

GRADUATION ADDRESS OF DR. HZ ZOKUFA

Friday 17 April, 10:30 - Faculties of Education, Law and Pharmacy

RHODES GRADUATION 2009

The Chancellor – Prof Jakes Gerwel

The Vice-Chancellor – **Dr Saleem Badat**,

Deputy Vice Chancellors

Deans, Heads and Professors of various Departments

Lecturers and Administrative Staff

Distinguished guests

Graduates and their Parents

Ladies & Gentlemen

It is a real honor to be invited by the Vice-Chancellor to attend this graduation.

It is a privilege and great recognition to be asked to give a "**Graduation Address**" I do not take such invitations and requests for granted.

Can I also thank Ms Jenny Purdon and Ms Caroline Steele-Gray for the excellent arrangements they made for me to be here.

My relationship with **Rhodes University**, especially the **Faculty of Pharmacy**, dates back to **1989** and has been very fruitful since then.

Allow me to congratulate all those who are graduating today – it is "**all or none**". You either "**have it**" or you "**don't**".

The world that you will be interacting with is after "**what**" you have as expertise, competence and skill.

You also have to know clearly what **it is that you have**.

The challenge will be how to convert the "**what**" to something beneficial to humanity and yourself.

The questions will be **what can you do?**

Can **you do this?**

What is the **value** and **relevance** of your qualification?

What makes it **special** and **legitimate?**

Can you share it with somebody and still have it?

It is very important to be **strategic** about what you have and can do. To me strategy is not only about vision, mission and objectives. All of this just gives a broad indication of which way the organization will go. The real strategy speaks to what actions one take to align what has to be done with the environment, so that there is an **"appropriate fit"**. The appropriate fit will give rise to the **"impact"**. If there is no alignment, the fit will be inappropriate and the impact will not be felt.

The challenge that we have is to continuously think on how best to achieve the **"alignment"**. It may not be justified to try and fight the environment so that it aligns itself to what you want. You may fail doing so, because the environment is more powerful than individuals and single organizations.

The **Law graduates** will most likely agree with me, that in South Africa in the last couple of months, a lot has happened that challenges the **Judicial System** in terms of its **credibility** and **objectivity**

The question is **"to what extent does it upholds the rule of law to the benefit and protection of South African citizens, in a way that guarantees equality before the law"?**

Ordinary citizens want to feel **protected**, and not **victimized**. We want to find comfort in knowing that we have a **robust legal profession and judicial system**.

Simply put, are our Corporate laws, Property laws, Criminal Laws, Financial laws and other laws, that impact on our livelihood adequately drafted, in a way that provides checks and balances so that we are protected ?

If not, what is the legal profession doing about this?

Is it appropriate to capitalize on the "gaps" in our legislation to fight certain cases and generate revenue?

Is it not more appropriate to "close the gaps" so that the citizens of the country are adequately protected.

The legal profession has a **daunting task** of ensuring that this happens.

As you practice your profession, **build your profile along the lines of strictly adhering to its tenets that have been proven and tested over time. This will distinguish you from the rest of the pack.**

The **Education graduates** will agree that we have a huge challenge in South Africa of providing an education, that will not only give people the required **skills** to make a decent living, but also to make them **literate**, be able to **think critically** and **analytically**.

A winning nation is made up of educated people who have skills and can think.

Being an **Educator** is a noble and very rewarding thing.

To teach somebody something, to become knowledgeable must be satisfying. You have actually empowered somebody by doing so.

So as an educator you are **on top of the material** and you have the skill to teach somebody.

As you practice your profession, think of the many people you will be empowering, and how they when empowered, become the **"best they can be"**, and they then do things that benefit the country.

There is therefore a **major contribution** that you must make to the people of South Africa, so that South Africa can **move forward** and be well positioned in **Southern Africa, Africa** and the **World**.

The **Pharmacy graduates** will agree that one of the major challenges in South Africa is the Healthcare Services. Both the public and private health services have problems and challenges that must be addressed. The private sector is not necessarily better than the public sector in certain aspects, and its sustainability is questionable.

The huge problem with the public sector is lack of adequate funding, capacity and skills.

The biggest challenge of the private sector is making healthcare more affordable. The latest **Annual Report of the Council for Medical Schemes 2007-2008**, denotes the following:

- Contributions' increase is >CPIX (8.3%)
- Number of beneficiaries 7 478 040 (fairly constant since 1997)
- Contributions collected R64.7billion
- Claims paid to providers R56.3billion
- Deficit shown R992million
- Private Hospitals claims R20.2billion (36%)
- Medical specialists claims R12.2billion (21.7%)
- Medicines R9.4billion (16.7%)

From the above data it is difficult to accept that the private healthcare financing system is sustainable going forward. It is most certainly untenable. There is no growth in terms of numbers of people participating (accessibility), affordability is not achieved, and quality is questionable in terms of value for money, because of the "fee for service model" of payment.

You will note that **medicines constitute the third highest claim at R9.4billion (16.7%)**. The public sector spends ~R5billion per year on medicines via the tendering system. The total amount therefore spent on medicines in South Africa is ~R14-15billion per year.

Pharmaceutical Services therefore require huge resources to adequately manage such a huge expenditure. This management includes:

- Drug supply and logistics.
- Pharmaco-economics and Evidence Based Medicine.
- Appropriate prescribing and rational usage.
- Making medicines affordable

It is also a statutory requirement, provided for in the Medicines and Related Substances Act as amended (to be signed by the President), that:

- All the medicines must be evaluated for **safety, efficacy** and **quality** before market authorization is given.
- The unregistered complimentary, traditional and other forms of medicines with medicinal claims, currently sold in South Africa, must be evaluated for same.

All of this poses a **huge challenge to the Pharmacy profession**. This will require more **pharmacists** than we have and produce annually. They must have all the required competencies and skills to handle these challenges. Universities like Rhodes must therefore be adequately supported so that they can continue to play a meaningful role in training these pharmacists at undergraduate and post-graduate level.

Presently we have a lot of debates on the proposed **National Health Insurance (NHI) System**. This is aimed at putting a downward pressure on escalating healthcare costs in South Africa, and changing the financing model of healthcare, so that it is progressive and integrates the principles of social solidarity and income cross subsidies. As pharmacists you are going to be integral in this process going forward.

With all of this please be aware that **you are not alone**.

You have **colleagues, mentors, professional** and **statutory bodies, body of literature** and **academic centres**.

What remains is for me to:

- Wish you well in your **chosen career**.
- Hope that you will find an environment that will have **faith** and **confidence** in you and **allow** you to do something.
- Hope that you will find an environment where you will be **nurtured, mentored** and **supported**.
- Hope that you will find an environment that will allow you to **grow**, and **envelope** yourself with a **credible profile**.

In **South Africa** we need more people who are **educated** and **literate**.

They must be **healthy** and adequately protected from **abuse** and **victimization**. We will all benefit from that.

In this regard **you all have a role** as **educationists, pharmacists** and **lawyers**.

Once again, thank you **Prof Jakes Gerwel** and **Dr Saleem Badat** for inviting and giving me the opportunity.

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen
Thank You for listening to me.

END