

## **SINU CHANCELLOR SIR DR NATHAN K KERE'S CONGRATULATORY REMARKS.**

Our Guest of honor, Governor General, Your Excellency Right Reverend David Tiva Kapu and Lady Kapu. I know Lady Kapu is not here because as you have just moved into your official residence she is preparing your home. Minister for Education and Human Resources Development Hon. Tozen Leokana if you are watching livestream. Likewise Cabinet Ministers and MPs, Premiers and members of Provincial governments. Your Excellencies, members of the diplomatic corps, development partners, NGOs, government officials, leaders of the private sectors, and invited guests, Acting Pro-Chancellor, and Permanent Secretary Dr Franco Rodie and SINU Councilors, Vice-Chancellor Professor Transform Aqorau, Pro-Vice Chancellors, all SINU staff, students and your families, ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys. Allow me to take my privilege as your Chancellor to be the first to congratulate our newest graduates and say a few words. But before I do that, I thank the Providence that unlike the last graduation ceremony when I conferred the graduands from a hospital bed overseas, I am very grateful that I do this today with you, in person.

Let me now respect the traditional landowners on the land we stand, chiefs and leaders of the Tandai tribe, past, present and future.

First, as the Chancellor of our university, I too would sincerely like to thank you your Excellency, Right Reverend David Kapu for gracing our Graduation ceremony in accepting our invitation at such a very short notice. Your presence, Sir, has uplifted the importance of our ceremony today to a new height. And importantly this will leave lasting memories that will linger in the minds of all our graduates in the years to come. Thank you, Sir, for your kind words of wisdom and thank you, your Excellencies including Lady Kapu.

After I conferred your degrees, diplomas, and certificates, you are all graduates as we go through the process. All graduates, my sincere congratulations to you, for the successful culmination of your years of study.

As I will allude to in a minute this year is very special and marks a new milestone attained by your very own University, SINU. You all indeed have persevered and worked hard consistently over the years and today you all will deservedly receive your certificates, diplomas and degrees, and for the very first time, a Doctor of Philosophy degree. This, we all come together to witness and celebrate. Congratulation, you are now well qualified and are ready to face the world and serve our people in your chosen vocations and careers.

Ladies and gentlemen, I just cannot mute my sincere joy and pride that SINU has today set not only history, but a delightful legacy graduating our first Doctor of Philosophy degree, the highest accolade, that can be offered by any prestigious universities anywhere in the world. Madam Mary Tahu Paia, my sincere congratulation to your being our first PhD graduate in our very own national university. I commend all your supervisors both local and overseas for this successful journey you have taken. I am very privileged to be here to witness that today you have planted this legacy that many of our upcoming bright citizens will do nothing else but emulate and grow.

At this momentous occasion, it is my greatest joy and satisfaction to witness the awarding the first PhD degree by our very own university. This indeed is a living proof that our university has literarily been transformed. I ask for your understanding for being personal but this happy occasion merit stating the mere fact in my setting the legacy for obtaining the first Solomon Islands PhD in 1992. This was immediately followed by Professor David Qegeo in 1994, Professor Kabini Sanga in 1996 and our very own Professor Transform Aqorau in 1998, all from overseas universities.

As the gate opens to us for this highest academic accolade all over the world many, many more Solomon Islanders followed successfully, imprinting on our national academic template, enormous excitement and securing for us an absolute sense of hope. My joy is further strengthened that today many of these

PhD graduates, some are here with us today, return and serve our beautiful country, including at our very own National University, as soon to be Dr, Mary Tahu Paia, has indeed done, joining two of our original pioneers, Professor David Qegeo and Professor Transform Aqorau. I have no hesitation, ladies and gentlemen, but to say the future is promising, when more and more young smart Solomon Islanders, trekking along the path now set by Mary Tahu Paia, and revealing to all of us, especially leaders, the infallible guarantee that the future for our nation is indeed bright.

For these significant achievements, I thank our esteem and fully committed Vice Chancellor, Professor Transform Aqorau and the Pro-Vice Chancellors, deans, professors, lecturers, tutors and all supporting staff. You all should be proud as you indeed have performed your duties extremely well in guiding, facilitating and educating, on life reaching skills and knowledge transfer to this vital human capital, you see in front of us, throughout their years of study. Let us all celebrate today this successful outcome of your passion and commitments that you performed consistently, with continuity, respect and perseverance for no other reason but for students, for our university and for Solomon Islands.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you have already heard from our Vice Chancellor, on his vision for SINU, your university programs have been trajected to beyond expectation, not only uplifting programs to high academic standards, but upgrading and mentoring national citizens to meet those standards. Today we witness tremendous achievements that many would have thought not possible in a mere five years ago. The opportunity to acquire the highest university accolade, for example, has been brought home. Well done hard-working SINU team members as well as the collaborating universities and institutions. Today you have transformed and uplifted SINU this new level of academic quality. The event of the last week, firmly laying the foundation for the 4<sup>th</sup> SINU Campus on Malaita, is indeed once again a testament of your vision, to physically expand SINU to enable more and more Solomon

Islanders easy access to the opportunities for highest tertiary education in the country. Well done, I am not only happy but stand tall with pride, as your SINU Chancellor.

Let me remind us that these achievements would not have been possible without the support of all stakeholders, especially the government and all development partners. Indeed, developing partners the promises that you rendered in words have been passionately followed up with deeds. I sincerely thank you all. Your support has brought overwhelming joy and pride to all Solomon Islanders and has elevated our National Tertiary Institution, now to the level that we can all be proud. This is just the beginning as our university will continue to need your full support, to achieve its future plans and dreams, all for our students, for our university and for our country.

All graduates, as you go out to serve the nation in whatever you do, always remember that you are still very much part of SINU. Though today we happily grace ourselves on what high academic standard we have transformed SINU. We can declare such achievements verbally, in our many reports and expert reviews, please be reminded of one solemn true fact. That this **high standard will only be revealed by your very performances as you serve our people** in any place in this tiny world you work in. As the successful graduates of your university, I urge you to serve with professional expertise, with high ethical standard, with high levels of confidence, honesty and inclusivity, the very people and community you serve.

All graduates, my sincere congratulations, and that of my family. This is your day, celebrate it and enjoy it with your families, relatives and friends.

God bless you graduates. God bless our national university and God bless our beautiful people and islands from Ong Tong Java in the North to Rennell and Bellona in the South, from Anuta and Tikopia in the east to the Shortlands in the west.

Thank you.