



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY DR. JOE BARRAGE WANJUI
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI ON
THE OCCASION OF THE 38th GRADUATION
CEREMONY AT THE CHANCELLOR'S COURT ON
FRIDAY, 7 DECEMBER, 2007**

**The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education,
Prof. Karega Mutahi**

**The Chairman of the University Council, Mr John
Simba**

The Vice Chancellor, Prof George Magoha

Members of the University Council

Vice-Chancellors of our sister universities

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (AA), Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (A&F), Prof. Peter Mbithi

Principals of Colleges

Deans and Directors

Heads of Department

Parents/Guardians

Graduands

Members of staff

Distinguished Guests

Students

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the 38th Graduation ceremony. I specifically want to congratulate you, your parents, guardians and the lecturers who have taught and nurtured you. In turn, you have proved that the choice you made, over four years ago to join the University of Nairobi was the right one. This premier institution is the oldest, largest, most diverse, complex, dynamic and advanced in the public universities system. We encouraged you to find your level and to work hard to be the best you could be. This is an important day in your life and we are proud of you. Let me remind you that your parents and your community have

sacrificed in order to see you through the University.

Well done!

I wish to remind the graduands that the world they are about to join values hard work and places a higher premium on success. You must aim to work smart and harder to always get it right the first time.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University has proved over the years that it will not relent in the pursuit of excellence. This resolve is manifest in the way that it has maintained high academic standards. The University has also initiated reforms that emphasize

best practices in management. The reforms have been embraced at all levels; it is a fact that our line managers are highly motivated, dynamic and equal to the task of propelling this University to laying the ground for excellence in academic distinction.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University of Nairobi has continued to grow and to expand its programs. Established as a Technical Institution many years back, the University has evolved over the years into a premier institution of higher learning in the region. This has demanded courage, determination and commitment. We wish to applaud all those gallant

men and women who were responsible for transforming this institution, their quality pioneering research and consultancy are acknowledged world wide. I am sure that you are proud to be associated with this University.

Guest of Honour Sir, I have said before that discipline is essential for success. Our staff are appreciative of this and have been able to do what is right and not necessarily what is popular. This is evident in the fact that in the last one and a half years, they have chosen to uphold the rule of law and continued to perform their duties as the other public universities

have been enjoined in industrial action. This demonstrates clearly that our staff are credible and true leaders. Such bold action and exemplary behaviour has trickled down to the students. I wish to thank the staff and students for showing that they are equal to the task.

Ladies and gentlemen, a world class university is one that the society admires and emulates. Our University continues to be a think tank for what should be done. We have set standards and become a point of reference for research, consultancy and community service. The City of Nairobi and the

nation at large has benefited from our vast alumni of over 90,000, who are to be found in all sectors. Truly, we are engaged in programs and processes that accelerate the socio-economic development of this nation, the African region and indeed the world at large.

Ladies and gentlemen, as mentioned by the Vice-chancellor, unruly behaviour amongst students in the past had given this institution a negative image. In October 2007, we were encouraged by the maturity shown by the student leaders when they hosted a cocktail for CEOs of leading private and public

organisations. This cocktail was an actualisation of the vision by management of bringing students and the players in industry together to share ideas on how they can work together to establish mutually beneficial relations. It was noted that in recent years, the student community has behaved well and the industry look forward to other engagements with them. I wish to challenge our students to remain at the head of the pack; this is because the market has increasingly become competitive unlike a few years ago when University of Nairobi enjoyed a virtual monopoly in the market.

Ladies and gentlemen, the youth of this country are a valuable asset, so much so that during this election year, they are vulnerable to misuse by politicians and pressure groups. Youth have vigour, zest for life, energy and new bold ideas. Let us begin to harness that energy and synergies into positive leadership. Let us abstain from politicising the University, it should be noted that this institution is apolitical, you are however free to have your own opinion; please keep your opinion and your ballot secret.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University has improved its infrastructure. Indeed, it has improved its ratings

at the local and regional level to position one and 23 respectively. I wish however to urge management to improve on this rating especially at international level, for instance the University must borrow practices from the more reputable universities, which concentrate on cutting edge research and high level training of manpower. My challenge to the University community is to strive to be in the same league with University of Cape Town – the leading African University.

Finally, I would like to congratulate our graduands on this meritorious achievement, it is my sincere hope that all of you will find your true niche in the market, please remember to join your Alumni Association, and cultivate links with the rest of the University community.

I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.