

RECTOR'S SPEECH
(8th graduation August 2019)

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen! Good morning.

It is my greatest pleasure and honor to welcome you all to this graduation ceremony.

We are here today to acknowledge the great work that all of you have done, especially you the graduands, to honour you with warm congratulations, and to send you on your way to the next steps in your lives and careers with the blessings and good wishes of the ILPD community.

Graduation is such an important milestone for graduands and their families, and I congratulate you all on your achievement. You should however note that, although the completion of your diploma program is a great personal accomplishment, the pride is equally shared with your parents, siblings and friends who contributed to your success and we are grateful that they are here to celebrate with us. The ILPD family is very proud of your achievement, and it has no doubt that you will become its great Ambassadors and it takes this opportunity to wish you well in your chosen careers.

Dear Graduands, each one of you is here today through your own hard work. You have needed courage to face the challenges of higher learning. You certainly developed certain qualities of character and cognitive ability to achieve this. These qualities include empathy, rigour, the capacity to think independently, to listen politely, and, when necessary, 'to disagree, without being disagreeable'. You have learnt how to align and present your arguments in a convincing and a persuasive manner, you have learnt how to intellectually challenge or defend yourself from your opponent instead of the physical or personal attacks. You have equally learnt how to frame your reasoning and rulings in a manner that would not attract appeals in case you choose to become a Judge, and just to mention a few of the skills that you have acquired from here.

With these qualities and skills, you are empowered to seek out new opportunities with the confidence that you can contribute to the improvement of the Justice systems in your respective Jurisdictions by overcoming challenges and unexpected setbacks. For those of you who already work in some legal profession, you now have the tools with which to approach your work differently for greater efficiency and productivity. That is the power of a higher learning education and training with the focus on the practice.

As legal practitioners we pride ourselves in our attention to detail, ability to spot issues and to craft ways of protecting our clients. As you strive for excellence in your respective professions – as our Motto goes, remember that one way of viewing a profession is as a body of men and women against whose practice the public should

be protected. Always hold yourselves to, and maintain, the highest standards of your practice. I recently read from one of the Kenyan Newspapers, of an advocate who was struck off the roll of advocates in the Republic of Kenya. Though the basis for his being struck off the roll of advocates was the fact that it was discovered that he did not qualify to be enrolled in the first place, what raised suspicion of the flawed enrollment was client dissatisfaction of his services.

For graduates who recently graduated with your Bachelor of Laws degree and now with this Diploma in Legal Practice and would wish to become an Advocate, I advise you to seek gainful employment working for well established, experienced Law Firms of good reputation that will allow you grow and enhance your career. Young lawyers these days get tempted to start their own firms too quickly with the target of making a lot of money while they are still young. This I do not advise as it deprives the lawyer of the necessary knowledge and experience he or she would acquire in a law firm of good standing and exposes the general public to risks. Get in love, if you haven't already, with reading.

To those aspiring to become Lawyers, as **Abraham Lincoln** once said;

"The leading rule for a Lawyer, as for a man of every calling, is diligence."

To those aspiring to get to the bench, I implore you to always follow, as **Edmund Burke** once said;

"It is not what the Lawyer tells me I may do; but what humanity, reason, and Justice tells me I ought to do."

Otherwise, I wish to once again say, we are proud of you for your achievements. But there is much more to do, and today marks a new beginning. To quote **Nelson Mandela**;

"After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more hills to climb."

As for us, we are always ready and happy to sharpen you again and again through our other Postgraduate Practice Diplomas or through the Continuous Legal Education (CLE) programs and so, should you feel like you need more, feel free and come back home for more! We have expanded and we shall continue expanding both in different programs to offer but also in up-to-date infrastructural facilities to accommodate the expansions.

In conclusion, I call each one of you to action, to go out from here, with confidence, with our blessings and best wishes, and to work actively in establishing or perfecting your practice.

Congratulations to all of you once again and, thank you.