hard work was called for. Your university education may have equipped you academically. Use this to build yourself morally as well for it takes academic excellence and a strong moral fibre to make it to the top of any profession.

If I may remind you, respectable graduands, please reflect on the toils of your parents and guardians and the sacrifices of the Government and the good people of Ghana-farmers, workers and taxpayers-which enabled you to have university education. You owe them a debt of gratitude. They are not asking for anything more than a promise to stay around to discharge your national service obligation and to help build Ghana.

Once again dear graduands, accept my **WARMEST CONGRATULATIONS**.

Your Excellency the Vice-president, Otumfuo, Distinguished Ladies and Gentelman, it is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you once again to the 34th Congregation of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Thank You and God Bless Us All

AGYEWODIN NANA ADU GYAMFI AMPEM II
ACHERENSUAHENE
CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL, K.N.U.S.T

**ADDRESS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PROF. J.S.K AYIM AT THE 34TH
CONGREGATION CEREMONY OF KNUST ON SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2001 AT
9.00 AM**

Your Excellency, the Vice-President of the Republic of Ghana
Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Asantehene
Chairman of the University Council
Ministers of State
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Colleague Vice-Chancellors & Principals,
Members of Convocation
Distinguished Alumni
Distinguished Graduands
Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to associate myself with the Chairman of Council in extending the warmest congratulations of myself, my administration, and all alumni of this University to His Excellency, Alhaji Aliu Mahama on his election as the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana. By appointing you as his Vice Presidential running mate, President Kufuor has made this University and all her alumni proud.

Indeed, the inclusion of KNUST ALUMNI like Hon. Hackman Owusu-Agyemang, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Yaw Osafo Maafo, Minister of Finance, and other Alumni in the Government of President Kufuor, has vindicated the training and the professional discipline which this University imparts to its graduates. We congratulate both you and President Kufuor on your election victory and thank the President for the honour done to the alumni of this University.

A special welcome also goes to our good friend and former colleague, Professor Ameyaw-Akumfi, who is now the new Honourable Minister of Education. We congratulate you and all your colleague Ministers who are here with us today on your appointment. We assure you of the wholehearted support of this University in all technical and professional matters, which may be referred to us for advice.

As for Otumfuo, we do not even know how to thank you for your exemplary interest in education, especially this University. Otumfuo, we say thank you once again and welcome.

Your Excellency, Otumfuo, Chairman of Council, Congregation traditionally is a ceremony for the award of honours and degrees to deserving students of this University. It also provides a forum for the Vice-Chancellor, as Chief Executive Officer of the University to submit his annual report on the state of the University to congregation. Copies of the Vice-Chancellor's Report have been distributed to some of you along with the basic

statistics of the University during the 1999/2000 academic year. However, it is important for me to highlight on a few things here.

This University has over the past one year enjoyed peace and decorum. The staff have been supportive, understanding and cooperative. The TEWU have been cooperative and most understanding. The majority of students have maintained discipline and hard work; they have focused on development of facilities, which enhance their well being. The teamwork that is developing on campus augurs well for the development of our great institution.

Teaching

During the last academic year, the University made some giant strides towards both increased output of graduates and academic excellence. The results showed that in the June 2000 final examinations, 1605 were successful, of whom 362 were females. Of the successful ones 69 obtained first class honours, out of whom 9 were females. At the postgraduate level, the University produced one PhD, 115 Masters and 38 Postgraduate diplomas.

While congratulating all graduands on your successful achievements I would also like to congratulate all members of Convocation, especially the academic staff and the administrators as well as the other categories of staff who have contributed to the attainment of this excellence in teaching, research and the transmission of knowledge for the improvement of the quality of life of the people of Ghana.

New Programmes

Mr. Chairman, in pursuance of the objectives of the University to adapt to current trends as a way of meeting the developmental aspirations of the nation, new areas of academic and social interest are constantly being explored. Accordingly, the Academic Board of the University has approved the following five new programmes to start in October this year:

1. BSc Computer Engineering
2. BSc Telecommunication Engineering
3. BSc Optometry in the Department of Visual Science, Faculty of Science
4. BSc Nursing, in the School of Medical Sciences
5. BSc Herbal Medicine, in the Faculty of Pharmacy.

