

SPEECH

BY

MR. JOSEPH B. WANJUI, CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY

OF NAIROBI

ON THE OCCASION OF

THE INSTALLATION CEREMONY OF THE CHANCELLOR

AND

31ST CONGREGATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

ON 7TH MAY, 2004

Your Excellency,

The President and Commander-in-Chief of the
Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya,
Her Excellency, the First Lady
Honourable Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament,
Chancellors,
Chairman and Members of Councils, and Vice-
Chancellors of Public and other Universities,
Your Excellencies, the Ambassadors and High
Commissioners,
University Staff and Students,
Graduands and Parents, Relatives and Friends,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am greatly honoured to stand before you today as the new Chancellor of the nation's finest University. It is impossible to thank adequately all those who have helped me along the path that has led me here, many of whom are here today.

I wish to especially thank His Excellency the President for appointing me Chancellor. As mentioned by the Vice-Chancellor during his speech, I am fully cognizant of the fact that I am joining the rather daunting line of President-Chancellors of this University, from Hon. Mzee Jomo

Kenyatta, Hon. Daniel T. arap Moi and Hon. Mwai Kibaki. Standing on the foundation that these great Kenyans have laid, it is a great privilege to be able to make my contribution to the greater good of the University of Nairobi, and, in turn, our great nation and human-kind at large. I also wish to thank members of the University Council, the Senate and the entire staff and students of the University of Nairobi for making me feel warmly welcome both as their Chancellor and as an individual.

I wish to take this opportunity and warmly congratulate His Excellency the President for the conferment of the Degree of Doctor of Letters (*Honoris Causa*) of the University of Nairobi, and commend the University for finding such a worthy graduand, who, as cited by the Vice-Chancellor, has dedicated his entire life to social, political and economic emancipation of the people of our country. Your Excellency, we feel greatly privileged that you were able to be with us today and are deeply grateful to your Government for the support it has continued giving to not only this University but also all public universities in our country. We wish you

good health and every best as you continue steering our country to greater heights of progress.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am also deeply grateful to all those participating in today's Ceremony, especially the Graduating Class of 2003 and all our guests, for making this function such a colourful occasion.

I am humbled, by both the installation and the citation and kind words said about me earlier, during the conferment of the degree of Doctor of Science (*Honoris Causa*) of the

University of Nairobi. I thank the University for bestowing me with such an honour. I am obviously challenged by a sense of obligation and the enormity of my responsibility to not only maintain but also participate in the improvement of the tradition of academic excellence in learning, in the search of knowledge and in the service to our community of this great University.

This is a day of great personal significance to the graduating class, its families, relatives and friends. It is a day of celebration of our students and their

accomplishments and it provides an opportunity to acknowledge all those who have made a difference in their lives. It also provides a time to reflect on the people who have made such extraordinary contributions to the development of our University.

As I have quickly found out, and as summarized by both the Chairman of the Council and the Vice-Chancellor during their speeches, this is a great University, with a still greater potential. It is great because of its people – the students, with their brains, energy and insights; the faculty, renowned

for their excellence and innovation in teaching, research and service; the managers, who have made major strides even during difficult times; the alumni, who serve literally in every sector of our economy; the Government, which has unfailingly provided the major supported to the University; and development partners and all those friends, who have faithfully seen the University through its most difficult moments. I feel proud to join such a devoted team that has made the University what it is to day, and a team that continue working together to push the University to even greater heights.

It is indeed a great challenge for me, as I take up my position of Chancellor and titular leadership of this University. As outlined in the University of Nairobi Act, my role is to: -

- (a) Be the head of the University and, in the name of the University, confer degrees and grant diplomas, certificates and other awards of the University, as I have done today.

- (b) From time to time, direct an inspection of the university or an inquiry into the teaching, research or any other work of the University;
- (c) Arrange for visitation into the general administration and organization of the University in such manner as may be provided in the statutes;
- (d) From time to time give advice to the Council which I may consider necessary for the betterment of the University;

- (e) Enjoy such powers and privileges and perform such other functions as may be provided in the statutes of the University.

I want to share my belief that, together we will work to make this University achieve its stated vision and mission of playing a leadership role in higher education in Africa. Indeed I believe that we have the capacity and the resources required. If we pull together and in the same direction, and accept the need for change that will enable us to grasp the enormous opportunities before us, we shall

make it. The problems and obstacles, of course, must not be under-stated, and solving them cannot be an easy task. The onus, however, lies with each and every member of this University to play his or her role properly. We must work together to find amicable solutions to our problems. I want to give you my pledge that I will do the best that I can to help build on the foundation and strengths of our past, into a formidable future.

Once again I wish to congratulate the graduands and wish them the very best in their future endeavours. Please

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 and to help ensure that succeeding generations have the same opportunities you have had here at the University of Nairobi. Education is a gift that one generation gives to the next.

Thank you.