

## 1<sup>st</sup> Swearing-in-Ceremony of Class of 2022

# Provost's Address

Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> April, 2023

The Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officer(CNMO), Matron Mary Fullah, from the Ministry of Health and Sanitation, the District Medical Officer, Dr. Mamoud Idrissa Kamara, other senior nurses medical personnel here present. The Vice Chancellor and Principal, University of Makeni, Prof. Joseph A. Turay, the Director of Academic Affairs, Registrar of the University of Makeni, the administrators, Deans of Fatima and Yoni Campuses, here present. The Registrar of the Nurses and Midwives Council for Sierra Leone, Matron Christiana Masallay, the Paramount Chief Koblo Queen II of Marampa Chiefdom, Distinguished Guests, Graduands, Staff and Students, Parents, religious congregations and diocesan priests of the Makeni Diocese, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good Morning.

Let me on behalf of faculty, staff and students of the Department of Nursing of the St. John of Campus, warmly welcome you all to the 1<sup>st</sup> Swearing-in-Ceremony of Newly Qualified Nurses for 2022 Session.

In today's ceremony, the nursing department will present **49 newly qualified State Registered Nurses** for induction into the Nursing professional body. Mr. Vice Chancellor and Principal, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen, you will agree with me that this is a huge success considering the significant progress this newly transformed department have made so far especially when we look back where and when we started as a School. **In 2010**, when the then St. John of God Catholic School of Nursing organized its first Graduation ceremony, we only produced **21** graduands. Over the succeeding years, we have produced 750 graduands in the various categories of Nursing, SECHN(**662**) and SRN(**88**). What you are witnessing here today is not merely a solemn ceremony of oath taking, but also an actual showcasing of our finished products who we certify as having gone through the necessary training and are now equipped with the requisite skills to respond to the challenges within the health sector.

Mr. Vice Chancellor and Principal, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen please, therefore permit me to highlight some of the St. John of God Campus achievements during the 2021/2022 academic year under the following headings:

## **Faculties and Programmes**

In 2007, this campus was established and accredited with the main aim of training nurse professionals, with the appropriate skills mix and competencies to provide nursing care services in Sierra Leone. In 2017, the Nurses and Midwifery Council accredited the campus to train Registered General Nurses and in 2018, the Tertiary Education Commission accredited the campus as a level C Status Institution. The SRN training programme started with an enrollment of only **12** students, 5 years later, the campus SRN enrollment rate has significantly increased. The current SRN students enrollment stands at **254** of which **8.7%** are males and **91.3%** females; and at least 59% were enrolled this year 2022.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor & Principal, the boldness of the University of Makeni to expand its tentacles to this campus in order to meet the emerging and re-emerging needs of society is partially fueled by the increasing demand for higher education in Nursing programmes;

As part of the re-engineering exercise undertaken by the wider University, to restructure its faculties, departments and units, our campus has been expanded to now include a department of Nursing in the Faculty of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences creating the department of Nursing in this campus. At the moment the campus runs only one programme, that is, Diploma in General Nursing. To train the next level of leaders in nursing, the Faculty has commenced the preliminaries of seeking accreditation from the requisite regulatory Bodies to commence a new programme in Nursing: Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Nursing hopefully in the next academic year.

## **Curriculum Review, Teaching and Learning Environment**

In the year under review, the curriculum of the diploma in Nursing programme was reviewed to reflect emerging and re-emerging needs in the discipline, and was harmonized and adopted alongside the requirement of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation. The department participated fully in this process until its launching.

In the area of higher Nursing education, the BSc(Hons)Nursing curriculum has been developed to produce General Nurses meeting the expected labour market competencies today.

### **Faculty and Staff**

Mr. Vice Chancellor and Principal, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, our current academic staff strength stands at **22**, of which 59% are males and 41% females. Amongst them, we have 1 Associate Professor; 2 Senior Lecturers, 2 Lecturer II, 11 Demonstrators and Research/Teaching Assistants; and 6 part-time lecturers. Two(2) demonstrators are currently pursuing their Bachelor Degree programme in Nursing and Education Administration. The campus is direly in need of sponsoring staff to pursue postgraduate and doctorate programme in various health disciplines but especially in Nursing.

The Ministry of Health & Sanitation has seconded during this year two additional graduate and experienced midwifery Educators.

### **Infrastructural Development**

Mr. Vice Chancellor and Principal, distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen, the campus administration undertook renovation of sanitary facilities, sustainable water supply with a bore hole of 90 meters deep, partial fencing of the land especially the frontage, engineering works done to control the waste water from the rains, and currently undertaking construction of a three (3) lecture Hall block with a capacity of 100 students per hall, and an online platform hall with a capacity of 50 students at a time. The ongoing work will pre-position the campus to adequately cater for the increasing number of qualified pupils applying for admission and for continuing students and commencing new programmes. The refurbishment and renovation of the school administration, and lecture rooms have also been completed.