As a University of Science and Technology, propelling the nation in this era of advanced technology and information age, we will not relent in our efforts to serve the technological and manpower needs of the nation, in fulfilment of the aspirations of the founding fathers of this our great University.

Funding

While expressing our pride regarding the numbers and the quality of our output, it should dawn on us the lost opportunities which could have accrued to this University and the

nation had we been adequately equipped enough to admit and train more graduates for this country. Since the Chairman of Council has already discussed the need for the enhancement of our academic facilities in his address, I would only remind you of the waste in turning away over 50% of the qualified applicants.

It is also important to note that Universities all over the world are funded through the public and/or private sector. In developing countries where Universities were initiated by the state, the Government becomes the owner of the plant and equipment and therefore has the primary responsibility to provide and improve the infrastructure or the physical resources required for teaching, learning, research and extension of knowledge to industry and the people.

In some cases, however, the University also benefits from financial support and endowments by individuals, corporate citizens and illustrious alumni. Everybody therefore has a stake in the University and has a moral obligation to ensure the growth of the University and the success of its academic programmes.

It was for this reason that the University in December 1968, became the first University in Ghana to establish an endowment fund to mobilise additional resources to support the University's teaching and research programmes. Our experience, however was that people did not want to donate for various reasons; including lack of incentives and security. It is our fervent wish, therefore, that Government will create a conducive environment for individuals and companies in Ghana to contribute financial and material support for our Universities and enjoy security and tax exemptions.

At this point, I would like to commend senior members of this University for completing a 3.6 billion cedis hostel comprising rooms and flats to accommodate 240 students, with their pension funds. The GUSS Hostel came into use last October when the academic year began, and this has made life a little more comfortable for some students who would otherwise have had to stay outside the campus, sometimes under extremely difficult conditions.

Again, last year, I reported that the Ghana Hostels Ltd., a subsidiary of the Social Security and National Insurance Trust (SSNIT) had planned to build a hostel on University land; I am pleased to report that work on it is progressing steadily, and it is expected to be ready for occupation by 600 students around October this year. Three private companies are in the process of starting Hostels on University land. I wish to fervently renew my appeal to all individuals and companies to consider investing in campus hostel projects seriously; I assure you, it is a commercially viable social sector investment; the University administration will ensure security of your investment and freedom to manage your hostel.

Research

Apart from teaching, research continues to be the second focus of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The Centre for Biodiversity Utilisation and Development (CBUD) which was established only about three years ago, has started making a tremendous impact on our communities, in bringing into the mainstream agriculture, the cultivation of indigenous leafy vegetables such as kontomire, prekese, ayoyo, alefu, okro etc., whose cultivation had hitherto been taken for granted. Following a number of seminars, workshops and field work, a number of farmers in all the seven southern regions of Ghana and one in Tamale, have taken to the full-time cultivation of these nutritious vegetables.

CBUD's work which is collaborated by the Institute of Renewable Natural Resources, the Department of Biochemistry, the Department of Horticulture, the Department of Soil Science and the Department of Biological Sciences, is funded by this Government of the Royal Republic of the Netherlands. As our contribution to complement the donor assistance from the Royal Netherlands Government, KNUST has Constructed an eight- room building complex of offices, library and products development units for exclusive use of CBUD at a cost of one hundred million cedis. This beautiful building complex was commissioned in January this year jointly by the Vice-Chancellor and the Ambassador of the Royal Netherlands Government, His Excellency, Alexander Heldring.

Also, under a joint venture between KNUST, the Ghana National Petroleum Corporation (GNPC), the Ghana Tourist Board, the Ministry of Tourism and the Universities of Frankfurt, Munich and Kiel, the Department of Physics at KNUST, has begun some geophysical and remote sensing investigation into the Lake Bosomtwe Crater. The research objectives are to map out gas zones, assess any potential hazards in the lake and find out the rate of sediment intake and other possible sources of underground water feeding into the lake. .

