



## **UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROF. A.O. MAGOHA, VICE-  
CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, ON THE  
OCCASION OF THE 35<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI ON FRIDAY 1<sup>ST</sup>  
SEPTEMBER 2006 AT THE CHANCELLOR'S COURT**

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**Minister for Education, Science and Technology,**

**Hon. Dr. Noah Wekesa**

**The Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Dr. Joseph**

**Barrage Wanjui**

**Chancellors of other Universities**

**The Chairman of University of Nairobi Council,**

**Mr. John Simba**

**Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education,**

**Prof. Karega Mutahi**

**Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Science and**

**Technology, Prof. Crispus Kiamba**

**Members of the University of Nairobi Council**

**Vice-Chancellors of other Universities**

**Members of the Diplomatic Corps**

**Deputy Vice-Chancellors, University of Nairobi**

**Principals of Colleges**

**Deans/Directors of Faculties/Schools and Institutes**

**Chairmen and Heads of Departments**

**Graduands**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

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**Let me take this opportunity to warmly welcome you to the University of Nairobi and to the 35<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony. I would like to congratulate all the graduands for their achievement and also thank their parents, guardians, teachers and all those who contributed to the successful completion of your studies.**

**Mr. Chancellor Sir, the graduands before you are drawn from the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, College of Architecture and Engineering, College of Biological and Physical Sciences and**

**College of Education and External Studies. The College of Humanities and Social Sciences and College of Health Sciences will have their graduation on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006.**

**Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University of Nairobi is committed to its vision of becoming a world-class African University whose mission is to extend the frontiers of knowledge through teaching research, creative works, consultancy and community service. To that end, we have continued our long tradition of**

**providing quality and relevant education to meet the needs of our nation and the world at large.**

**The University however faces numerous challenges, the key of which is inadequate funding. Government funding for the University of Nairobi only accounts for about 38% of the annual budget. While we highly appreciate the crucial support the University continues to receive from the Government, a lot more is required if we are to realize our dream of becoming a world-class university. My passionate plea is to the Government to expedite the approval of**

**our proposal on differentiated unit costs, which should come together with the delinking of accommodation from university admissions. This will not only address the problem of inadequate funding but greatly improve access to University education for numerous Kenyans and the University's capacity to train the high level skilled manpower required for this country's development.**

**I am very glad to note Mr. Chancellor Sir, that non other than H. E. the President is addressing this issue positively together with the Committee of**

**Chancellors of public universities and we fully appreciate this development.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen, the success of the University Management under my stewardship as Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive should not be measured by our accomplishments, some of which have taken root. It should instead be measured objectively by the opposition we encounter, and the courage, resilience and focus with which we pursue, maintain and sustain the struggle against such odds**

**and intrigues during this very rapidly changing phase of the University towards a World-Class Excellence.**

**This University is a truly Kenyan institution and I intend to keep tribalism and Ethnic politics out at all cost without fear or favour. Our yardstick will remain competitive meritocracy in all appointments, which started with my own. I also expect nothing short of results oriented hard work from all staff. In this regard I first wish to thank most sincerely the government through the Ministries of Education, Science and Technology for not interfering with**

**University administration. This has greatly enhanced corporate governance at the University and significantly contributed to the peace and harmony existing currently at the University. We hope this autonomy will continue.**

**Secondly, I wish to recognize the very crucial contribution the Academic Staff Union (UASU) continues to make at this University through its members, which is two pronged. First, they have executed their academic duties diligently as per their terms of service like all other staff. Secondly, they**

**have continued to extend this service beyond regular working hours to teach and supervise Module II students until 9.00 p.m. Monday to Friday and the whole of Saturday. Mr. Chancellor Sir, this singular action has contributed 2.4 billion shillings to the University budget of 2005/2006, almost equal to government capitation at 2.65 billion over the same period. This is thoroughly commendable and on behalf of University Council, Senate, staff and students I wish to thank them most sincerely for their patriotism and dedication.**

**This is also the most appropriate time and place to recognize and sincerely thank the former Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Francis John Gichaga for pioneering the Module II academic programmes in 1997 at this University, a module that has now been replicated and adopted in all public universities with great success.**

**Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University of Nairobi has a distinguished record and accomplishment in teaching, research, development, consultancy and entrepreneurship. The University has responded to**

**the country's, regional, Africa's and international high-level manpower training needs and demands by developing programmes and specializations in pure sciences, applied sciences and technology, humanities, social sciences and the arts.**

**To date, the range of programmes are approximately over 400 undergraduate, Post Graduate Diplomas, Masters and PhD programmes. These programmes are administered in over 66 different academic Departments, 10 Faculties, 6 Institutes and 18 Schools distributed in 6 Colleges. The University has**

**continued to use diversified educational modes of delivery which have included face to face lectures coupled with practicals, laboratory, clinical, field work, distance education and e-learning.**

**The University recognises the importance of teaching our students in a holistic manner to enable them to face diverse challenges in the employment arena. Some of the common undergraduate courses taught to all our students include Communication Skills, Elements of Economics, Law in Society and HIV/AIDS.**

**During the past academic year, the University Senate has introduced forty-two new and market driven programmes aimed at meeting the diverse and challenging needs of our students.**

