**A SPEECH BY PROFESSOR NGOMO HORACE MANGA, VICE-CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BUEA, AT THE PAUGHSS DEGREE AWARD CEREMONY**

**Yaounde, 24 February 2023**

The Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education,

The African Union Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

The Chairperson of the Pan-African University Council,

The Rectors of the Universities of Yaounde I and II,

The Director of the Pan African University Institute of Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences,

Directors,

Mr Mayor of the Soa Community

Dear Teachers,

Dear Graduating Students,

Distinguished Guests,

All protocol duly observed,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a singular honour and privilege for the University of Buea to be present today, as a main actor in the Degree Award Ceremony of the Pan-African University Institute of Governance, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Before I proceed, permit me, in my own way, to wish you our warmest welcome to this landmark event in the lives of our institution and to express to you our sincere gratitude for finding time to assist us today in spite of your very busy schedules.

Indeed, in 2013 a joint decision of the African Union Commission (through the Commissioner for Human Resources, Science and Technology, Professor Ezin) and the Government of Cameroon (through the Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, Professor Jacques Fame Ndongo) entrusted our University with the Pan-African University Translation and Interpreting Programmes (PAUTRAIN) of the Pan-African University. Since then, the University of Buea has always been particularly privileged to contribute to Cameroon Government’s unflinching support to the Pan-African University. From its two maiden programmes, it now runs three Masters Programmes and is poised to go further.

Considering that growth is a normal and inevitable process in life any organisation, more so in academia, and mindful of the current linguistic landscape of the African Union with the adoption of Kiswahili as a working language of this Continental institution by our leaders, PAUTRAIN offers a unique opportunity. We are proposing a double major Masters programme in translation and interpretation into Kiswahili. This programme which hopefully will be adopted by the Board of PAUGHSS will provide a unique opportunity to train qualified researchers cum professionals to serve the entire continent, for it is our vision that this language, the pride of the continent, provides a unique opportunity for the continent to be the more united.

We are ready to take up the challenge and as illustration may we recall that the two best candidates of the maiden batch of PAUTRAIN then known as PAUMCIT were Kiswahili speakers from Tanzania and are currently studying at PhD level in the University of Buea. The training of translators or Interpreters with Kiswahili has been constant in all subsequent batches.

The current graduating batch is not an exception and in anticipation of the individual presentation that will soon be made by the Director of PAUGHSS, out of the 20 graduating students of the current 7th batch, three have Kiswahili, one in translation and two in Interpretation. Generally, 23 students are graduating this year from PAUTRAIN; three returning students of the 6th batch and 20 of the 7th batch. They are from 15 different nationalities with 13 males and 7 females. This batch thus scores a success rate of 90.9%.

We want to thank the entire staff of ASTI, the University of Buea and other partner universities who have left no stone unturned in imparting knowledge to these students.

A special debt of appreciation goes to the colleagues of the European Union Commission DGSCIC and staff interpreters of the United Nations for their support in weekly pedagogic assistance to both staff and students of PAUTRAIN.

We wish to equally express our gratitude to the government of Cameroon for its reliable support to the University of Buea in this noble mission. In addition to the facility provided to PAUTRAIN for its lectures and offices, I wish to solemnly announce that the University of Buea community has decided to grant 5.20 hectares of land to support the construction of a befitting complex to host the PAUTRAIN programmes. We hope the Commissioner will find time to grace us with a courtesy visit for the handing over of this land.

Dear celebrants,

Dear graduating students,

The Buea community, specifically the University of Buea is proud of you. Your sense of discipline and responsibility have constantly raised to our esteem. Your security records are clean, your relationship with the rest of the community is an example of African Integration. In fact, no one will know you came from different countries. You have always actively participated in University wide extracurricular activities and this, with excellence. Your weekly sporting activities have been closely monitored and appreciated. We hope that this will be sustained with current batches.

As you go out to the professional world we trust that you will become true ambassadors of Pan-Africanism. We dream to see a day where the General Assembly of the African Union will be exclusively or mainly made up of alumnus of the Pan African University for as you know, this is the true nursery of the Africa we want. The knowledge you have acquired, both in character and in learning is adequate for you to excel, but remember that life is a constant learning experience. We are proud to send you back to your various countries, knowing the critical role you will play there, in most cases as pioneers in your fields. Remain humble and success will be yours. We wish you all the best in this new path.

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The training, dynamism and proactive spirit of the students we are sending out today has earned them special attention and recognition from other valuable stakeholders.

We take pride in celebrating several successful missions of our students to academic and youth leadership seminars that has scaled up the visibility of the Pan-African University in general and PAUGHSS/PAUTRAIN in particular. These include the following:

* The Summit on transforming education in New York USA;
* The just ended African Union General Assembly 2023;
* The Global Partnership for Education in Dubai:
* The Fourth SADC; Southern African Youth Forum in South Africa :
* The World Bank Group onboarding Internship Training Programme in Washington DC:
* The Russia Africa Youth Forum in Moscow and
* The upcoming Mandela Washington Fellowship.

Two of the current graduants are already on internship at the ECOWAS Headquarters in Nigeria, one in translation and the other in Conference Interpretation. We are confident that they will be retained on a full time basis upon graduation. One has just been interviewed for recruitment in Kenya. This is a token of the quality of education they have received and how promising the job market is, for PAUTRAIN graduates.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am therefore here today, not only to fulfill the last and most important steps of Anglosaxon education on which our programmes are predicated, and which is Convocation, but to equally reiterate our unflinching commitment to the Pan-African University. We count on your renewed collaboration and cooperation of all stakeholders to enable the Pan-African University Translation, Interpretation, Transborder Languages and Intercultural Mediation Programmes to grow even stronger, for the benefit the African continent

Long live the University of Buea!

Long live the Pan African University!

Long live the African Union!

Thank you very much for your kind attention.