This project has a lot of socio-economic potential in terms of alternative sources of energy, whose exploitation will manifest in potential jobs fur the youth. In addition, the impact on eco-tourism and the use of the lake for water sport cannot be underestimated. The German Government and the German Research Society, recently handed over-a research platform and equipment estimated at about 90 million cedis for the project.

You will find in the Vice-Chancellor's Report, a list of on-going research of the Various Faculties, Institutes, Departments and Centres, as well as that research outcomes and I recommend them to you for your study.

Alumni/Golden Jubilee

Your Excellency, Otumfuo, Chairman of Council, during the last Congregation I reported on the desire of this University to celebrate in grand style its Golden Jubilee scheduled for the 2001/2002 academic year. As part of the recommendations of the Golden

Jubilee Preparatory Committee, I travelled throughout the country, accompanied by our Pro Vice-Chancellor, Prof E.Y. Safo and others, to create awareness among our alumni, and to mobilise them to revitalise the KNUST Alumni Association in support of the Jubilee celebrations and the University's growth generally.

I am happy to report that everywhere we went, from Sunyani to Wa, to Bolgatanga, Tamale, Koforidua, Ho, Akosombo/Kpong/Akuse, Tema, Accra, Takoradi and Cape Coast, we found alumni serving this country in very strategic positions as Ministers of State, Regional Ministers, District Chief Executives, Chief Executive Officer of Corporate Bodies (public and private), Directors and Regional Heads. I must say that the testimonies received on their professional competence and their impact on the rural communities; convinced me that this University has made its mark in the 50 years of its existence.

For the first time in the history of the Alumni Association about 500 participants showed up at the Millennium Alumni Congress held on the Campus in September last year. One of the highlights of the Congress was a decision of the alumni to construct a 1000-room Alumni Jubilee Hostel as a jubilee monument and also to help ease the accommodation problems of students on the campus. But even more interesting was an invitation I received from the Alumni Association in America to address them at their Convention 2000 at the Ghana Embassy in Washington, DC and to tour selected Universities over there. The invitation covered two other KNUST staff who accompanied the Vice-Chancellor.

Your Excellency Otumfuo, Chairman of Council, the alumni in America provided air tickets and excellent hospitality for the three of us, they linked KNUST with funding agencies and ten University Institutions in six states. We are in touch with them trying to identify projects for which they can mobilize both financial and material support.

My own vision for this University in the short to medium term is to see to the provision of communication infrastructure on the campus through the application of modern information and communication technology and internet connectivity so that every office and every individual will be on-line.

This vision was very well received in the United States and just about a month ago, a four-man site inspection team from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, US visited the campus with a view to bringing down a team of 10 students plus their lecturers in July to establish two Computer laboratories on the campus - one for staff and students at the library complex, and the other for our Junior Secondary School. There are further prospects for the University of Pennsylvania to further collaborate with KNUST in teaching and research in various fields including engineering, pharmacy and the proposed nursing programme.

The alumni in America also helped us to establish linkages with the following American tertiary institutions: Temple University of Philadelphia; New York University, and Swathmore College which has sent someone to discuss student exchanges and study

abroad programmes at KNUST; the Southern University of Texas, Texas A & M University, the M.D. Anderson Medical Research Centre in Houston, the Florida A & M University and some other institutions which are keen to establish work relationships with KNUST.

Your Excellency, Otumfuo, Nana Chairman, I am happy to have this opportunity to pay public tribute to our alumni in America. I thank them for the contacts.

The alumni in Tema, Accra and the Takoradi are trying to link us up to industry and commerce. We thank the alumni both at home and in America for this spontaneous support. We are sure that they will exhibit even greater commitment in the Jubilee activities due to be launched by the Golden Jubilee Planning Committee. soon.

Other Link Projects

Through the instrumentality of Professor Bruce Boye, of the University of Applied Sciences, Lubeck, Germany, and Prof E.A. Jackson and Dr. E.A. Annan of our School of Engineering a joint research and technical cooperation has been initiated. The project involves the two Universities working closely with two German companies.