**They consist of six undergraduate Diploma programmes including Diploma in strategic studies, ten Bachelors degree programmes which include Bachelor of Commerce by Distance Learning, eight Postgraduate Diploma programmes including Postgraduate Diplomas in Biotechnology and Bio-**

**informatics, sixteen Masters programmes including Master of Medicine in Neurosurgery, and two Doctor of Philosophy programmes in Biotechnology and Bioinformatics.**

**Established in 2005 and based at the College of Biological and Physical Sciences, the Centre for Biotechnology and Bioinformatics (CEBIB) is a shared facility to facilitate research and capacity building as well as enable development of marketable products through application of Biotechnology and Bioinformatics.**

**The current main focus of the CEBIB programmes is in training at postgraduate level (MSc and PhD) research and product development and outreach activities and consultancy services. The expected output of the CEBIB training program is to leverage impact on agricultural and industrial output as well as contribution to sound health and environmental management systems in the country and the region. CEBIB, the only center of its kind in Eastern and Central Africa has already admitted the first group of students pursuing Masters and PhD degree courses.**

**Mr. Chancellor Sir, this new centre is housed in a KShs.40 million shilling building that was generously donated to the University by the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE). The handing over ceremony took place on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006 and was presided over by the Minister for Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Dr. Noah Wekesa.**

**I wish to take this opportunity to once again thank ICIPE for this most generous donation and assure**

**them that the building will be used for the purpose it was intended; teaching and scientific research.**

**Mr. Chancellor Sir, during this 35<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony for the four Colleges of Biological and Physical Sciences; Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences; Education and External Studies; and Architecture and Engineering, 2,200 students will graduate from the University. These comprise 15 Doctor of Philosophy graduates, 219 Masters and Postgraduate Diploma graduates, 1632 Bachelors degree graduates and 334 undergraduate**

**Diploma graduates.**

**Ladies and gentlemen, we are also in the process of relocating the University of Nairobi Bookshop to College House across the street to create room for the establishment of the Gandhi Memorial Postgraduate Library to cater for the over eight thousand postgraduate students of the University. Of course funds to stock this library to world-class standards are available. This action will improve academic standards for our postgraduate students**

**and go along way towards our march to world-class excellence as a University.**

**Since the launch of our strategic plan the University has made strides in achieving specific targets. These include the launching of the University Service Charter, HIV policy, Intellectual Property Policy and Staff Performance Appraisal.**

**The first phase of the restructuring during the strategic plan period is now complete and being operationalised. We have also continued to train our**

**staff in line with our main objectives “towards World-Class Excellence”. Recently, a two-day training workshop for Chief Internal Examiners brought together all Chairmen of teaching departments, Directors, Deans and other senior management staff to consider ways of strengthening the examination process. In this regard the University will construct a central examination centre at one of the stalled projects in Chiromo to further improve the quality of the examination process.**

**We have also increased our linkages with other international universities and in this regard 30 new linkages were effected in the past academic year, the last of which was signed only three weeks ago with the University of Peace.**

**Mr. Chancellor Sir, quality infrastructure is critical if the University is to achieve its desired goal of becoming an international centre of excellence. To this end, the University of Nairobi has continued to rehabilitate the existing infrastructure, and complete many of the stalled projects. Among the recently**

**completed projects is the KShs.40 million Library, at Kikuyu campus with a sitting capacity of 1,500. We are also expanding the Physics and Chemistry Laboratories at Chiromo, at a cost of Kshs.54 million. Apart from the above projects, the University has been able to secure donor support to the tune of KShs.18 million for expansion of departments of Immunology and Pediatrics all in our College of Health Sciences.**

**To strengthen its Extra-Mural program, the University has acquired the former British Council**

**Building in Kisumu at a cost of KShs.35 million. The building was formally handed over to the University on Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2006 and is part of the University's efforts to make education available and accessible to the Kenyan public at their doorstep.**

**The University has also continued to expand and strengthen its ICT infrastructure by establishing and equipping computer laboratories for students and staff. In this regard, the University wishes to thank Huawei Tech (Kenya) Company Ltd. for its donation of KShs. seven (7) million towards the acquisition of**

**the critically needed ICT resources. These developments will help to maximize students and staff productivity, enhance teaching and learning and improve quality of research through ICT.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen, the University has a responsibility to contribute positively and actively to the society. Following the declaration of drought situation that gripped the country most of 2005 and early 2006 a national disaster by the Government, the University community responded by voluntarily contributing over KShs.4 million towards the**

**national famine relief effort. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all members of staff, University Council and students for this noble gesture.**

**As I indicated earlier, Ladies and Gentlemen, this is the first of two graduation ceremonies to be held this year. We have been able to achieve this because of the current tranquility that is existing at the University. I must commend our student community and their leaders through the umbrella body of SONU for the remarkable improvement in student discipline. The benefits of this new culture of**

**dialogue and peaceful resolution of disputes are self-evident. Please keep it up.**

**In concluding, let me once again congratulate our graduands for doing us proud. As you enter a new phase in your lives, we are confident that you will be able to use the skills you have acquired to improve yourselves and serve your community and country well.**

**Thank you.**