



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH BY DR. JOSEPH BARRAGE WANJUI, CBS,
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 40TH GRADUATION
CEREMONY AT THE CHANCELLOR'S COURT ON
FRIDAY DECEMBER 19, 2008**

**Hon. Dr. Sally Kosgei, MP, Minister for Higher
Education, Science and Technology,**

Cabinet Ministers

**Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and High
Commissioners**

**Mr. John Simba, Chairman, University of Nairobi
Council,**

Council Members,

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

Chancellors of all other universities,

University Officials,

Parents and Guardians,

Graduands,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to be with you to day to celebrate the 40th Graduation of the University of Nairobi. As you may be aware, this is the second time this year that we are gathered here to mark yet another important milestone in the calendar of events for this premier University. It is only in last October that we had the privilege of conferring honorary degrees to three distinguished African leaders for their outstanding contribution to the well being of our country and nation.

As a University, our mission is to provide quality university education and training through

creation, preservation, integration, transmission and utilization of knowledge. This mission cannot be realized within a hostile environment. For that reason, we at the University of Nairobi place a high premium on peace and stability to be able to conduct our core business in line with our mission and vision.

Today, Ladies Gentlemen, we are proud to present to the society a cohort of students who have gone through their full academic programmes without interruption. We are proud of them because they chose to focus on what they had been admitted for. As a result, we are gathered here today to celebrate the fruits of their labour. They say that life begins at 40. This being our 40th graduation ceremony,

we can therefore declare that our life has just begun. It is a new life in the way we carry out our business. A new approach to service delivery and a new commitment to remain focused to our goal of being a truly world class institution.

I am happy to note that the University had already embarked on transformation programmes which have begun to bear fruits. For instance, mid this year, the University became ISO 9001:2000 certified. The ISO 9001:2000 not only marked a memorable achievement but also bestowed the University with the responsibility for continuous improvement. I therefore would like to appeal to the University to maintain the ISO spirit and

preferably embark on other international recognitions.

The University of Nairobi will continue to discharge its mandate of teaching, learning research, consultancy and community service. However, the increasing numbers of programme and students have had corresponding increase in challenges as manifested by, among others, overstretched facilities. To surmount these challenges, various intervention strategies will be identified. These include strengthening existing partnerships and developing new ones. The University also would like to appeal to the Government for continued support.

Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the parents, guardians, the University staff and all those stakeholders who have contributed towards enabling the graduands to successfully complete their studies. It takes sacrifice and dedication to mould and mentor the graduands into responsible and skilled citizens who are ready and willing to serve the society.

May I also take the opportunity to congratulate the class of 2008 for their hard work which has made the 40th graduation ceremony a success. We are proud of you and we are confident that you have been equipped with the necessary knowledge and

skills that will enable you navigate your way to a successful career and service to society.

As you embark on your new life, it may be useful to remember the views of some great minds like Charles Darwin. According to Darwin, it is not the strongest or the most intelligent of species that survive; it is the most adaptive to change. Since we live in a world whose only constant is change, it is advisable to have transformative a mindset that is capable of anticipating and initiating change. With such a mind set, you move from being an object of change to a change agent.

This year started off like no other in independent Kenya. The expected joy of ushering in the New Year was marred by the post election violence. The violence shattered the image and reputation of our beautiful country as an island of peace in a turbulent environment. Our country shifted from being a sanctuary to thousands of refugees fleeing from their country to a place for internally displaced refugees and even witnessed a new phenomenon of neighboring countries hosting Kenyan refugees.

I am glad that Kenyans sobered up and stopped the violence. The signing of the national accord marked the beginning of the healing process. As the year comes to a close, we can see light at the

end of the tunnel. We are slowly regaining faith and hope in our country. And if one were to ask whether we can live together again as brothers and sisters, we would not hesitate to say 'Yes, we can'.

It is possible to once again be proud of being Kenyans. And this is the way it is ought to be. We began badly and hopefully we have learnt our lessons. The year is ending happily.

I therefore would like to end my remarks by wishing you successful future undertaking merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Thank you.