

PROTESTANT INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES 6th GRADUATION CEREMONY

For the sixth time, the Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences [PIASS] awarded degrees to 283 students. The ceremony took place on June 19th 2019 at PIASS Karongi Campus, in Karongi District, Western Province. The ceremony was chaired by the Chancellor of PIASS, Rev Dr Andre Karamaga in the presence of the Guest of Honour, Dr. Marie Christine Gasingirwa, representing the Honorable Minister of Education, the Chair of PIASS Council, His Grace Archbishop [rtd], Dr Onesphore Rwaje, the vice-chancellor, Rev Prof Elisee Musemakweli, the Mayor of Karongi District and his collaborators, the representatives of the Governor of the Western Province, many guests including vice chancellors and representatives of other High Learning Institutions, local population, PIASS academic staff members and students. Welcoming the guests and the hosts, Rev Prof Elisee Musemakweli, Vice Chancellor of PIASS, presented the development of teaching, research and services of PIASS to communities and churches since its creation. He thanked the Government of Rwanda for its support to the sector of education, and the accompaniment of private education sector; he also thanked the authorities of the District of Karongi and the Western Province for facilitating PIASS to have a beautiful settlement which is now home to the Karongi Campus.

Addressing the 6th congregation, the Chancellor, Rev Dr Andre Karamaga, expressed his deep joy as one of the graduates of the first promotion of the School of Theology in 1974. He congratulated the graduates and said his joy overseeing the huge developments the institution reached in the last 50 years [of the School of Theology; 30 years of the Faculty of theology, and 10 years of PIASS as a University]. He invited the graduates to have in mind that what they have received while at campus is just a little to

enter their new beginning of a long journey of service to community and nation and the world.

The Guest of Honour, Dr. Marie Christine Gasingirwa, reminded the audience that to take up the challenge of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi, the Government of Rwanda focuses on human capital development, to achieve Quality Higher Education, reminding Rabelais thesis that “ Science without conscience is the ruin of the soul”. She congratulated PIASS for its scientific research and innovations aiming at delivering quality education package and expanding and extending its scientific research and services to community through the annual Scientific Week and other national and international scientific events, published nationally and internationally and translated in Kinyarwanda, to disseminate the productions within the communities and citizens of Rwanda. To the Graduates, Dr. Marie Christine Gasingirwa reminded the graduates that as they completed one chapter another one is opened. She therefore invited them to make themselves useful to society now that they are well equipped to face the world’s challenges with critical thinking, analytical skills, creativity, appreciation, open-mindedness, problem resolving and confidence they gained in PIASS.

For the 6th Graduation, 283 graduates [166 males and 117 females] were awarded Bachelor’s degree in various disciplines: 31 in Theology; 170 in various disciplines offered by the Faculty of Education (in educational planning and management; in business studies; in History; in Geography; in Kinyarwanda and in English); 82 in various disciplines offered by the Faculty of Development Studies (in Rural and community development; in Natural Resources and Environmental Management; and in Peacebuilding and Development).

Pursuing its pace to being a Quality Education oriented institution, PIASS donated rewards to five graduates who performed brilliantly in each faculty and in the Karongi campus in particular: Francoise Niyonsaba from the Faculty of Theology; Merveille Kavira in the Faculty of Development studies; Marie Louise Mukarukundo in the faculty

of Education; Angelique Ingabire and Eliakim Habinshuti both from the Karongi Campus, each received a laptop sponsored by local companies.

The Protestant Institute of Arts and Social Sciences[PIASS] whose main campus is located in the City of Butare- Huye, Southern Province was started in 1970 as a school of theology by the Protestant Churches of Rwanda, the Presbyterian Church of Rwanda and the Union of Baptist churches in Rwanda, later joined by the Anglican Church of Rwanda and the Free Methodist Church of Rwanda, then subsequently by the Pentecostal Church of Rwanda(ADEPR) and the Association of the Baptist Churches in Rwanda. In 1990, the school became a Faculty of Theology at a university level, fully accredited by the Government of Rwanda. In 2010, the institution became a fully-fledged university which provide specialized programmes under three faculties [Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies; Faculty of Education; Faculty of Development Studies]. PIASS offers programs at bachelor and master's levels. At the same time, the institution has applied for additional faculties and special programs to open by the next academic year 2019/2020.

PIASS is a well - known institution, nationally and internationally; it's an institution that gives primacy to quality teaching, research and service to community. It is a member of the RUPA, member of ORIPES, etc. It has a well - structured and organized research activity including the organization of annual scientific week that results in the publication of the findings; the coordination of scholarly activity with internal and external scholars; the organization of international colloquia. These include the recently International colloquium on the African Christian Theologies and the Impact of the Reformation [Kibuye-Karongi 18-23 February 2016] in cooperation with the University of Bochum in Germany and the Protestant Churches of Germany with the participation of more than 20 universities from Africa, Europe, North America; International Conference on the European Union, the East African Community, and the Continental Integration of Africa

– Potential and Challenges[from 27th to 28th September 2018]in collaboration with Jean Monnet Network with participation of academic partners and institutions from the EAC countries, Europe and China; the international colloquium on the work on memory in post-genocide Rwanda, in cooperation with the university of KwaZulu Natal [South Africa], and many others from Africa, Europe and North America.

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