



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY MR. JOHN P.N. SIMBA, CHAIRMAN OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI COUNCIL DURING THE 36TH GRADUATION
CEREMONY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI HELD ON 4TH
DECEMBER 2006 AT THE CHANCELLOR'S COURT.**

Chancellor of the University of Nairobi,

Dr. Joseph Wanjui,

Minister for Education, Prof. George Saitoti

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education, Prof. Karega Mutahi

Vice-Chancellor, University of Nairobi,

Prof. George Magoha

Members of the University of Nairobi Council

Vice-Chancellors of other Universities

Deputy Vice-Chancellors of the UoN

Principals of Colleges

Deans of Faculties and Directors of Institutes and Centres

Chairmen and Heads of Department

Graduands

Distinguished Guests

On behalf of the University of Nairobi Council and the university community let me welcome you all to this 36th graduation ceremony.

Let me also on behalf of the council warmly congratulate you the graduands for making it possible for this day to happen.

This is the 36th such ceremony – each is both a celebration of the hard work of graduands and the further development and expansion of our training programmes at the University. As Chairman of Council, it has been a privilege to attend the last three of these ceremonies and to share in the happiness of all the graduands present.

Each graduand has a story to tell of commitment, tenacity, enthusiasm, personal energy, exhaustion, frustration as well as fun and of course support from your group, lecturers, family, relatives, friends and guardians.

So to all your families, relatives, guardians and friends who have supported you throughout I would like to say thank you, well done – you should be extremely proud of their achievement.

Today as we formally release the graduands to the larger society, we are confident that they will use the knowledge and skills acquired to contribute to the development of the country. Indeed for almost fifty years the University of Nairobi has served as one of our country's premier institutions for research, learning and thinking. Some of Kenya's finest statesmen and thinkers have either studied or taught here. Today, going forward, you are carrying on this proud tradition. You are providing the intellectual capital for our country's continued growth.

But remember this is only the beginning. The journey ahead will always require you to replenish your skills and knowledge. One may even add that in matters of knowledge the world belongs to the discontented.

I am delighted to be here and to share this happy moment with all of you, your families, relatives, guardians and friends.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, for the last two months, industrial action has paralyzed learning in all public universities with the exception of the University of Nairobi. Let me take this opportunity to particularly thank the academic members of staff, the student community and the university administration for working together to ensure minimal disruption to our programmes.

As I stated during the 35th Graduation Ceremony, the University Council is committed to maintenance of good industrial relations with trade unions for the mutual benefit of the University and all members of staff. Let me reaffirm that the Council has always embraced dialogue as a means of resolving industrial disputes and places high priority on improving terms and conditions of service in order to attract, retain and motivate competent staff. But, let me also add that the university as a responsible corporate citizen must, at all times, act within the law.

Mr. Chancellor, Ladies and Gentlemen, our quest to expand access to education to accommodate more deserving Kenyans is on course. This passion though, is hampered by lack of adequate physical facilities to cope

with the ever-increasing demand for higher education. Through our internally generated funds mainly from Module II courses, we have managed to complete various stalled projects, put up new ones and acquire others. This window for development is however increasingly becoming untenable, as government financial support to our budget stands at about 40 percent leaving us with a shortfall of 60 percent to meet from our own sources. This resort to internally generated funds to finance recurrent expenditure has slowed down our development. Our appeal to the government is to consider increasing capitation to the University so that we can accelerate completion and improvement to our physical facilities thereby creating capacity to address current and future needs.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I am happy to report that the annual staff appraisal exercise that we introduced last year has now been institutionalized and covers all employees. This year's exercise was completed recently and all employees have received feedback from management. The appraisal exercise is meant to monitor staff performance to ensure prompt quality service to our clientele in line with the recently launched service charter that gives timelines to various services we offer.

Apart from teaching, research is a core activity in any institution of higher learning. To bolster research Council approved Kshs 100 million to fund these activities. Procedures are clearly spelt out on how our departments can access these funds. This move is expected to increase research activities which for sometime, had scaled down significantly due to lack of adequate funding. But I must hasten to add that we need far more than the amounts allocated by Council in order to fully exploit our research capability.

To protect innovations and inventions by our staff and students arising from research and related activities, the University approved the intellectual property policy and is in the process of domesticating its operations. As a key stakeholder in the knowledge industry we shall work closely with others to ensure the protection of our intellectual property. We look forward with increased anticipation to the day when we can report substantial revenues from royalties and fees arising from commercial exploitation of inventions and innovations.

In line with the State Corporations legislation which require all corporations to submit their performance reports to their respective parent ministries, the Treasury and Inspectorate of State Corporations, I am happy to report that the University of Nairobi not only adheres to this requirement but has also gone further and put all its Colleges on performance contracts. All colleges have signed the contracts with the management and are now required to meet certain performance quotas within specific time frames. This process would ensure monitoring of budget and programme implementation and guarantee effective and efficient service delivery.

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, I take this opportunity to commend our students and their leadership for conducting themselves with maturity and decorum that befits their status. By embracing dialogue whenever issues have arisen, this has not only avoided unnecessary disruption to our programs but has also endeared our student community to the larger society. Indeed they have done us proud.

In conclusion, allow me once again to congratulate our graduands for arriving at this milestone; for working hard and making sacrifices; for making it through sleepless nights, tests and examinations. Whatever your dreams may they come alive.

God bless you all.

Thank you.

It is now my pleasure to welcome the Minister for Education, Prof. George Saitoti to make his remarks and invite the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui to address this congregation.