

**SPEECH BY MR. ABDI MOHAMED, CEO & MANAGING DIRECTOR OF ABSA BANK
KENYA PLC DURING THE ZETECH UNIVERSITY 2024 GRADUATION CEREMONY**

[Salutations]

The Chairman, Board of Trustees Zetech University, Eng. Ken Mbiuki,
Members of Board of Trustees,
The Chancellor, Zetech University, Prof. Susan Alfano Nkinyangi,
The Chairman, Zetech University Council, Mr. Hassan Mohammed,
Members of the Zetech University Council,
The Vice-Chancellor, Zetech University, Prof. Njenga Munene,
Members of the Zetech University Management Board,
Members of the Zetech University Senate,
Zetech University Staff,
Students, Parents and Guardians,
Distinguished Guests,
Graduands,
Ladies and gentlemen

Good morning!

[Introduction]

It is a great honour to stand before you today at this remarkable milestone in the lives of Zetech University's graduating class of 2024. I am truly humbled to be your Chief Guest and to celebrate the evidence of hard work, in pursuit of excellence. Let me take this early opportunity to congratulate you on getting conferred your degrees and awarded your diplomas. Each of you stands today as a testament to resilience, adaptability and ambition.

The theme for today's celebration, "Harnessing Green Skills and Creativity for Shared Prosperity," holds particular significance for us even at Absa Bank Kenya. In an era where climate change and environmental sustainability are defining the global agenda, it is heartening to see Zetech University at the forefront of preparing graduates who are not only technically adept but are also primed to impact their communities positively.

Recently in Kenya, we experienced the worst floods ever in the country which was preceded by a severe drought in which we saw loss of lives and livelihoods. These climatic changes are an awakening call to responsible institutions including Universities to amplify the conversation on climate action. I must truly commend Zetech University for choosing such a timely and relevant theme for the Graduating Class of 2024.

Goal 13, of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), calls for urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. The UN has set a Climate action agenda which aims to empower leaders from government, business, finance, local authorities, and civil societies to come up with credible actions, policies and plans – and not just pledges – to accelerate the decarbonisation of the global economy and deliver climate justice to deter the rising effects of global warming. That is why you see major institutions talking of the planet first, people, then profit.

But why Green Skills and Creativity?

The UN targets to create one million new green jobs for youth, with a particular focus on young women by 2030. These include skills in areas such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management, water conservation, sustainable agriculture, circular economy and environmental protection. I take note that the theme for this year's research conferences delved into the above subject of circular economy.

As a bank, we recognise that addressing climate change requires every sector to rethink its approach to business and investment. From renewable energy to eco-friendly projects, Absa has been at the forefront of green financing in Kenya. Our investments are increasingly focused on supporting businesses that prioritise environmental stewardship and demonstrate a commitment to reducing their carbon footprint.

The Promise of Your Education and the Theme

Many of you have already been exposed to green innovations at Zetech University, including the AirSafi - air-purification project, the Smart Pest Deterrent System, among many others. These inventions as illustrated exhaustively by the Vice Chancellor demonstrate your capacity to find solutions that address pressing environmental and social issues. This is the kind of ingenuity the world needs more of, and I urge you to carry this forward as you embark on your professional journeys.

Absa Bank Kenya's Commitment to Green Financing and Sustainability

At Absa, we believe in walking the talk when it comes to sustainability. Our green financing portfolio aims to support businesses that are committed to environmental consciousness. We understand that our role as financiers goes beyond providing capital; it is about encouraging responsible practices that contribute to a sustainable future.

Our approach to sustainability is multi-faceted. We invest in projects that promote renewable energy, waste reduction, and efficient water usage. Furthermore, we are committed to integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into our operations. By funding green projects, we not only contribute to Kenya's climate resilience but also support job creation in emerging green sectors. In doing so, we foster a circular economy where shared prosperity becomes a reality.

A Call to Action for Graduates

As you take on the mantle, today's graduation theme invites each of you to take a stand for the future generations. Climate change is an urgent issue, and you are the generation with the power, knowledge, and creativity to tackle it head-on.

Your creativity can lead to groundbreaking innovations, and your green skills can drive sustainable practices. I urge you to be bold in your pursuits, to challenge the status quo, and to continuously seek solutions that create a lasting, positive impact. Whether it is a simple thing like reducing paperwork for online devices, it takes one step at a time.

The skills you have acquired at Zetech University have given you the tools to make a tangible difference. Whether you find yourself working in technology, agriculture, finance, or any other field, there is an opportunity to make choices that positively impact the planet.

Conclusion

Dear graduates, as you step forward into the world, know that you carry with you the hopes of your families, the pride of your university, and the support of your communities. You are the stewards of our planet, the change-makers, and the leaders who will create a future of shared prosperity.

I have no doubt that the education you have received here has prepared you well. As you leave Zetech University, I encourage you to stay true to your values, to embrace innovation, and to remain committed to the cause of sustainability. Absa Bank Kenya stands with you in this journey, and we look forward to witnessing the incredible impact you will make.

Once again, congratulations, class of 2024! The future is in your hands – make it a greener, brighter, and a more prosperous one.

Thank you!