

**ADDRESS BY
HIS MAJESTY KING LETSIE III AND CHANCELLOR**

**AT THE 35TH CONVOCATION FOR THE AWARD OF
CERTIFICATES, DIPLOMAS AND CONFERMENT OF
DEGREES**

AT THE

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO, ROMA
SATURDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER, 2010**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER,
HONOURABLE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE,
HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
HONOURABLE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING,
HONOURABLE CABINET MINISTERS,
HONOURABLE JUDGES OF THE HIGH COURT,
YOUR EXCELLENCIES, MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC
CORPS,
CHAIRMAN OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNCIL,
DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF COUNCIL,
VICE-CHANCELLOR,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS, AND GRADUANDS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

ALLOW ME TO EXTEND THE WARMEST WELCOME TO THIS AUGUST
GATHERING OF REPUTABLE SCHOLARS AND ACADEMICS AND OF
RESPECTED PERSONS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE WHO HAVE
GRACED THIS OCCASION WITH THEIR PRESENCE.

I AM GENUINELY PLEASED AND SINGULARLY HONOURED TO PRESIDE OVER THIS 35TH CONVOCATION FOR THE CONFERMENT OF DEGREES AND AWARDING OF CERTIFICATES AND DIPLOMAS; AN OCCASION MARKING THE PINNACLE OF THE UNIVERSITY'S ACTIVITIES.

WE ALSO RECOGNISE AND APPRECIATE THE PRESENCE OF THE HONOURABLE MINISTERS, DIGNITARIES, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF OUR SISTER UNIVERSITIES. YOUR PRESENCE, INDEED ADDS AN AURA OF DIGNITY TO THIS CEREMONY.

CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL,

I WISH TO CONGRATULATE THE GRADUANDS WHO DESERVE TO BE HAPPY AND PROUD FOR HAVING SURMOUNTED A MYRIAD OF CHALLENGES ON THEIR PATH TO THIS PODIUM. THE RAYS OF HOPE AND OPTIMISM BEEMING FROM THE FACES OF THESE GRADUANDS IS AN INDICATION THAT THEY FEEL WELL EQUIPED TO LEAVE THE CLOISTERED ACADEMIC LIFE, AND ARE NOW POISED TO TACKLE THE DAUNTING CHALLENGES OF THE HARSH REAL WORLD. IN THIS NEW REALITY, WHICH IS CHARACTERISED BY AN ACUTE SCARCITY OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES,

TODAY'S GRADUANDS WILL BE REQUIRED TO BE MORE RESOURCEFUL AND CREATIVE THAN THEIR PREDECESSORS, IN ORDER TO CREATE MORE AND BETTER OPPORTUNITIES FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT. IN THIS NEW REALITY, WHERE OUR COUNTRY IS FACED WITH MULTIPLE SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES, OUR YOUNG GRANDUANDS, WHETHER THEY WILL BE SELF-EMPLOYED OR EMPLOYED EITHER IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR OR PUBLIC SECTOR, WILL HAVE TO EMPLOY THEIR SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE WITH GREATER DEDICATION, DILIGENCE AND DISCIPLINE, WITH THE AIM OF CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR OUR PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY THE POOR AND THE MARGINALISED.

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

LET ME RECORD MY PROFOUND GRATITUDE TO PARENTS, SPOUSES, GUARDIANS, RELATIVES AND FRIENDS FOR THE UNQUALIFIED AND UNWAVERING MORAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT THEY RENDERED TO THESE GRADUANDS DURING THEIR LONG ACADEMIC JOURNEY LEADING TO THIS GLORIOUS MOMENT. IN ADDITION, WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE LECTURERS,

RESEARCHERS, AND LIBRARIANS WHO HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY CONTRIBUTED NOT ONLY TO THE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF THESE GRADUANDS, BUT ALSO TO THE MOULDING OF THEIR CHARACTER AND PERSONALITY. WE ALSO THANK THE SUPPORT STAFF FOR THEIR TECHNICAL AND PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE IN CREATING A CONDUCIVE TEACHNG AND LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

WE FURTHER WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK, IN NO SMALL MEASURE, THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINS FOR THE SPIRITUAL AND MORAL GUIDANCE THEY OFFERED TO THESE GRADUANDS DURING THEIR PERIOD OF SCHOLARSHIP. I ALSO WISH TO THANK THE UNIVERSITY FOR CONTINUOUSLY AND CONSCIOUSLY ABSORBING THE STUDENTS WHO ARE VISUALLY IMPAIRED AND PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED. THIS IS MOST COMMENDABLE; AND I HOPE THAT MORE EFFORTS WILL BE MADE TO DESIGN FACILITIES WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO ENHANCE THEIR ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES AT THE UNIVERSITY.