CBB software GmbH - software developers, and Fachhochschule Lubeck - a biomedical engineering company and some Ghanaian companies plan to train students in Computer Engineering and Biomedical Engineering. The German Government Organisation, GTZ, is co-ordinating the sourcing of funds for the project. Pledges towards the projects so far stand at DM 1,043,000. A delegation from Germany came-down to sign the agreement with KNUST about five weeks ago. This project is unique in the extent of the interface, which has brought the interests of both University and Industry together to work for the benefit of the people.

The Electricity Company of Ghana continues to sponsor KNUST for mutual benefit. All Housing Units on campus have been fitted with pre-payment electric meters donated by the Electricity Company of Ghana. Lecturers from Engineering supervise the installation and management of the meters. The experience they have accumulated are used to support the nationwide management of pre-payment electric meters.

The future of the industrial development of this country rests squarely on KNUST. KNUST abounds in technologically trained human resources. Our doors are open; we are ever ready to provide service and find solutions to your industrial problems.

During the year, we were also able to move the existing links between KNUST and Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) one step forward following a visit by Dr. Grace Hampton, Executive Assistant to the Vice President who is, herself a Professor of Art, to KNUST last summer, during which she conducted a survey in the teaching and study of art in West Africa.

While in Kumasi, Dr. Hampton became attracted by the opportunities that existed for KNUST's College of Art and the School of Fine Arts and Architecture at Penn State to mount joint distance education programmes through a two-way inter-connectivity of Penn State's Distance Education Centre and the African Virtual University (AVU) Centre at KNUST. Consequently, she drafted a project proposal which won our support.

On her return, Dr. Grace Hampton, in consultation with President Graham Spanier of Penn State, invited me and the Director of AVU, Professor Singh, to visit Penn State in January. As a result of that visit, Penn State and KNUST have agreed to source funds from some multilateral donor agencies to mount joint live degree courses via satellite to both campuses.

With time, the teleconferencing facilities can be extended to cover other programmes by other faculties/institutes on the campuses of the two Universities. This requires that the information technology infrastructure on-line on this campus should be seriously enhanced to assume on-line interconnectivity and delivery of courses at all times.

SRC Students Projects

Your Excellency, Otumfuo, Chairman of Council has told you about the absolute peace on the student front and I would like to commend the outgoing SRC President, Mr. Andy Osei Okrah and his team, for the serious and the mature leadership with which they have handled SRC affairs during their tenure. Instead of trying to make their voices heard through a series of “aluta” Mr. Okrah and his team, soon after their assumption of office decided to focus on development; they were able to convince students to contribute towards an SRC development fund. They raised over 250 million cedis towards development of an FM station, Radio FOCUS, 94.35 and a Hostel Project. They have applied for and have been granted a parcel of land by the University and they are ready to start the construction of a multi-billion cedi hostel to raise money for other SRC projects while helping to ease the accommodation problems of students on the campus.

About three weeks ago, the SRC invited me to commission the students FM Station on the campus named Radio Focus on 94.35 metre band. They have promised that they will use it for the positive development of the general University community. They also intend to share with their listeners some of the research findings on the campus that can have an impact on the Ghanaian society, especially the immediate neighbouring communities of the University.

Currently, work has started on the rehabilitation and the conversion of the old Mangle Store One into a 50 unit computer laboratory for students. A contract has been signed with a private entrepreneur to provide the 50 computers and accessories. Certainly, these are very noble ideas and I would like all of you here to applaud the student leadership for their vision. It is my hope that the new SRC Executive led by Mr. Samuel Laryea who

contributed towards the above mentioned developments have learnt a lot of good things from their predecessors and will continue the positive change from there.

One other achievement of some of our students needs special mention. We at KNUST have now joined the Internet Club. A group of final year students guided by a lecturer have designed and launched two web sites for KNUST. Presently, an alumnus, who is a service provider, is hosting the sites. We appeal to Government and friends of Government as well as friends of KNUST to assist us connect to the Information Super Highway. You may access us on www.knust.edu or www.knustalumni.com.

Appeal to Government

My greatest appreciation goes to Government for his continuous support for our programmes. May I take this opportunity to appeal for a definite grant of over three billion cedis to repair the Great Hall and to complete the Medical School Hostel. We hope that our Golden Jubilee handshake will take care of these pressing needs.

