



MZUZU UNIVERSITY

PRESS STATEMENT

STATUS OF HOLDING OF THE 22ND MZUZU UNIVERSITY CONGREGATION

Mzuzu University planned to have its 22nd Congregation on 27th January 2021. His Excellency the State President, Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera, was to be installed as Chancellor of the University. Over 750 candidates were to be presented for various academic awards. Preparations for the Congregation were at an advanced stage. Traditionally, university congregations are face-to-face gatherings. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic being experienced in the country, public gatherings have been restricted as one of the measures towards preventing the spread of the virus. Mzuzu University is no exception to this directive.

To this end, following the national address by the State President on Sunday, 17th January 2021 which included further restrictions on public gatherings and closure of educational institutions, the University Management called for a meeting with representatives of the graduating students to review its plans in view of the Presidential Address. The meeting was held in the morning of Monday 18th January 2021 to explore other options of having the Congregation. During that meeting, graduating students suggested having a virtual Congregation for the installation of the Chancellor and for the presentation of their awards. The proposal regarding having a virtual Congregation was accepted by the University Senate at its meeting held in the afternoon on Monday, 18th January 2021. Thereafter, on the same day, the University Council through a *round robin* resolution, agreed to having a virtual 22nd University Congregation, under the circumstances.

At the moment, the University is working with Government towards the possible holding of a virtual 22nd University Congregation. The Congregation and Ceremonies Committee, which includes representatives from the graduating students, has been tasked to re-orient its preparations for the Congregation towards the virtual mode, while awaiting further direction from Government.

The Law provides that the University shall award certificates, diplomas and degrees in Congregation. The University understands the pressure from the graduating students to receive their awards. Some of the graduating

students completed their studies in December 2019 and received their end of programme results in March 2020. Since then, the Congregation has delayed following closure of educational institutions in March 2020 owing to the COVID-19 pandemic. The delay was further compounded by the absence of the University Council as the Governing Board, following the dissolution of governing boards for statutory corporations in June 2020, and was only reconstituted on 23rd September 2020.

While it is unrealistic to expect the University to hold the virtual Congregation on the originally planned date of 27th January, 2021 given time limitations, the University is working tirelessly to ensure that a dignified ceremony is held at the earliest time possible through a different mode, under the circumstances. Graduating students, their parents and guardians are therefore being assured that everything possible is being done to conclude the matter with the speed it deserves. The University is continuing to work with representatives of the graduating students both from ODeL and face-to-face mode as its commitment to a transparent, accountable and inclusive organization of the proposed virtual 22nd University Congregation. Graduating students and all stakeholders will be further updated once a concrete understanding on the matter has been reached with Government.

{Signed}
University Registrar
Mzuzu University
Private Bag 201
LUWINGA
MZUZU 2

Telephone : 01 320722/575/579 (during working hours)
Fax : 01 320 692
E-mail : ur@mzuni.ac.mw