HONOURABLE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

OUR UNIVERSITY IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES, SOME OF WHICH ARE A CONSEQUENCE OF

EXTERNAL FACTORS. PRIMARY AMONG THESE, ARE THE FINANCIAL PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC CRISIS. AS A PUBLIC INSTITUTION, THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO HAS OVER THE YEARS DEPENDED HEAVILY ON GOVERNMENT SUBVENTION. THAT SUBVENTION WAS CUT DURING THIS FINANCIAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 2010. THE NUMBER OF NEW STUDENTS RECEIVING SPONSORSHIPS THROUGH THE NATIONAL MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT SECRETARIAT HAS BEEN REDUCED, LEADING TO A DECREASE IN THE TUITION AND RESIDENCE FEES. OUR FEAR IS THAT REDUCED FINANCIAL RESOURCES MAY COMPROMISE THE UNIVERSITY'S ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS SET FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE COUNTRY AS STIPULATED IN VISION 2020, THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT OF 2004, THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING STRATEGIC PLAN 2005 -2015, AND THE NUL STRATEGIC PLAN 2007-2012. HOWEVER, THE UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN AN EXERCISE OF PREPARING A BUDGET THAT WILL MEET THE MINIMUM NEEDS WITH MINIMUM DEFICIT. THIS HAS TURNED OUT TO BE A DAUNTING BUT NECESSARY TASK.

ANOTHER CHALLENGE FACED BY OUR UNIVERSITY, IS THE AVAILABILITY, OR LACK THEREOF, OF PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE

IN THE FORM OF CLASSROOMS, LABORATORIES, STUDENT ACCOMMODATION, AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES. BOTH THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND NUL STRATEGIC PLANS PROPOSE INCREASED ACCESS TO THE UNIVERSITY. OUR STUDENT POPULATION HAS INCREASED DRAMATICALLY DURING THE PAST FIVE YEARS. HOWEVER, THE INCREASE IN STUDENT POPULATION IS NOT MATCHED BY AN INCREASE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE. THE OVER-CROWDED CLASSROOMS ARE LIKELY TO COMPROMISE PROVISION OF QUALITY EDUCATION BY THIS INSTITUTION. SIMILARLY, MOST OF OUR STUDENTS HAVE TO FIND ACCOMMODATION OUTSIDE THE CAMPUS, AND SOME OF THAT ACCOMMODATION IS NOT CONDUCIVE TO PROPER LEARNING.

IN ADDITION, THE UNIVERSITY FACES SHORTAGE OF HUMAN RESOURCES IN HIGH DEMAND DISCIPLINES SUCH AS SCIENCE AND SCIENCE-RELATED FACULTIES AS WELL AS IN DISCIPLINES THAT DIRECTLY ADDRESS SOCIAL ISSUES OF OUR COUNTRY.

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

AMIDST THESE CHALLENGES, THE UNIVERSITY IS CONFIDENT THAT ITS STRATEGIC PLAN, THROUGH ITS FOUR CORE PILLARS WILL PROVIDE SOME SOLUTIONS TO THE AFOREMENTIONED PROBLEMS. THE FIRST PILLAR SEEKS TO ENSURE INCREASED ACCESS TO THE UNIVERSITY'S PROGRAMMES BY EXPANDING ITS PROVISION OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING. THE IDEA IS TO ADMIT MORE QUALIFIED AND DESERVING BASOTHO STUDENTS INTO THE PROGRAMMES THAT THE UNIVERSITY OFFERS IN ORDER TO EQUIP THEM WITH SKILLS THAT WILL ENABLE THEM TO CONTRIBUTE MEANINGFULLY TO THEIR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE WIDER SOCIETY.