Benefactors

Apart from the Electricity Company of Ghana, I would also like to acknowledge with deep gratitude various donations to the University by the institutions and individuals listed below:

1. Otumfuo Education Fund
2. Unilever Ghana Limited
3. Volta Aluminium Company Ltd. (VALCO)
4. Ghana Institution of Engineers
5. Ghana Institution of Surveyors
6. Ghana Institution of Architects
7. Guinness Ghana Limited
8. Ghana Breweries Limited
9. Coca-Cola Bottling Limited
10. Hotel Georgia Limited
11. Ghana Airways
12. Poku Transport & Sawmill
13. Internet Ghana.

My appreciation also goes to all other people and organizations of goodwill who have helped the University in various ways during the last academic year.

Graduands

Your Excellency, Otumfuo, chairman of Council, Distinguished Guests, finding solutions to Ghana's problems is not the exclusive responsibility of the staff of the University alone. It is the responsibility of indeed every Ghanaian, particularly those of our fresh graduands who are about to go into the world to face the realities of our time. As

alumni you are first and foremost the creditable ambassadors of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.

Our industries are experiencing difficult times; our economy suffers continual shock treatments; our people are perplexed by squalor, deprivation and diseases. You are the technocrats, you are those who have trained and acquired the knowledge and the skills to handle such problems in our communities. You should consider yourselves as agent of change and role models. You should help our communities especially the rural communities to enjoy some of the positive change, which this nation is hoping for.

Think of how you can affect the lives of ordinary folks who have toiled and sacrificed to give you the education you have received. For, it is only when you do these things that your education would have been of benefit not only to yourselves as individuals, but also to mankind as a whole. Ask yourselves this question:

“How can I be my brother's keeper”? or even “my sister's keeper?”, remembering that it is the little, little things which we do for others that are pleasing to God.

Wherever you go, whatever you do and in all your relationships with others these words of Jesus Christ from Matthew 25:42-43,45 of the Good News Bible should be ringing compassion in your hearts:

“I was hungry but you would not feed me, thirsty but you would not give me a drink; I was a stranger but you would not welcome me in your homes, naked but you would not clothe me; I was sick and in prison but you would not take care of me.”

“.....I tell you, whenever you refused to help one of these least important ones, you refused to help me.”

Distinguished Graduands, the future of our people is in your hands, the challenge is yours and I wish you well.

Remember, also to assist KNUST, your alma mater even in your prosperity, and the ALMIGHTY GOD will let his face shine on you and bless you.

Your Excellency, Otumfuo, Chairman of Council, Distinguished Guests, fellow staff of KNUST, Graduands, let us thank God for this wonderful and memorable day.

I thank you all.

**ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY, ALHAJI ALIU MAHAMA, THE VICE -
PRESIDENT OF GHANA AT THE 34TH CONGREGATION OF KNUST, KUMASI,
ON SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 2001 AT 9:00 AM**

Otumfuo Osei- Tutu II, Asantehene
Honourable Ministers of State
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Chairman of the University Council
Vice-Chancellor
Members of Convocation
Illustrious Alumni
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me thank the University Council, first of all on behalf of His Excellency J. A. Kufuor, the President of the Republic of Ghana and on my own behalf for inviting us to this august congregation ceremony, the first to be held by any University or an educational institution in this country since our election to the Presidency.

As you can imagine President Kufuor would very much have liked to come and share with you in the joy of the occasion. He had a lot to do with this University during his tenure as the Town Clerk or the City Manager of the Kumasi City Council in the mid 1960s until he joined the Government of Prime Minister K.A. Busia during the second Republic in 1969. Unfortunately, the President could not come because of other international commitments.

He has, therefore, requested me to apologize most profoundly to all of you, for his inability to be here with you and to represent him at this well-attended congregation ceremony.

Otumfuo, Chairman of Council, Vice-Chancellor, as an alumnus of this University, coming to this campus is always a spiritual experience since it always brings back to me the fond memories of my good old days as a young civil engineering student a few decades ago.

