

**SPEECH BY THE COMMISSIONER FOR HUMAN RESOURCES,
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, HER EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR
SARAH ANYANG AGBOR, AT THE GRADUATION OF THE THIRD
BATCH OF STUDENTS OF THE PAN AFRICAN UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE FOR LIFE AND EARTH SCIENCES (INCLUDING HEALTH
AND AGRICULTURE)**

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I bring you greetings of goodwill, felicitations and solidarity from the Chairperson of the AUC, H.E. Dr Moussa Faki Mahama. It is an honor for me to address this congregation, marking the graduation of the third batch of scholars of the Pan African University Institute for Life and Earth Sciences (including Health and Agriculture, PAULESI). For the Pan African University Institute, today's graduation goes a step further than last year's, as we also have a cohort of PhD students graduating in different fields.

I will seek the indulgence of this august gathering to allow me at this juncture, to address these faces of Africa, symbols of hope and the transformation that Africa needs to be the Eldorado who are the that is supposed to be.

Graduations are special, and a moment to reflect and celebrate one's academic achievements. In the course of your studies, you dedicated your energies, minds and spirit to the pursuit of knowledge which is never attained without sacrifice. Having worked hard to satisfy the requirements of your program, you are now reaping the benefits of your sacrifice. This is indeed cause for rejoicing, as your knowledge, skills and intellectual maturity will open new opportunities for you to tap.

Let me also state, that graduation is the beginning of a new chapter in life, characterized by possibilities and challenges. It is therefore a new beginning where your success depends on the choices you make. These choices may not also be easy, but the overriding factor is your resolve to thrive on your skills and contribute to transforming the African continent, which is already faced by so many challenges. Also remember that your journey this far did not come without the efforts of your parents, partners, teachers, friends and others whose support you may continue to need in your lives.

Today is the day of your celebration, the day of your decoration. How long you flow in this aura depends on the seeds you will sow as from this moment. Today you are reaping the fruits of your hardwork throughout the academic year. Yes you have gone through this journey for a purpose. It is as we have

captured in AGENDA 2063, the vision of an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa driven by its own competent and skillful citizens.

Distinguished Guests, graduands, ladies and gentlemen. The African Union is proud to have played a major role in the process towards this graduation, which is connected with the story of the Pan African University. For centuries, Africa has had a little visibility in knowledge generation and dissemination as a means of supporting the livelihoods and addressing the needs and aspirations of its peoples. The idea of PAU Institute therefore, emanated from the need to fill this vacuum and create a home-grown knowledge pool that focuses on the priorities of the African people.

Agenda 2063 is Africa's strategic framework that aims to deliver on Africa's goal for inclusive and sustainable development and is a concrete manifestation of the Pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.

These are the triggers of the PAU institutes planted in the five regions of the beautiful continent of Africa. As flagship program, PAU institutes were created to make the youthful population of Africa a professional, dynamic and competent population that can respond to the various challenges of the

continent. **PAULESI**, serves as the PAU hub for the crucial areas of Life and Earth Sciences, also covering Health and Agriculture. These are key priorities of Agenda 2063, and it is my belief that PAULESI will play an important role in achieving our continental aspirations in these areas.

Therefore **Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Graduands**; permit me to draw attention to the existence of three other institutes of PAU, addressing different thematic areas in the various regions of Africa. In Kenya, there is a PAU Institute for Basic Sciences, Technology and Innovation. Cameroon is hosting the PAU Institute for Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences; whilst Algeria hosts the Institute for Water and Energy Sciences (including Climate Change). PAU's fifth thematic institute, on Space Sciences, will be hosted by South Africa and is expected to be operationalized this year.

It is reassuring to note, that each of these institutes serve as a hub for a broad thematic area, supporting a cluster of many centers of excellence with similar thematic orientation. This is the continental layout of the Pan African University, which is also designed to meet the special needs of African scholarship and development. PAU offers extra language courses in all the institutes, and has consolidated

courses on the History of Africa plus Gender and Human Rights, across all programs. By this measure, PAU is already contributing to African integration.

Let me assure the Graduands, that the passion with which PAU was established is alive more than ever before, and this must not be the end of your connection with the University. Your graduation should mark a new chapter in your relationship with PAU, as there are other opportunities the AU Commission has created for the young generation of Africans to tap including the African Union Youth Volunteers program. The Commission will continue to provide the necessary policy direction and institutional support, for the full realization of the AU's vision in creating the Pan African University, which is a new generation of African leaders, properly trained to take the best advantage of the continent's resources. This indeed is a key pillar for the attainment of the AU vision of a peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa.

The collaborative enterprise between PAU and the University of Ibadan which produced this batch of graduates, is therefore a measure of achievement for the African Union, and for the government and people of Nigeria who deserve congratulation on this occasion. I wish to

convey, on behalf of the African Union Commission, our profound appreciation for the support that the government of Nigeria has rendered to the inception and evolution of PAULESI.

Dear Graduands, Significantly, you are a chosen generation, a privileged lot to have had full sponsorship for a qualified graduate studies. Therefore the onus is on you to deliver the deliverables. You must be productive, proactive for the Africa we want.

It is for this reason that I really pray that “may your graduation be just a lifetime of fulfillment for you”. Remember that tomorrow belongs to the people who prepared for it today and who believe in their dreams despite the negative things around them.

It is a new hat of success you are wearing. Please BETHEFUTURETODAY. Remember the road to success is not an easy one. The real world you are entering too is not a kind one, there hurdles and thorns of life and in life. But these are important ingredients because they act as springboards to your success story. When the going gets tough, the tough gets going. A bumpy ride on the road to success must be a distraction. Stay focused. When a door gets shut, a bigger door is waiting to be opened. And when people look down

at you and make you feel you are nothing or your voice does not count s, smile within and say to your spirit man that “this day of my non recognition shall be the springboard of my remembrance and upliftment because those that trust in the lord shall do exploits.

Never ever give up because there is light at the end of the tunnel. Don't let others stop you from being who you are because of who they are. When you make a mistake, don't sleep on it, get up, shake off the dust and move on because mistakes are only proof that you are trying. Perseverance is an essential tool and attitude in the journey of life. What we call success is the totality of small efforts repeated day in and day out. The rainbow comes out after the rain.

Your life is not determined by what you achieve but how you respond to challenges and failure. Failure can act as a springboard to your miracle. That you did not succeed does not mean you are failure, or it is your end. It means that you were put to the test and you can do better.

Life itself is a university of some sort. You only graduate until the day you die. Your attitude and character are important in your success story. You must be humble, humility and respect are great Pan African values. We often say

Pride goes before a fall. Be humble, be wise, be thoughtful, be like the eagle. The way you see, you speak, hear and act is integral to your success. You need to believe in yourself even when people do not. Do not let someone's bad experience Or negativity pull you down.

Many of us here were not born with a silver spoon but through hard work and determination we are where we are now. The years of lack and poverty cannot be seen because God has given us new Garments to wear. Where there is a dream, there is hope. You must keep the vision that made you apply to this course alive so you can achieve a satisfying end. As a person, I believe that trust in God and hard work can transform our world. I believe that each one of us within our being have what it takes to turn dreams and visions into practical realities.

Distinguished Guests, Graduands, ladies and gentlemen; permit me to thank the Nigerian government, the management of the University of Ibadan and indeed the African Union Commission's partners in development for the support and solidarity which saw the successful implementation of PAU, and the PAULESI programmes.

Once again, I thank you and wish the graduates the best in their future endeavors.