



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**REMARKS BY MR. JOHN SIMBA, CHAIRMAN, UNIVERSITY
OF NAIROBI COUNCIL, DURING THE OCCASION OF THE
45TH GRADUATION CEREMONY, ON FRIDAY SEPTEMBER
9, 2011 AT THE CHANCELLOR'S COURT**

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

**Prof. Crispus Kiamba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of
Higher Education, Science and Technology**

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

**Prof. George Magoha, Vice-Chancellor, University of
Nairobi,**

Chancellors of Other universities,

Council Members

Deputy Vice Chancellors, Principals of Schools,

Distinguished Scholars

Graduands

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to the 45th graduation ceremony, an occasion in which we release into the world of work over 4,000 graduates. Graduation marks the culmination of the successful completion of our academic program. For our graduands this day will always be special, when after years of diligent attention to reading and intellectualizing, they, pass out into the world – your parents, guardians, relatives, friends and indeed all of us have come to share in your joy. And to bear witness to the fruit of your work and the sweat of your brow, justifying many sacrifices made. You are an important showcase of our own success as a university. Congratulations.

I wish to welcome you to the world of work. A world that is now more demanding than ever before-competitiveness at all levels – knowledge across professions, adaptation, and

flexibility. You are well equipped to confront these challenges. Find your niche out there and thrive. For most of you, this day is only one step into your future.

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me welcome the newly appointed Members of the University Council including Dr Betty Gikonyo who now becomes the Vice Chairperson. We thank the government for these appointments which, came together with my own reappointment as the Chairman. At a personal level therefore, I am honored to serve this great institution.

The new members, no doubt have been carefully selected on the basis of the strength, and diverse range of skills and professionalism that they can bring to the University. I am sure that the new Council will take up the challenges ahead, including attracting and retaining the best staff, refining structures and systems so vital in enabling us

realize our objectives as spelled out in the strategic plan and maintaining the standards of quality while still ensuring that there is equity in the access of all Kenyans to a university education. I wish to reassure you Mr. Chancellor Sir and all stakeholders that, we shall remain focused on the tasks ahead. I believe we will succeed in guiding the management and governance of the University.

Allow me to also pay tribute to the members of the previous council for their commitment to duty and immense contribution to the success of our programs.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I wish to thank you most sincerely for the constant guidance and support that you have given to the Council and to the University Management. You have

often reminded us that a University is not a chess board; there are no kings and drakes, no pawns to be won by an individual. We appreciate your philosophy of team work, collective responsibility and maintaining a watchful eye. The University community is indeed grateful that despite a busy schedule, you always take time to visit the University and inspire us, as you appraise issues on the ground.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, when the University of Nairobi set out on the journey to re-engineer itself, it instituted the concepts of ISO 9001: 2008 and performance contracting for effective and efficient service delivery. I am happy to report that in 2011, the University of Nairobi has received its recertification certificate for ISO 9001: 2008, launched its 2008-2013 Reviewed Strategic Plan, and achieved 3rd place in the Performance contracting for the category of

State Corporations. We still retained our number one position among public universities. Indeed, the management and staff have to be commended for this good performance. The staff have worked hard and been dedicated to duty ensuring that the Institution is on the right path to becoming a world class university.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I wish to take this moment to sincerely appreciate the support that we have continued to receive from the government through our parent Ministry. However, the thin financial base of the University is often constrained by the inadequacy of funds to support capitation and physical infrastructure. I wish therefore to appeal to our government to increase the funding available to the University to enable us to build new lecture theatres. Even as we make this appeal, let me also assure the government that the council and the management will

constantly explore other viable options of broadening our financial base.

This University was put up almost fifty years ago, but in the last ten years as demand for university education has increased the student numbers have been growing forcing us to stagger the intake in order to facilitate students to access accommodation. The University has found itself in a precarious situation, where it cannot address the concerns of parents and guardians on accommodation of their children. As the university will never be in a position to accommodate ALL its students, an opportunity exists for partnerships to fill in this vital need.

Ladies and Gentlemen, For the parents and guardians present here, let me once again thank you for the

sacrifices you have made which have enabled this day to happen – bringing joy to the graduands. However, you have the continuous challenge to nurture and mentor these graduates so that they achieve their really potential ready to contribute to the development of society after all the tutoring they have already under gone. Take pride that along the way, challenges and hurdles notwithstanding, you can still celebrate. Your task of encouraging and willing these graduands to excel and recognize that there is still room for improvement is essential. We thank you for partnering with us and pay you tribute for your contribution towards producing a holistic graduand.

As I conclude my remarks, I wish to address the students of this University. You deserve appreciation for your discipline and focus on what brought you here. Always remember constructive engagement invariably achieves

more. The University directed its attention on improving the learning environment so that you, with your energy and zest, can be harnessed to dialogue and to jealously guard the image of the University. The peaceful SONU elections came and went – almost unnoticed. The lesson; campaigning can be as robust as the candidates together with their supporters want without degenerating into name calling and violence.

A story in the bible is told of a certain man who laid a feast for his friends and when the feast was ready, he wore a festive robe and set a festive table. When his servants went to collect his guests, each of them gave excuses saying please excuse me I cannot come. Each one of you, unlike those biblical guests, did not give an excuse but willingly came thereby honouring us with your presence at

this important ceremony. Thank you and God bless you all.

Thank you.