I still remember with nostalgia the beautiful buildings, the lecture halls, the laboratories, workshops, the studios, halls of residence, the lawns and the only Olympic size swimming pool in black Africa at the time, coupled with the congenial atmosphere under which we studied.

My presence here today, therefore, gives me a strong feeling of home coming. But let me address myself to some of the issues, which the chairman of the University Council and the Vice-Chancellor have mentioned in their various reports to this Congregation.

As an entrepreneur myself, there is no doubt in my mind that education is the key to national development and that technology is the prime mover of modernization and

industrial and socio-economic development. It is therefore sad that facilities in our Universities and other educational institutions have been allowed to deteriorate, as a result of the poor state of the country's economy.

That is why my Government has made it its priority to rebuild the economy so as to create wealth in order to help re-equip our educational institutions and our hospitals for the benefit of the good people of Ghana. We have also heard your concerns about the ageing profile of the academic and professional staff of the universities owing to your inability to compete with industry in order to attract younger staff into the university system.

While determined to improve the lot of the staff and students in our universities, NPP Government will also look into the possibility of requesting Parliament to review upwards the compulsory retiring age of lecturers knowing that like vintage wine, academic knowledge matures with age.

Of course, it is not only the universities and the polytechnics which are going to constitute the focus of our attention in education. We will certainly have to pay even a greater degree of attention to the pre-university institutions which feed you with your human raw materials; for unless the quality of the candidates entering the universities are good, there is very little that one can do to help them to improve themselves.

That is certainly why my Government has deemed it necessary to assign a full Minister of State to secondary, primary and female education. In this regard our Government will, in the spirit of its open doors policy, be receptive to new ideas from the universities and all well-meaning people for the improvement of not only teaching and learning, but also for the enhancement of the management of our educational institutions and other sectors of the economy.

Otumfuo, Chairman of Council, the task of financing education at appreciable levels cannot be satisfactorily accomplished without the full participation of all stakeholders, particularly, industry, commerce and the general public who stand to benefit from the knowledge of the graduates.

I am therefore appealing to all entrepreneurs, private businessmen and corporate organizations who want to contribute either in cash or in kind towards the endowment funds of educational institutions, to do so without any fear or inhibitions whatsoever.

All alumni who have benefited directly from the education acquired in this university should help restore the dignity of this university, which, undoubtedly, is one of black Africa's foremost technological universities. The same also goes to those companies which employ the graduates of our universities to help them make huge profits without ploughing back any of their profits into those institutions. In this regard, our Government will consider the possibility of granting tax exemptions to individuals and organizations which donate freely to educational institutions as practiced, in other countries.

Otumfuo, Chairman of Council, permit me to salute all the professors, lecturers, staff and students who have at least tried to remain loyal to the cause of the universities despite the deteriorating conditions. Let me assure you that the government under His Excellency President J. A. Kufuor, will guarantee academic freedom to all institutions of higher learning so that they can generate ideas for the benefit of the good people of Ghana. You should, therefore, not hesitate to approach the government whenever you have any ideas to offer.

Now, distinguished new graduates, I believe that most of you may be wondering where you are going to work after you have finished your National Service. It is true that the economy is in a bad shape with our national debt running over 40 trillion cedis, but that should not be a cause for total despair. We are in touch with our overseas friends and partners. We are in discussion with other nations of goodwill. We are putting in place the mechanisms for stabilizing the economy.

Once this is completed the stage would have been set to encourage manufacturing industries to produce more. Producing more requires more labour which translates into jobs. I assure you that all is not lost, for I can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

What this means is that we should all put our hands to the wheel. We should not behave like the imprudent man who lamented over his poverty while sitting on gold. We in government have faith in the people of Ghana's ability to recover and take our destiny into our own hands. We shall overcome.

As technocrats who have acquired practical skills it should not be beyond you to set up on your own and raise capital by exploring means of raising capital to start your own cottage industries. Many of those who became successful have done so without waiting to look for jobs. You have acquired skills; go out there and use your ingenuity and become entrepreneurs.

I wish you all the best in your chosen professions.

God Bless You