THE SECOND PILLAR OF THE NUL STRATEGIC PLAN SEEKS TO ADDRESS THE AGE-OLD PROBLEM OF THE UNIVERSITY'S FINANCIAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND THE DIVERSIFICATION OF ITS INCOME STREAMS. ITS OBJECTIVES ARE TO ENHANCE NUL'S CAPACITY TO GENERATE MORE INCOME FROM THE PROGRAMMES AND ACTIVITIES OF ITS VARIOUS FACULTIES. IT IS ENCOURING TO LEARN THAT FACULTIES AND INSTITUTES ARE ALREADY IN THE PROCESS OF PUTTING IN PLACE STRATEGIES TO THIS EFFECT. IF I MAY, I WOULD LIKE TO USE THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AS AN EXAMPLE. I AM INFORMED THAT THIS

FACULTY HAS PLANS TO ACQUIRE EQUIPMENT TO PRODUCE LIQUID NITROGEN WHICH IT WILL USE FOR ITS OWN PURPOSES, WHILE SELLING THE EXCESS IN THE OPEN MARKET. FURTHERMORE, THE POSSIBILITIES OF DESIGNING WEBSITES AND SOFTWARE FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS IS ALSO BEING EXPLORED. THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY OF THIS FACULTY DEVELOPING A WATER TESTING LABORATORY WHICH WILL BE OPERATED ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS. OTHER FACULTIES ARE ALSO PLANNING SIMILAR COMMERCIAL SCHEMES WITH THE SPECIFIC AIM OF GENERATING MORE INCOME FOR THEMSELVES AND FOR THE UNIVERSITY AS A WHOLE.

**DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING THAT FOR THESE INITIATIVES TO SUCCEED AND BEAR FRUIT, A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT WILL BE REQUIRED AND SHOULD BE SUPPLEMENTED BY A SUSTAINED INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT. I WOULD THEREFORE LIKE TO APPEAL TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS AND ALL OUR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS TO LEND THEIR SUPPORT TO THESE INITIATIVES SO THAT THE UNIVERSITY CAN ATTAIN ITS

GOAL OF RELATIVE SELF-SUFFICIENCY WITHIN A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME. IT IS ALSO MY HOPE THAT ALL THE MEMBERS OF STAFF, ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC WILL MAKE THE NECESSARY SACRIFICES AND SHOW THE REQUIRED DEDICATION IN ORDER TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF OUR MISSION.

**CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL,
MR VICE-CHANCELLOR,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,**

I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT IN THIS CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT, THE UNIVERSITY MUST AGGRESSIVELY MARKET ITSELF AND ENHANCE ITS IMAGE BY TAKING DELIBERATE STEPS TOWARDS OCCUPYING A HIGHER NATIONAL PROFILE. AS OUR BIGGEST AND OLDEST INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING, NUL HAS A SIZEABLE POOL OF WELL TRAINED PERSONNEL WHO ARE WELL EQUIPED TO ASSIST IN TACKLING SOME OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS THAT OUR COUNTRY IS CURRENTLY FACING. THIS WELL OF SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE CAN AND SHOULD BE TAPPED INTO BY THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHER BODIES WHO ARE INVOLVED IN SEEKING SOLUTIONS TO OUR SEEMINGLY INTRACTABLE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. A PARTNERSHIP OF

THIS NATURE WOULD ENABLE THE UNIVERSITY TO DEMONSTRATE ITS RELEVANCE WITHIN THE WIDER SOCIETY AND IT WOULD ALSO PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR THIS COUNTRY AND ITS CITIZENS.

**HONOURABLE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

AS I MOVE CLOSER TO COMPLETING MY REMARKS, I WOULD LIKE TO THANK THOSE LOCAL COMPANIES AND INSTITUTIONS WHO HAVE GENEROUSLY CONTRIBUTED FINANCIALLY TO THE PURCHASE OF SOME ITEMS FOR THIS GRADUATION CEREMONY. EQUALLY, WE ALSO WISH TO THANK SPONSORS OF THE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC AWARDS. THIS GENEROUS GESTURE WILL GO A LONG WAY IN ENCOURAGING OUR STUDENTS TO AIM FOR EXCELLENCE IN THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND SCHOLARSHIP.

**CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL,
HONORABLE MINISTERS,**

FINALLY, ALLOW ME TO REGISTER MY SINCERE APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE TO ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE 10TH COUNCIL FOR THE STEWARDSHIP ROLE THEY PERFORMED UP TO THE END OF THEIR TERM. THEY CARRIED OUT THEIR DUTIES WITH INTERGRITY, LOYALTY AND DEDICATION, DESPITE THE ENORMOUS CHALLENGES THAT CHARACTERISE THE ADMINISTRATION OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING, IN PARTICULAR THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO.

**CHAIRMAN OF COUNCIL,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS AND,
GRADUANDS,**

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION AND PATIENCE AND I WISH YOU THE MOST JOYOUS GRADUATION CELEBRATIONS.

KHOTSO !!! PULA !!! NALA !!!