We are very pleased to recognized the huge contribution of the current graduands in providing funds to erect a very formidable metal solid rolling gate. It is the wish of the administration for the successive groups to pursue similar targets

### **Partnerships and Linkages**

Mr. Vice Chancellor and Principal, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, this Campus

since its establishment prides itself in the culture of collaboration and partnerships. Our Partnerships and linkages with other institutions within the country and beyond has benefitted the campus in terms of technical assistance; the future is to focus on areas where our faculty and students will have a platform to expose them to diverse and more advanced nursing facilities through exchange programmes. Some of the partners and Institutions include:

- MoHS
- The District Medical Officer of Port Loko DHMT
- Campus Doscent University College of Nursing, Barcelona, Spain.
- Africa Viva Foundation, Spain.
- Western European Province, Ireland
- The St. John of God Development Company, Ireland
- The Hospitaalbroeders Fund raising office, Netherlands
- The Provincial Superior, St. Augustine Province of Africa, Accra(Ghana)
- Juan Ciudad Fundacion, Madrid, Spain.
- The St. John of God Catholic Hospital, Lunsar
- Bread for the World, Germany.

### **Alumni**

Today, the Alumni will attain **799** of graduands as SECHN and SRNs who have been produced and commissioned for service delivery by the campus since its establishment in 2007. The Campus can therefore boast of an Alumni of successful men and woman who have excelled and are currently excelling in their various work settings both in and out of the country. Today, I called on you the graduands to join and reactivate the Alumni association and also to join and support us as we work towards a New Vision for the Campus.

### **Challenges**

We have always at the previous graduation ceremonies reported our perennial challenges in what has become recurrent. Our challenges, which may not be unique to us, range from funding, infrastructure, equipment, to Human Resource. In our efforts to meet these challenges, we require support not only from our traditional partners but also from government and stakeholders in nursing education, alumni, and bilateral development partners.

Looking towards the future, we must walk towards strengthening our capacity to meet the expectations of the University of Makeni as a campus. In this regard, we are searching for

sponsors to support our young staff to pursue Masters in Nursing or other nursing related areas, and Doctors in Philosophy in Nursing or Nursing related areas.

University education is expensive and as such a lot of females will be exposed to dropping out. We will continue to advocate with our good friends to continue raising funds despite the difficult situation abroad in order to empower young ladies to acquire higher education for the sake of improving human capital development in Sierra Leone.

The campus needs to be upgraded and as such there should be a much better administrative Building which will accommodate all the future faculty at the different levels. Seriously, if we do not increase the staffing accommodation facility, there is the risk of not retaining quality staff in this campus. One may ask why the need for that here whilst in other towns they provide themselves. Yes, it is true but Lunsar is a rural town and only those who are interested to stay here would do that but on condition better conditions are available. one key condition is accommodation.

This year, I wish, through you, Mr. Vice-Chancellor & Principal, to direct our appeal to all partners in health to come in and assist us with opportunities to obtain funding for the construction of the lecture halls, laboratories and office spaces on this St. John of God Campus.

### **Graduands**

Mr. Vice Chancellor and Principal distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen, at this point, I would like to seize the opportunity to address the graduands.

The main highlight of this ceremony is to present to you on this joyous occasion our graduating health professionals who will soon be swearing to your professional oath in order for you to be properly inducted into the nursing profession as qualified Nurses in fulfillment of our nursing tradition.

For almost all of you, this day symbolizes the climax of a long and difficult academic journey. I must however, hastily add that it is by no means the end of the road. In fact, it is a new beginning after the end. What is quite obvious, especially for some of us who went through a

similar experience is the fact that the path you took to arrive at this glorious destination was full of challenges such as insomnia, tireless and endless examinations, Anti-social life style, panic anxiety, depression, suicidal tendencies, broken hearts and broken relationships. But in the face of all of these challenges, you were able to weather the storm to be recognized and certified here today as Nurses.

Mr. Vice Chancellor and principal, distinguished Guests ladies and gentlemen, these young men and women are deserving of our commendation because they have successfully brought honour to the campus, themselves and their parents and guardians. I am therefore kindly requesting you the graduands at this point, *to please stand up* for a big round of applause. On behalf of the Faculty of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences, and the University of Makeni, I want to say congratulations to you for this remarkable achievement. *Please be seated*.

The huge contributions of your parents, guardians, and sponsors towards this achievement cannot go unrecognized. These were the people who while you were burning the midnight oil to score the required grades, were also busy working hard to provide the necessary support in the form of cash, logistics and emotional pacification. I am therefore requesting the parents and guardians to please stand up for a well deserving big round of applause --, thank you very much and *please be seated*.

