

**REMARKS BY 2023 VALEDICTORIAN DURING THE 4TH AMREF
INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (AMIU) GRADUATION CEREMONY ON
FRIDAY 14TH JULY, 2023 AT AMIU MAIN CAMPUS, NAIROBI**

Mr. Chancellor Sir
The AMIU Board of Trustees
Members of the University Council
The Vice Chancellor
Deputy Vice Chancellor
Senate, Deans and Members of faculty
Graduands and Students
Parents and Guardians
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

Congratulations, Class of 2023! We did it! It's a great honor to be this year's valedictorian of our great Amref International University. Ecclesiastes 3:11 reminds us that God makes all things beautiful in His time. Today, I attribute my success to God's grace and give Him all the praise.

My first AMIU class was on Tuesday, May 14th 2019. It was a Critical Thinking class taught by Dr. Nyagero, focusing on Socrates' Paradox: "I know, that I know nothing. I know, that I know, that I know nothing" Dr. Nyagero's teaching was exceptional, and it made me realize how true those words were for me. I knew nothing. I had two options: run away or stay and prove Socrates wrong. I chose the latter.

We all come to university for different reasons. Some progress naturally from high school, while others pursue a second degree because over time, their passion changed. Some it's for better job opportunities, while some are here due to parental expectations. Regardless of why you joined, make it count.

I joined AMIU to pursue a BSc. in Health Systems Management and Development, but I'm leaving with a greater purpose. I am an advocate for equity, equality, and justice in health.

I came as a student, but I'm leaving as a leader. I use my space to influence, set agendas, encourage, and build.

I came voiceless, but I leave having found my voice. I speak out, critique, recommend, and applaud. If something matters, I make it known.

To the graduating class of 2023, make it count. And remember, this isn't the end. If you have a diploma, aim for an undergraduate degree. If you have an undergraduate degree, pursue a masters. If you have a masters, consider a Ph.D. And if you have a Ph.D., strive to become a professor.

However, let's not forget that the most important lessons are learned outside the classroom. I've learned invaluable lessons from my mother, who can create a balanced meal with just Kshs 100. I've learned from the security personnel at the gate, who greet us faithfully every morning. I've learned from children who find joy in simple pleasures. Each person is like a book—full of lessons waiting to be discovered.

In conclusion, I'd like to express my gratitude and recognition to a few individuals. The AMIU student community who gave me the opportunity to serve as the Student Council President for the 2021/2022 academic period. Running for that election was one of the best decisions I've ever made. To my classmates, the HSMD May 2019 cohort, you made the past four years easy. Some of you went from acquaintances to friends and even family. Thank you.

Dr. James Mwitari, though absent, you ingrained health systems management in us. We graduate today because you planted the seeds. Thank you.

Mr. Francis Namisi and Mr. Nibert Boruett, you've been constants in our lives for the past four years. You not only taught us but also cared for us. On behalf of my class, thank you.

Dr. Josephat Nyagero, you've been a part of my journey in many ways. From Critical Thinking class to Epidemiology and Demographics class, to being my direct supervisor in the Student Council, you always made room for me like a father. Thank you.

To Vice Chancellor Prof. Joachim Osur, words fail me. You've taught me invaluable lessons beyond the classroom. I'll always remember how you

joined us for the burial of a nursing student, Jerry Ochieng. You showed that he and all the students mattered. Personally, you've given me a voice and a seat at the table where decisions are made. Thank you.

Dr. Githinji Gitahi, the CEO of Amref, I speak for many students when I say you make us proud to be associated with Amref. Your boldness and humility inspire us. When I grow up, I want to be like you. Thank you for always making time for us.

And to all AMIU faculty, we wouldn't be here today without your immense contributions. Thank you.

Remember my first class? Well, today I find myself back there because the more I've learned over the past four years, the more I've realized how much more there is to learn. I know nothing. I know, that I know nothing. I know, that I know, that I know nothing.

Congratulations, Class of 2023! Thank you.

Ann Njogu
Valedictorian 2023