



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY DR. JOSEPH B. WANJUI, CHANCELLOR,
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, DURING THE OCCASION OF
THE 49TH GRADUATION CEREMONY, TO BE HELD ON
AUGUST 23, 2013 AT THE CHANCELLOR'S COURT.

Cabinet Secretary in charge of Education, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi

Chancellor's from sister Universities

Chairman of the University of Nairobi Council, Dr. Idle Farah

Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha

Council Members

Parents and Guardians

Staff

Students

Graduands

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my joy to be here with you today during this occasion to celebrate the 49th Graduation Ceremony of this premier institution. This is an important day for the young people before us who have completed their studies and we wish to acknowledge and commend them for the efforts that they put in to achieve success. However, I wish to remind them that there are bigger things waiting that include opportunities to start or enhance careers given that they are now more complete in terms of knowledge.

I wish to acknowledge the parents and guardians represented here for their sacrifice that ensured their children went through university. I urge you to continue supporting your children, and to proffer advice and guidance.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the last ten years have been good years in the development of this nation; no doubt we have observed the developments in infrastructure and our economy has been growing. We can acknowledge that the growing economy has had an impact on people's lives. It is the major role of the University therefore, to maintain and provide the kind of graduate who will play a bigger role in this nation. I have stated here before that at this point in time, we need our graduates to go out and be self employed and help in creating jobs so that our country can experience rapid growth. In the challenging times that we live in, it is individuals who are growing the economy and we challenge our graduates, who are privileged to be educated, to view themselves as linchpins creating opportunities for others.

Ladies and Gentlemen, on June 17th 2003, the then President H.E Mwai Kibaki appointed me Chancellor of the University of Nairobi. This was an important step in that for the first time in the history of the University, the Chancellorship had been removed from the presidency with ramifications that the Chancellor would be closer to staff and students.

From the onset, I was determined that the status quo was not an option and therefore we would introduce changes in the way that we did things. If this meant restructuring the University in a number of ways, then so be it.

This is what the University committed to do: management introduced performance contracting, performance appraisal systems, and launched a service charter with intensive training for change management.

The University also commenced on the road to ISO 9001:2008 and reviewed its strategic plan.

Ladies and gentlemen, as we endeavor to transform this University, we must be prepared to surmount the challenges associated with a change process. We must all be committed to continuous improvement, in that way we will remain focused in achieving our ultimate goal to be a truly world class university. I am proud of the University, which embarked on the road towards world class excellence, with reforms that so far are a model for other public universities to learn from. For example, the University took a bold step when it hired top management through a competitive process; a clear indication of an unshakeable determination to achieve excellence.

Ladies and gentlemen, Martin Luther the King noted that the mark of a true education is character. Again, it has been recognized that the human resource of a nation are judged by the sound education that they have received. I have thus been convinced that our students must reflect on the virtues of integrity and honesty and make a decision to change any negative images that haunt the student community. A world class university is one that society admires and emulates. The question that the student community might want to address then is how they can get society to appreciate and acknowledge that they matter. I would wish to exhort the student community to remember that the rights and privileges of education, bring a responsibility to make good use of your knowledge to change the world for the better, even

ensuring that succeeding generations have the same opportunities that you have had. Education is a gift that one generation gives to the next; this is what Kenyans expect from its students, to take charge with dignity, to be intellectual pioneers that the country needs in the new constitutional order. Let the youth once again be viewed as the managers of our national growth and development.

Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to report that the University of Nairobi continues to be the think tank of what should be done. A few years ago, I challenged the university to set standards, becoming a point of reference that is the pride, not only of the city of Nairobi but also the nation at large. The anthem of the university reminds us to shun being ivory towers and to

come down from the pedestal. This has suggested that the university engages in programmes that accelerate the socio-economic development of the nation. In this way, the university will revitalize and engineer itself daily, being audacious in its plans, goals and objectives.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is probably one of my last graduation ceremonies to preside over; I therefore want to sincerely thank the government for appointing me Chancellor of the university in 2003. I thank the Senate and the Alumni Association for honoring me to continue to serve as Chancellor. I wish to take this opportunity to share my belief that discipline is the essence of success. I believe that a university prepares you for the world and the opportunities and training that you receive should enable you to find your niche and contribute to the

development of the nation. We all have a challenge to change fundamentally our spirit to add value to our institutions.

I pray that the University of Nairobi, with its diverse resources, will keep its lead as a center of excellence and with sound management principles, and a dose of business acumen will continue to herald the fundamental change required in the administration and spirit of the university.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I commend the new Council for agreeing to take up the mantle of running the University. I urge the team, led by Dr. Idle Farah to steer the University, in the face of mounting challenges, in a responsible manner ensuring that all students and staff are well catered for, in order to retain the best brains and

future workers. As a public university, we have to depend on the government for the necessary resources required to meet the competitive needs of our staff. However, the prevailing economic conditions have constrained the government's capacity to avail these resources as expected. I urge the staff to exercise patience as the government finds long lasting solutions to address their plight.

As I close my remarks, I wish to encourage all of us not rest on our laurels, but rather, that we should expand and maintain the quality of education that we offer and jealously guard the reputation of our brand.

I thank all of you for gracing this occasion and making it so colorful and memorable. Thank you and God bless you.