Not least in our line of appreciation are the lecturers, administrative staff of the campus and the University as well as our preceptors and staff nurses of the respective hospitals where we place our students. You contributed significantly to the lives of our graduands; first as imparters of knowledge and skills, and second as role models who demonstrated patience and understanding the discharge of your duties; would all lecturers, administrative staff and preceptors and staff nurses around please stand for a big round of applause ----thank you very much and *please be seated*.

Mr. Vice Chancellor and Principal, Distinguished guests, Ladies and gentlemen, in a short moment from now, our junior colleagues will be led to swear to their respective oaths which will give them the legal and moral right to use the title Nurse. These titles carry with them huge responsibilities and great expectations from society. Your professionalism and conduct will be judged by the way you comport yourself. You are now entering the world of reality

where the application of the knowledge and skills you have acquired over the years will be put to test. In all walks of life, we have the good guys, the bad guys and the ugly ones. The decision to fall into any of these categories depends entirely upon you.

By certifying you here today, we are making a public pronouncement that you have been adequately equipped to practice your profession anywhere in the world. The journey however does not end here. The nursing profession involves a lot of training and practice in order to become a full professional. I therefore want to urge you; wherever you may find yourself and whenever you have the opportunity for further training, please take advantage of it to add to the body of knowledge you may have acquired. As you are aware, our profession is endlessly being challenged by emerging and re-emerging health issues that have still not been sufficiently addressed. Moreover, there is a vast field within the profession beckoning researchers. As young professionals, I urge you to take the challenge now that you have been equipped with the basic professional knowledge and skills. Be mindful that your attitude and interaction with your colleagues and the public you serve, count a lot.

To this end, I want to implore you to be available to postings regardless of wherever you may be assigned to perform your duties considering that urban cities are not the only places where your services are needed. In fact, there is a body of evidence which shows that experience is mostly acquired as we move from place to place. Please be willing therefore to work in the rural areas if situation demands that you do so.

I will also wish to end with a note of caution to parents, guardians or sponsors. We are aware that you have put in a lot to make these graduands what they are today. We are also aware that one should reap where one has sown. Your expectations may therefore be very high as this may be considered as payback time. But Please be patient with them because they need some time to settle down. I have no doubt in my mind that once they are settled, they will look back where they came from and be grateful to all those who rendered help.

## **APPRECIATION**

Mr. Vice Chancellor and principal, distinguished Guests, ladies and gentlemen, our success over the years is as a result of not only our resilience but also because of the good will and support of the Hospitaller Order of St. John of God Brothers through its Project and Finance

Offices. Through the collaborative efforts of these two Offices, the campus has over the years benefitted from projects and more than 40% of our students are awarded scholarships in the form of Bond. This gesture has significantly ameliorated the financial burden on the students. Thus, on behalf the Administration, I would like to acknowledge these two key Offices at the Provincial Curia and to extend our profound gratitude to the directors for their enormous contributions to the campus's objectives and aspirations. In addition, the following dignitaries and institutions have tremendously supported this college in diverse ways and are therefore worthy of our sincere thanks and appreciation:

- The Directorate of Nursing and Midwifery, MoHS
- The Students and staff of Campus Doscent University College of Nursing, Barcelona, Spain, especially the three present here with us.
- Dr. Victoria Fumadoz, Spain
- Cora Moreira, Spain
- Dr. Maite de Aranzabal and Family, Bilbao, Spain.
- Dr. Nekane Arana and Family, Bilbao, Spain
- David Heyer, Netherlands
- John Flemming, Ireland
- Anne Maguire, Ireland
- Electric Aid, Ireland
- The Provincial Superior, St. Augustine Province of Africa, Accra(Ghana)
- Juan Ciudad Fundacion, Madrid, Spain.
- The administration and Staff of the St. John of God Catholic Hospital, Lunsar
- The staff of the St. John of God Catholic School of Nursing, Lunsar.
- The Staff of our clinical placement sites(**Connaught, Holy spirit , Magbenteh, Makeni Government, Koidu Government, DHMTs, Kissy mental and PCM hospitals**) and our affiliation School of midwifery in Makeni.
- The Sierra Leone Nurses and Midwives Board for Sierra Leone
- The St. John of God Brothers' Community of Sierra Leone.

Let me conclude by expressing my sincere thanks and appreciation to all Academic, Administrative and Junior Staff and students of the Campus, the Dean of the Faculty, the University administration for the cooperation and support they have accorded my administration. I remain committed in providing leadership and the necessary support as we work together to move the Campus to its glorious destination.

Finally, on behalf of the staff and students of St. John of God Campus, I wish to welcome you all to this occasion and God bless you.

Thank you all for your time and keen interest in our campus business.



God bless you.

**PRESENTED by:**

Ms. Jessica Konoppa

Ag. PROVOST – Saint John of God Campus, University of Makeni, Lunsar.

Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> April , 2023.