



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**REMARKS BY MR. JOHN P. N. SIMBA, CHAIRMAN,
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI COUNCIL, ON THE
OCCASION OF THE 46TH GRADUATION CEREMONY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI AT THE
CHANCELLOR'S COURT ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2,
2011**

Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui, Chancellor of the University of Nairobi

Hon. Prof. Margaret Kamar, MP, Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology

Prof. G. A. O. Magoa, Vice-Chancellor, University of Nairobi

Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors from other universities

Council Members

University Staff

Parents and Guardians

Graduands

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I take this opportunity on behalf of the University of Nairobi Council to welcome all of you to the University and to the 46th graduation ceremony. This is an important time for all of us, as we release to the world over 5600 graduands drawn from the Colleges of Humanities and Social Sciences; and Health Sciences.

To the class of 2011, congratulations for your achievements. I know that you are relieved that this face is over. Your parents guardians, friends and relatives are happy and proud of you, for after their sacrifices, you now join the ranks of intellectuals. I know the graduands have not disappointed Faculty, and the University community, who mentored you,

and supported you to achieve the results you have today. Once again, congratulations.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University Council wishes to thank the government for helping to resolve the stalemate relating to the recent industrial action. I wish to assure all staff that the Council will continue to review not only their terms and conditions of service, but also improve the working environment. We all know that staff of the University continue to develop the educational resources of our country and to contribute ideas and options on how to accelerate our national development. Without knowledgeable people, no meaningful economic or social development can take place. We will continue to

dialogue so that together we find common ground to address the challenges we face.

Mr. Chancellor sir, the University continues to be among the top performing State Corporations. It has consistently met its performance targets, translating into a culture of quality in our core functions. Again, despite a thin financial base, the University has continued to develop capital and infrastructure projects and revitalized funding for research activities. This is no mean achievement and I must congratulate the management for providing the necessary leadership so vital in achieving our objectives.

While we applaud the support that the government has extended, I would like to appeal specifically for an increase in the level of funding so that we can put up new hostels for our students, build new lecture halls, laboratories and other physical facilities. However the university must also make a contribution in providing some of these facilities. In this regard, the University is in the process of commencing the construction of a new multi-storey block at Main Campus to house offices, lecture halls and seminar rooms, funded mainly from internally generated funds.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I wish to acknowledge the contribution that parents, guardians and well wishers

continue to make to the University. We thank them for making this University, their institution. We note the support from our stakeholders, who identify with us and challenge us to continually review our functions and activities. I wish to reassure this wider community that the University will continue on the path of development that we embraced including, Performance Contracting; ISO 9001:2008; reviewing our Strategic Plan, among others. I would urge the community of parents, guardians and sponsors to challenge us consistently, dialogue with us, for it is only through such partnerships that common understanding and goodwill can be developed. As this University was the University of choice for your

child, let it be the University of choice for your families.

Mr. Chancellor sir, a few year ago, student discipline was a challenge. The disruption of academic programs, the negative public image and perception, were such that the University was the brunt of negative comments and innuendos. With measures for training in leadership and mentorship have been put in place, majority of the students body have changed and are embracing some very innovative values. However, in a minority of cases we have seen attempts to return to the past. This will be resisted. Let me appeal to our students to embrace the rule of law and desist from activities inimical to their own

development and that of the institution. Adequate structures now exist to address any issues of import that the students may encounter whilst here. Make use of them to constructively engage.

I am aware that organizations have been partnering with the University to mentor and support needy students. I am grateful to some of the student body and the Alumni Association for the visible effort to work for the students. I also wish to appeal to donors and philanthropic organizations to come forward to partner with us. In fact recently, notwithstanding, challenges arising out of industrial action, we held a highly successful prize giving. Many thanks to donors who rewarded our achievers. To the students,

continue to reciprocate by embracing values of hardwork, discipline, innovation and transformed attitudes. “At the end of the day, you must ask yourself, other than the academic qualification, what have you taken away. You have been exposed, trained, mentored and supported, are you leaving the university with life long values or with nothing?”

Mr. Chancellor Sir, human resource in any nation are a value that has no definable worth. They must neither be wasted nor ignored. The staff of the University of Nairobi have been the best in scholarship, training and learning. We appeal to them to maintain this excellence, and also to exercise patience, calmness on the face of adversity.

Challenges are part of life's journey, but we must all learn to rise above adversary and to embrace the virtues of hope, diligence, hardwork and dialogue. I wish to thank the staff for continuing to uphold the high academic standards. I wish to thank them for embracing dialogue, for remaining peaceful during the recent industrial action and for agreeing to return to work even as all concerned search for solutions to the issues we face. This is as it should be. As the oldest and largest institution of higher learning in our country, we have to take up the responsibility of providing leadership not only in matters academic but in other pursuits as well. I wish to exhort the management and staff not to shy away from this responsibility, but to continue to enhance

quality standards in our core business and in the quality of our products.

I wish the graduands every success as you pursue your dreams and aspirations. Today, is only the beginning of your potential and promise.

Finally let me thank our ministry for its support, you Mr. Chancellor for your guidance, council members for providing leadership, Prof. Magoha and his management team and entire staff for ensuring that all our programs remain oncourse and all of you for your presence. As the festive season is upon us, I wish all of you, a peaceful Jamhuri Day, a joyful season and a blessed 2012.

Thank you.

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