Valedictorian Address by Dr Masawa Klint, MMed  
Convocation of the Aga Khan University  
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 5 February 2020

The Guest of Honour, Former president of the United Republic of Tanzania,  
His Excellency William Mkapa,  
Trustee Othman,  
The President of the Aga Khan University, Firoz Rasul,  
Provost, Vice-Provost, Deans, Associated Deans,  
Esteemed faculty, Alumni of the Aga Khan University,  
Invited guests  
and most importantly my fellow AKU graduands all protocols observed.

Good afternoon!

I would like to express my immense gratitude to God Almighty for guiding and leading us here, the faculty and all those who have mentored us and facilitated our growths, Our Chancellor his Highness the Aga Khan, for his leadership, efforts and commitment towards poverty reduction, through the Aga Khan Development Network and its functions particularly in the low and middle income countries.

We are only here because of the resolute support and encouragement from our families, brothers, sisters, spouses and children, thank you.

I know it has been a difficult journey, and there were times when you and I wanted to give up, when we thought it was impossible, when the demands on our shoulders were more than we could carry, there were times when we had self-doubt, when we contemplated quitting- but we did not; we rose to the challenge, we re-invented ourselves, we became more resourceful, more thoughtful, more matured in our ways, we allowed ourselves to experience growth- and we grew, and today we are here, a testimony to ourselves and those around us of how far we have come and where we are going- and for that, my dear colleagues I salute us.

The Aga Khan University has equipped us with lifelong learning skills, has instilled in us critical thinking and analysis, self-reflection and we have become independent thinkers with the ability to appraise a challenge and to formulate solutions. This is true of the academics. We were exposed to learning skills that are so commonly taken for granted and that are critical for human interaction, the underpinning factor of professional and personal growth. The university purposefully instilled in us communication skills, leadership, ethics and morality so that we carry out our responsibilities with sanctity.

With our unique set of experiences, and achievements such as these; we are confronted with a local society that has existed in poverty with its associated limitations on the ability to progress and advance. Recently the rate of growth of some of these indicators like the GDP have been promising. However, despite this growth we continue to face enormous challenges and especially as it appertains to health and education. It is becoming increasingly evident that these challenges, coupled with competent leadership, provide fertile ground laden with opportunities to advance the development of our society.

We are part of this society with its opportunities, as we are witnesses of the limitation that poverty
enforces on our people. Foremost, we must acknowledge that the challenges our people face are our own. This acknowledgment is not a display of naivetés; but a core human experience of compassion. This perception is genuine, should be protected and nurtured; we cannot be indifferent to the suffering of others. This affirmation should be taken further, for only through this resistance to indifference and a resilient compassion, can we truly identify the challenges, their associated opportunities and begin to synthesise plausible and practicable solutions.

“Sometimes, it falls upon a generation to be great. You can be that great generation. Let your greatness blossom” Nelson Mandela.

The outcomes of our intellectual achievement must extend beyond the self, beyond that one student we mentor, beyond that one patient we care for, beyond the teachers and educationalists that we lead and we must realise we have the potential to develop solutions for our unique societies.

Taking this responsibility requires the ethical and moral perspective that our faculty have worked very hard to inculcate amongst us, the compassion, the tenacity and the capabilities that all the graduands before you have displayed thus far to reaching this milestone. I want us all to understand as we go out there, we are bringing with us a fresh perspective, new ideas, and possible solutions. It is thus our obligation to take up leadership; to uphold moral ethics, to safeguard compassion and to aspire to be agents of positive change. I believe taking up these opportunities and challenges will lead to not just bountiful career satisfaction, exponential growths as professionals, but ultimately lead to fulfillment as individuals with wide scale positive impacts in our nations, our region and the world

Thus, my colleagues; ethical and compassionate leadership- I wish these on all of you in your future endeavors; It has been a privilege for us to grow together as friends, colleagues, brothers and sisters to this end.

Congratulations my fellow graduands.

Thank you

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