



**ADDRESS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI,
PROFESSOR SAMSON SAJIDU, DURING
THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON
THURSDAY, 29TH AUGUST, 2024 IN THE
GREAT HALL, ZOMBA**

Salutations

1. The Director of Higher Education Dr Levis Eneya;
2. The Chairman of Council, Dr Christopher Guta and all Council members of the University of Malawi;
3. Chairpersons of sister University Councils and all other Councilors;
4. All senior government officials here present;
5. Vice Chancellors of MUBAS (Dr Nancy Chitera), KUHES (Prof MacPherson Mallewa);
6. Dr Sunduzwayo Madise, Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Malawi;
7. Mr Martin Matululu, Registrar, University of Malawi;

8. Professors, Executive Deans, Directors and Heads of Department;
9. All members of staff of the University of Malawi and from the sister Universities;
10. Dr Grant Nthara, the officiating Clergy;
11. Honourable Bester Awali, Member of Parliament for Zomba Central Constituency;
12. His Worship Councillor Christopher Jana, Mayor for Zomba City;
13. Mr Archangel Bakolo, Chief Executive Officer for Zomba City Council;
14. Mrs Reinghard Chavula, District Commissioner for Zomba;
15. Chief Chikowi, Chief Mwambo, Group Village Headman Chikanda and all other chiefs present;

16. Mr Elia Mwalwanda, President of the University of Malawi Students Representative Council;
 17. Distinguished Invited Guests;
 18. Parents and Guardians;
 19. Graduands and students;
 20. Members of the media, and
 21. Ladies and Gentlemen.
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It is my distinct pleasure and honor to welcome you all to this graduation ceremony of the University of Malawi but before I continue, I wish to express my gratitude to the **President of the Republic of Malawi and Chancellor of the University of Malawi, His Excellency Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera** for trusting me to preside over this

graduation on his behalf. I remain appreciative of this trust.

I wish to congratulate all the 1292 graduands who will be conferred with various degrees and diplomas today and yesterday morning after having satisfied the committee of examiners and Senate for the awards.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The graduands that the Senate will present to you shortly have been provided with the necessary knowledge in their respective disciplines, as well as skills for discovery. These fine men and women have received adequate mentorship from this institution that will give them an edge over their peers. They

have been equipped well enough to succeed and they shall succeed.

They shall not sit back and complain when they encounter new challenges but will draw from what they have been taught to offer solutions.

As a testimony of the relevance of the University of Malawi, our alumni have continued to be entrusted with various leadership positions in this country and globally. You may have noted for a long time a number of appointments of our alumni into various key government positions. It may take us the whole day to do so and there can never be a clearer endorsement of our training.

Distinguished Guests

On the statistics of this graduation ceremony:

The University continues graduating students not only from here but also from our sister universities; namely, Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS) and Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS). These are our students who were enrolled during the federal University of Malawi at the then Polytechnic, College of Medicine and Kamuzu College of Nursing.

Yesterday and today there are 1292 graduands receiving their certificates of the University of Malawi. Out of these, 1 graduand graduated yesterday with Honoris Causa, 4

are graduating with PhDs, 154 with Masters degrees, 1002 with Bachelors degrees, 8 with Postgraduate diplomas, 107 with Diplomas and 16 with certificates. 508 of the graduands are female and 784 are male (approximately 40% female). I congratulate all our graduands upon reaching this milestone.

Just to give some highlights in the past 6 months since our last graduation ceremonies:

- We have signed a memorandum of understanding with Florida State University for a one-year project on Large Classroom Pedagogy (LCP) project.

- We have embarked on a project titled *Unlocking Data: Scaling up uses and users of data in education systems* in partnership with Ziz Afrique Foundation with funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC).
- We have come up with a Key Innovation to ensure that the digital library responds to the needs of students called Beekee Box, an Offline solar powered Digital Library that enables instructors to upload educational materials onto the box and learners access the materials without any internet connectivity.
- We are implementing a project on Improving Adoption of Nutrition Practices through Community Behaviour Tracking

Mechanism. The project is tracking community level maternal, infant, and young child nutrition (MIYCN) practices and behaviours uptake among households while ensuring compliance in the National Nutrition Information Systems.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to take a moment to speak directly to the graduands, the Generation Z graduates. You are a unique generation—one that has grown up in a world of rapid technological advancements, global connectivity, and unprecedented challenges. Your generation has witnessed extraordinary

events and has had to adapt to a world that is constantly changing.

1. Embrace Change and Innovation

You are entering a world that is more dynamic than ever before. Be the innovators, the problem-solvers, and the pioneers who drive progress. The future belongs to those who are not afraid to think differently and challenge the status quo.

2. Stay Resilient

You have already shown incredible resilience by navigating your education during a global pandemic (Covid 19), Cyclone Fred and many more, Remember, setbacks are not the end of the road but opportunities to learn, grow, and emerge stronger.

3. Value Human Connections

In an age where digital interactions often replace face-to-face communication, I encourage you to prioritize human connections. The relationships you build—both personally and professionally—will be the cornerstone of your success. Never underestimate the power of a kind word, a helping hand, or a shared experience. Arnold Schwarzenegger said and I quote,

“Just remember, you can’t climb the ladder of success with your hands in your pockets’ end of quote. This signifies the importance of being humble but also practically working hard.”

4. Be Global Citizens

Your generation is more globally connected than any before it. Use your knowledge and skills to make a positive impact on society, and strive to leave the world a better place than you found it.

5. Pursue Lifelong Learning

Your education does not end here. Whether through formal education, professional development, or self-directed learning, continue to invest in yourself. As H. Jackson Brown Jr said:

“Every person you meet knows something you don’t; learn from them.”

6. Stay True to Your Values

Lastly, as you navigate your career and life, stay true to your values. Integrity, honesty, and ethical behavior are the foundations of a

fulfilling and successful life. Let these principles guide you in your decisions, and you will earn the respect and trust of those around you. Borrowing from what Mzuni VC (Prof Wells Singini during the last Mzuni graduation ceremony) there is no course or module on theft and cashgate in this University.

Allow me to speak on behalf of the entire University Management, to honour all those who have supported you on your university journey. We thank your parents, guardians, spouses, girlfriends and boyfriends and not forgetting 'hopes', our staff members, your advisers, coaches, your friends and the main shareholder of the University,

Government. All these people and institutions had faith in your dreams and potential, and they have all helped you to be here today. We are grateful to them all. We also hope that you, in turn, will offer the same service to those who come after you.

Congratulations, once again, on becoming alumni of this exceptional institution. May your journey ahead be filled with purpose, passion, and boundless opportunities. And may you continue to make your alma mater proud. God Bless UNIMA, God Bless Our Mother Malawi

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION