



**SPEECH BY THE GUEST OF HONOUR, THE HONOURABLE
DEPUTY MINISTER OF HIGHER AND TERTIARY EDUCATION,
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT, ON THE THEME
*"DEVELOPING A SKILLED HUMAN RESOURCE BASE TO
IMPLEMENT ZIMASSET THROUGH CREATIVITY, INNOVATION
AND INVENTION "***

By

Guest of Honour

Hon. Dr Godfrey Gandawa (MP)

At Gweru Polytechnic

11 SEPTEMBER 2015; GWERU

SALUTATIONS

- The Director of Ceremonies: **Mr. Fidelis Mushayi**
- The Principal of Gweru Polytechnic; **Mr. W, Chandiwana**
- The Minister of State for Provincial Affairs for the Midlands Province, Honourable; **Cde Jason Machaya**
- The Provincial Administrator for the Midlands Province; **Cde C. Chitiyo**
- The UZ Vice Chancellor; **Professor Levi Nyagura**
- The MSU Vice Chancellor; **Professor N. Bhebhe**
- Civil Service Commissioners here present
- The Director of Tertiary Education Programmes in the Ministry of Higher and -Tertiary Education, Science and Technology Development; **Mr. J. T. Dewah** and Senior Government Officials here present
- The Chairman of the Gweru Polytechnic Advisory Council, **Mr. B. K. Mupandaguta** and Council members here present
- Heads of sister institutions and their representatives here present
- Captains of Industry and Commerce
- Gweru Polytechnic Staff and students
- Distinguished guests
- Parents, Guardians and their Spouses
- Graduands
- Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr. Principal, people often use the words "***invention***" and "***innovation***" interchangeably. Invention is about creating something new, while innovation introduces the concept of "use" of an idea or method. Patents are evidence of inventions, but "***inventions***" do not always equate to "***innovations.***" Patents without a use are not innovations. Polytechnics must create patents (inventions) that lead to innovation. If Polytechnics fail in this regard, then they cease to be drivers of economic growth.

Mr. Principal, ladies and gentlemen, innovation is not easy but difficult, as it is in most cases a combination of invention, along with it, behavior, and business models. Finding a single person with technical skills to invent, an understanding of user behavior and consumption, and the business background to understand the economics and dependencies of getting the innovation to market in a sustainable and profitable manner is very rare. Polytechnics must be able to mould and produce that kind of person, a wholesome person, who has all the requisite skills to drive our economy.

It must be known Mr. Principal that, shared thinking and collaboration between Polytechnics and industry are key components of problem solving and accelerating change in our economy leading to the success of ZIMASSET. Polytechnics must not operate in isolation, they must take an active role in industry revival.

Mr. Principal, when our graduates are trained to innovate and commercially exploit ideas into products we create entrepreneurs and not job seekers. Polytechnics must produce these entrepreneurs, technopreneurs and technicians more so, technically trained teachers who should be ready to go into our education system and develop the interest of technical, vocational and entrepreneurial spirit at an early age in schools.

Mr. Principal, instructions in Polytechnics and all institutions of higher learning must not remain essentially devoid of practical skills in the different trades. If that is allowed, Mr. Principal, the implication is that Polytechnics will graduate students with inadequate or complete lack of practical skills in the various trade areas. If allowed to happen, it will create a bleak future for the attainment of the lofty goals of the National aspiration policy on Education, of making Polytechnic graduates **"immediately employable"** or **self employed**. Polytechnic graduates must contribute their own quota to national development. Polytechnic graduates have the capacity to drive the economy because of the nature of their training, graduates here today must not be an exception. We must start to see an increase in the training of technical, science and technology courses and a reduction of the commercial courses. Polytechnics are practical and must be practical and technological.

Mr. Principal, practicality and technological inclination of Polytechnics must be the starting point for them to start producing relevant products to our situations and environment.

Reverse Engineering is one route that our Polytechnics can exploit to produce new products for our country. With the easy availability of computer-aided design, reverse engineering technology has become a practical tool to create three-dimensional virtual models of any existing physical component, Mr. Principal. This in turn, must make the use of 3D, CAD, computer-aided manufacturing or other computer-aided engineering applications, the means for a revolution in our industries. Let's exploit technologies to drive our industry by producing our own equipment required by our Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Reverse engineering can improve the performance and capacity of our equipment and machines in industry, it's up to our Polytechnics and these graduates today to make a choice and be determined to revive our industry with new machinery and equipment brought about through reverse engineering.

Mr. Principal, successful engineering is the creative execution of both art and science. The graduating teachers today, as educators, must be able to teach science as well as art very well. Teaching creativity, the art of engineering, must be another aspect to be well disseminated by our graduating teachers for technical and technological subjects.

Technology Transfer, Mr. Principal, is very critical in economic development. Polytechnics must embrace technology transfer. Transfer of ideas and technologies from Polytechnics to industry and private sector must become part of the mandate to each institution if we are to realize our own solutions to our problems in Zimbabwe.

Our industry should partner our Polytechnics in finding solutions to skills and transfer of ideas; hence commercialization of practical research from our institutions of higher learning.

Mr. Principal, creation of new technologies and products is possible only through the mobilization of intellectual capital of research and education institutions. From this point of view, universities and Polytechnics must serve as centres of science and engineering and play a leading role in innovative development of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Principal, the task ahead and the current economic environment requires an innovative Polytechnic or University with its core mandate being driven by scientific prowess, which should permeate at all levels of the institution. To adopt these changes, the organizational structures of our institutions of higher and tertiary education, of course must change themselves. The institutions must transform into institutions of innovative and entrepreneurial type oriented on the current market needs and have well developed ties with industry and commerce.

Mr. Principal, at present, institutions of higher learning have accumulated an enormous research and inventive potential. They have competent people who are able to create new technologies. But unfortunately, this potential is mainly used in the promotion of basic science and little used for commercial purposes to create innovative products which the country needs. This means that institutions of higher learning need to urgently consider their approaches and revise their priorities.

Mr. Principal, the education system in an innovative institution should be open to modern scientific research and modern economy. It is important to create within our institutions conditions for developing and supporting of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial ideas of students; young scientist and staff. That's the way to go.

To my dear graduands, I want to say imagination is the best starting place; this is buttressed by Rowling when he said **"We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already; we have the power to imagine better."**

More so, go do what your heart tells you, follow your passion, not what everyone else is doing, most people fail because they do things to please other people; follow the words of Ellen DeGeneres who once said **"Follow your passion, stay true to yourself, never follow someone else's path unless you are in the woods and you are lost and you see a path then by all means you should follow that."** Do your own thing. Your destiny is in your hands because you have acquired knowledge and you have the brains; like what Dr. Seuss once said; **"You have brains in your head, you have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose. You are your own. And you know what you know. You are the guy who will decide where to go."**

Congratulations! Makotokoto! Amhlope!

I thank you

I feel very much honored to officiate at Gweru Polytechnic's Graduation and Prize Giving Ceremony. Today's ceremony is a very joyous occasion for all of us, gathered here to celebrate the success of the graduands being certificated. We are gathered here, not only to mark the completion of an arduous training process, but also to give a rousing send-off to today's graduands, into the world of work. A lot of hard work and sweat, on the part of both the lecturers at Gweru Polytechnic and industry who played a pivotal role to achieve the success we are celebrating today.

The Ministry takes a very serious view of occasions like this one because it is a time of showing accountability to the nation, through the formal hand-over of a group of well trained and skilled human resources, to the nation. It is hoped that the injection of this batch of skilled human resources into the Zimbabwean economy, will accelerate the resuscitation of the economy, through the creation of new jobs and business ventures.

Your theme, “**Developing a Skilled Human Resource Base to Implement ZimASSET Through Creativity, Innovation and Invention**”, is therefore very appropriate for this occasion and for this time in the history of our nation. Mr. Principal, ladies and gentlemen, the graduands must become front runners in the implementation of ZimASSET, to revive and expand our economic fortunes.

Mr. Principal, ladies and gentlemen, it is comforting to note that this Polytechnic has already initiated steps to address ZimASSET. Gweru Polytechnic is now four years old into the business of producing practical subjects teachers, in subjects like Electrical Engineering, Metalwork, Computer Studies, Clothing and Textiles just to name but a few.

The net effect of all these training efforts, is to build a pool of technically qualified human resources who will empower members of society with productive and marketable skills, which will help them to run their own enterprises, thereby growing the economy and keeping poverty away from their door steps.

The baseline to all the technical training programmes run at Gweru Polytechnic, is to impart into the trainees, a multi-stakeholder mindset which says, “***I can do it, I am not a spectator and I can generate my own income.***” Zimbabwe needs citizens with such an attitude to propel itself out of the current economic challenges.

Mullins (2010) says that it is now a globally acknowledged fact in the 21st century that of all the factors of production, the human resource is the most critical and strategic one. It is the skilled human resources that manipulate all the other factors of production in order to come up with successful and profitable business results. Mr. Principal, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, the Zimbabwean economy seriously needs an abundant supply of highly trained and committed human resources, to effect a strategic and sustainable economic turn-around. This is so because for the past fifteen years, the country has been subjected to a successive regime of debilitating economic sanctions from the West. These sanctions have resulted in massive company closures and relocations by foreign owned businesses. This new crop of skilled graduates should help the Zimbabwean economy, by pioneering the Zimbabwean industrial revolution, through starting new enterprises, to create jobs for themselves and for others, thereby helping the nation to eradicate poverty. As advocated by Colander (2008), human beings with an innovative and imaginative spirit, armed with sufficient commitment to economic growth, can greatly expand that economy and increase its output and eliminate poverty. Gweru Polytechnic, therefore, has a national duty like all the other Polytechnics, to generate a pool of technical graduates with diverse skills, to staff the different positions in the public and the private sectors in Zimbabwe.

Through the employment of its abundant skilled human resources, in the industrial processing of its natural resources like gold, diamonds, platinum and wildlife products, Zimbabwe can re-chart its destiny, by setting up companies to add value to its primary products before exporting them. Sloman (2006:726) actually says that, "**many developing countries which heavily rely on primary exports, must export manufactured goods**". For Zimbabwe to turn into an industrialized country, Mr. Principal, distinguished, guests, ladies and gentlemen, the graduands being certificated here today are the critical mass needed to come up with a formula for Zimbabwe's economic well being, using the afore-mentioned primary products that are available locally.

The process of economic transformation is not a trouble –free process. It requires so many paradigm shifts. Former shop floor workers need to start operating at the level of managers and enterprise owners (Wagner 1983). They must develop a new sense of ownership of business. Furthermore, every Zimbabwean must embrace that spirit of "**I too can do it**". Such a spirit will go a long way in getting people to participate in production at all levels. Mr. Principal, ladies and gentlemen, institutions like Gweru Polytechnic therefore have the national mandate to assist the various publics that they have contact with, to quickly buy into the ZimASSET mindset. The challenges that are likely to create inertia against the blueprint can, however, be handled easily.

To you the graduands, please bear this in mind as you move from this graduation arena into the world of work that you have a critical national mandate to execute. Using the high quality technical skills that you have acquired from Gweru Polytechnic, the nation expects you in return, to provide solutions to the current economic challenges bedeviling it. The cutting edge knowledge and productive skills imparted to you during your training, should make you job creators and income generators. Society has invested a lot of time, money and efforts into your training, to mould you into productive national assets. Therefore, take your rightful position, in commerce and industry, to defend the Zimbabwean economy from collapse. A multitude of hostile and foreign political and economic forces are arrayed against the Zimbabwe economy, intending to annihilate it. You have a patriotic duty to act as a bulwark against the forces that are bent on liquidating us. Roll up your sleeves, as you take up the fight to resuscitate those companies that had already closed shop. Failure is not an option in this mortal combat to revive our economy.

To the captains of commerce and industry, I salute you for your resilience and your continued partnership with Government institutions like Gweru Polytechnic, in the training of the graduands, being certificated here today.

To the parents, spouses and guardians of the graduands, a very big thank you, for shouldering all the responsibilities and making all the sacrifices, so that they could concentrate on their studies.

Finally, to the Principal and Staff of Gweru Polytechnic, thank you very much for your commitment to human capital development and for mounting this joyful and successful occasion.

Once more to you the graduands, I say:

- **Congratulations.**
- **Makorokoto.**
- **Amhlope.**

I thank you.