



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH BY DR. JOSEPH BARRAGE WANJUI, CBS,
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, ON
THE OCCASION OF THE 47TH GRADUATION CEREMONY
ON FRIDAY AUGUST 24, 2012 AT THE CHANCELLOR'S
COURT**

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

**Your Excellencies, the Ambassadors and High
Commissioners,**

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

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

Council Members,

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

Academic Members of staff and students

Parents and Guardians,

Graduands,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am delighted to welcome you all to this premier Institution as we celebrate this auspicious occasion of the 47th Graduation ceremony. Graduands, when you first joined the University, you may not have been sure that you would complete your journey, you were probably not sure if the course you took was right for you, but through hard work and determination, the nurturing environment and commitment of your tutors, you are now at the end of the race. You therefore have a reason to celebrate as this ceremony, is the culmination of your work and diligence. On its part, the University is proud of your achievement and we wish to acknowledge and commend you all for the efforts you have put in to realize success.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we celebrate the passing out of the over 5000 graduands present here today, I wish to remind them that we are releasing them to a world full of challenges; luckily, the graduands are well equipped with skills to enable them surmount any of these challenges. The knowledge gained over the years is the power you now have to conquer the world. It is from you that we expect to see more enterprise, innovation and solutions to some of our most pressing needs.

No doubt you will soon have more skills, responsibility and authority than you have hitherto imagined. The

power may even turn your head, but always remember that power without responsibility is dangerous.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today's graduation ceremony is taking place against a background of great expectations from society for universities to provide the much needed guidance in the realization of the Kenya Vision 2030. The pillars of the Vision hinge on the improvement of the socio-economic and political well being of the citizens. I believe that the University of Nairobi has the capacity to drive this country into realizing this vision. The vast human resource pool of specialists in health, agriculture and food security, environment, building and land policy, education

management and communication, science, technology and innovation and the humanities, are important agents in the implementation of this vision. Again, our graduates, with the energies and synergies that they have absorbed, will fit into the strategic pool of resources required to realize the pillars of the vision. I appeal to the graduands therefore to be smart in establishing their niche, in whatever part of the county they find themselves located.

Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me to congratulate the management and staff of the University of Nairobi for their hard work that saw the University clinch position one in the 2010/2011 Performance Contract.

Attainment of Excellent grade is a clear indication of the University's commitment to become a World Class University. I however wish to remind you that this should not be the end of your efforts, indeed you have the challenge to continue to excel, because excellence in performance is about re-energizing oneself to new experiences and better practices of management. I am encouraged by the team work that the University engages in, with more people participating and owning the programmes and processes of governance and administration. I am fully confident that the University has transformed its structures and is more than capable of evolving workable, long term strategies for equitable governance and management.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to congratulate the University for increasing its collaboration in teaching and research. World over, joint research has added value to the normal practice of seeking scholars from international universities, institutions and organizations to collaborate with. As the University celebrates excellence, the management should ensure that it bears the challenge of remaining the citadel of cutting edge research and innovations. I enjoin with the University in appreciating our partners and collaborators. The research uptake capacity at the University must evolve to directly impact on policy and practice in the society; I therefore call upon more of our partners to come up with proposals for joint

research and collaboration in looking for solutions to some of our most pressing needs as a country.

Ladies and Gentlemen, instability of the economy in most parts of the world has also affected our country's economy. The impact of this crisis has been felt in reduced job opportunities, erratic bank interest rates and increase of prices for essential commodities such as fuel and food stuffs. Despite the economic crunch, workable strategies must be employed to mitigate further deterioration of our economy. I charge the graduands in front of us today, and indeed all of us, to use the skills and training that we have gained to be innovative employers.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are all aware that the country is preparing for general elections. The forthcoming elections are historic in that they will be held within a framework of the New Constitution that brings on board a devolved government. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to ensure that we exercise our democratic right freely and peacefully. The University must be at the forefront of engaging positively and meaningful in the electoral process. The University has vast experience in analyzing democratic policy and practice, providing consultancy service by engaging the public in intellectual discourse on elections and electioneering.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the future of any society is the extent to which it harnesses and prepares its youth to become responsible citizens. I am glad to note that our students have continued to excel in many areas and this has greatly contributed to the current positive image of our University. I commend the student body SONU for conducting their elections peacefully. Perhaps this is a tradition which all Kenyans can learn from as we prepare for the 2013 general elections.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as I conclude my remarks, I wish to pay special tribute to our government for its

continued support towards our University. I know that the finances extended by the government to our institution may not be enough but the amiable environment that the government has allowed the University to operate in should be a source of inspiration to us. The peace and tranquility in the country is a pre-requisite to any academic inquiry and indeed economic growth. Let us not take the prevailing peace for granted but otherwise jealously guard it and cultivate a cohesive and just society.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to thank the Chairman of Council, Mr. John Simba and his team for a job well done. Indeed, this University has grown in leaps and

bounds under the stewardship of Mr. Simba. As the Chancellor of this University, the entire Management has accorded me support which in turn has made it not only enjoyable but also memorable to share experiences. My challenge to the University community is to continuously embrace and accept change. This is what transformational leadership is about, that one accepts and engages in changing the way that they do things. This new attitude enables one to remain afloat and ahead of the competition.

As I conclude, I wish once again to congratulate the graduands for their achievement, and the parents, guardians and University staff for molding the

graduands holistically. We charge them to take the same excellence into the world and always remember to retrace their steps to this institution through the Alumni Association.

Thank you.