

**SPEECH OF THE DIRECTOR OF PAN AFRICAN UNIVERSITY  
INSTITUTE OF GOVERNANCE, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
PROF. ELIZABETH ABENGA ON THE 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY  
HELD ON 24<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2023**

**The Minister of State, Minister of Higher education  
Your excellency the Commissioner ESTI AUC  
Your excellency Minister of External relations  
The Rector University of Yaoundé II  
The Vice Chancellor University of Buea  
The Mayor of Soa  
Entire ESTI and PAU Family,  
Distinguished Guests  
Graduands  
Ladies and gentlemen.**

It is my pleasure and honour to welcome you all to this occasion of the graduation of the 8<sup>th</sup> cohort proudly christened THE AfCFTA ACCELERATORS FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT.

I am extremely delighted and honoured by your presence on this momentous day for our graduands. Today, we come together to witness the fruits of the combined efforts of all of us represented here, and other stakeholders not present here.

Today, I present a total of 91 graduands for the award of various degrees following successful completion their studies at the institute's Yaoundé and Buea campuses.

Statistically, I present :

- 24 for the award of PhD in Governance and Regional Integration - 75% male and 25% female

- 67 for the award of Masters in four different programmes -32% female and 68% male
  - From 41 different countries
- “ we are proud to announce that the admissions after this class has seen a near 50:50 gender ratio”.

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

PAUGHSS offers programmes that are unique and tailored to meet the current and emerging human capital needs of AU member states. The strong alignment of our programmes to Agenda 2063 aspirations and flagship projects guarantees the value of the contribution of these graduands to the realisation of the goals and aspirations of the continent.

I invite you to have a look at the research output of this cohort as evidence of their commitment to find solutions to the problems of Africa. I take this opportunity to inform you that as a response to the current needs of the continent, PAUGHSS has developed new programmes in entrepreneurship and innovation, trade and logistics, diplomacy and mediation and health systems management. These are due to be launched soon.

In addition to this, the institute has embraced and incorporated the application of state-of-the-art ICT resources to enhance the efficiency, access and quality of learning. This has been made possible by the generous support from AUC, Government of the republic of Cameroon as well as development partners such as AfDB. These goes a long way in enhancing the quality of educational experience of our students and preparing them for the real world that is technology driven.

A case in point is the just completed state of the art innovation hub established by funds from the AfDB that is going to benefit the students and community in enhancing entrepreneurial and innovation and initiating viable start-ups.

Suffice to state that no effort is spared in order to give PAUGHSS students the best practice-oriented training in order to make them competent drivers of development.

### **Your excellencies,**

At this juncture, I wish to congratulate the graduands for their hard work and for braving all the odds to attain their respective qualifications. It has been a fruitful journey worth the while.

Dear Graduands, our beloved accelerators of AfCFTA, our ambassadors of good governance and integration, our champions of Pan Africanism, it is in you that we entrust the means to realise the Africa we want.

This is your day. Congratulations! Felicitations! Hongera! I am proud of you. I believe that all the experiences you had here have enriched you enough to launch you to a higher level and make your contribution to the states that made it possible for you to study here at PAUGHSS. I urge you to give back to your countries and to Africa. It is the moral and noble thing to do.

I also encourage you to never stop learning to enable you to always keep pace with the dynamic environments you are about to face.

Remember, one dies when they stop learning. Continue to nurture the positive values acquired here and promote activities that contribute to making Africa great. Never settle for less than excellence in all that you do.

Your excellencies,

The PAUGHSS family acknowledge that no success would be realised without the generous contributions and support from all of you.

I express my appreciation to the African Union Commission for the support received towards this institute. His Excellency the Commissioner ESTI, Prof. Mohamed Belhoucine, the President of PAU Council Prof. Kenneth Matengu, the Director ESTI Mr. Hambani Masheleni, for the administrative support to the institute and gracing this significant occasion. You are all welcome.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Government of Cameroon, the host universities and all the valued friends of PAUGHSS in this great nation for the support in cash and kind to ensure the institute programs run well. In a special way, I wish to single out H.E. the Minister of External Relations, Lejeune Mbella Mbella and H.E. the Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education Prof. Jacque Fame Ndongu who have never failed to accord us the support needed in very timely manner.

The leadership of our host universities, University of Yaoundé II Prof. Adolphe Minkoa She and University of Buea Prof. Ngomo Horace Manga have not only provided a place for the institute to operate in, but have supported our programmes in very many ways and also made the environment a home away from home for the 90% international students. For this I say thank you very much and may our partnership grow from strength to strength.

I thank the honourable Mayor of Soa most sincerely for being a very supportive host to the PAUGHSS family here at Soa. The peaceful and secure environment has made it possible for PAUGHSS students and staff to live happily and perform their functions optimally.

To our partners, colleagues friends and all guests, we appreciate you and feel welcomed.

With these few remarks I welcome you all to this occasion and wish us all a delightful Graduation Day.

God bless us all.