



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH BY PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI, VICE
CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI DURING
THE 55TH GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON
FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 2, 2016 AT THE
CHANCELLOR'S COURT AT 8.00 A.M.**

- **The Cabinet Secretary, Education, Science and Technology, Dr. Fred Matiang'i**
- **The Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi**
- **Your Excellencies, the Ambassadors and High Commissioners,**
- **Chancellors of Sister Universities**
- **Chairman of the University of Nairobi Council, Dr. Idle Farah**
- **Members of the University Council**
- **Chairpersons of other University Councils**
- **Vice-Chancellors of Sister Universities**

- **Members of the University Management Board**
 - **University of Nairobi Senate**
 - **Graduands**
 - **Staff**
 - **Students**
 - **Parents and Guardians**
 - **Ladies and Gentlemen**
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I am once again honoured to welcome you all to the University of Nairobi and to this celebration of the 55th Graduation Ceremony. After years of hard work by the graduands seated here today, we are finally here to celebrate their achievements. Graduands, you are all aware that it is on account of your hard work and dedication that you have now qualified to be given the Power to read.

Madam Chancellor, today we are graduating students from the Colleges of: Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, Architecture and Engineering, Biological

and Physical Sciences, and Education and External Studies. However, those being awarded PhDs are from all six colleges of the University, including the College of Health Sciences and College of Humanities and Social Sciences. In today's ceremony, 4,448 graduands will be conferred degrees and awarded diplomas. The graduands consist of, 57 PhDs, 1 Doctor of letters (*Honoris Causa*) 564 Masters, 20 Postgraduate Diplomas, 2,812 Bachelors, and 996 ordinary Diplomas.

Madam Chancellor, the above numbers will rise substantially once we hold the 56th Graduation targeting the graduands of Colleges of Health Sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences later in the year.

Ladies and gentlemen, during the year, we have continued on our transformative agenda that saw the University continue to implement its Strategic Plan while concluding implementation of the short term plan and priorities for the financial year 2015/2016. This is in the realization of my dream about growing

this University to be “a top ranked, sustainable, World Class Institution, with enduring and valuable scholarly excellence”.

Madam Chancellor, I am pleased to note that Management has embarked on the process of reviewing our 2013-2018 Strategic Plan to refocus and recast it so as to address emerging issues.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you are aware, there have been reports circulating in some quarters about leadership wrangles in the University, which is mere

propaganda meant to tarnish the image and the brand of the University. Although those reports by merchants of doom have persisted, they have not managed to lower the University from its high pedestal of operations and delivery to the Kenyan public.

I wish to assure the government, our staff and students, alumni, parents and sponsors, various stakeholders and the general public that the University is stable and vibrant, while discharging its mandate, in line with its objects and functions.

Madam Chancellor, through the hard work and dedication of our members of staff and students, the University's visibility continues to rise. 2016 has seen our staff being involved in high profile research, and negotiate beneficial memoranda with various institutions and donor agencies.

I wish in particular to mention Prof. Jackson Mbutia, Dean, School of Engineering for negotiating an agreement whereby the University of Nairobi will soon be launching a Nano satellite (Cubesat) using

the International Space Centre. The Cubesat is to be built at the School of Engineering in Cooperation with the Italian Space Agency and University of Rome, Sapienza. This project is valued at approximately Ksh. 120 M.

I also want to acknowledge Prof. Jaldesa Guyo, the Coordinator, Africa Co-ordinating Centre for the Abandonment of FGM (ACCAF) for negotiating with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) a research project worth Ksh. 5.2 M, whose goal is to contribute to gender equality and reproductive rights

including for the most vulnerable and marginalized women.

These and related activities have ensured that we have maintained a solid research portfolio. I am pleased to inform you that the University's research fund currently stands at Ksh. 4 billion. This is attributed to the high-level research activity by our members of staff and collaborators.

In this regard, I would like to commend the following scholars for making significant contributions to our research kitty in 2016:

- **Prof. Dalton Wamalwa - Paediatrics & Child Health, CHS – Ksh. 341,850,000/-**
- **Prof. Jesse T. Njoka/Elvis Ouma – LARMAT/CESDES, CAVS – Ksh. 50,500,000/=**
- **Prof. Omu Anzala – Kenya Aids Vaccine Initiative, CHS – Ksh. 51,350,603/-**
- **Dr. Benson Wamalwa – Department of Chemistry, Kenya Science Campus- Ksh. 33,801,066/-**

- **Dr. Jared Mecha – School of Medicine, CHS – Ksh. 466,189,182/-**
- **Prof. James Machoki – UNITID, CHS- Ksh. 105,413,400/-**

In 2016, the University has negotiated and signed an additional 60 memoranda of understanding which are now being implemented.

Ladies and Gentlemen, to ensure that we offer quality academic programmes and to make our graduates relevant to industry, the University has

continued to review its academic curricula. Experiential learning continues to be the mainstay in all our programmes, equipping students with hands-on experience and skills. Students in various programmes are also put on internship and apprenticeship as they near completion of their studies, making them market ready by the time they graduate.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this year, like last year, we held the Nairobi Innovation Week on August 1 - 5, 2016. The now annual University signature event

was again very successful and I wish to thank the organizers for the time and effort in pulling it through. I also thank the various partners and exhibitors without whose contributions the event would have been as successful.

Madam Chancellor, allow me to convey special thanks to H.E. The President, Uhuru Kenyatta for finding time within his very busy schedule, to visit the University twice in a span of three weeks: the first time he officially launched our Nairobi Innovation Week on August 3, 2016 in Taifa Hall, and

then on August 23, 2016 he came to our College of Agriculture & Veterinary Sciences to lay the foundation stone for the Wangari Maathai Institute.

As you are aware, during the Innovation Week launch, H.E. The President promised that the government would enhance the University's capitation by Ksh.100 M to fund the Innovation Week activities.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me now to most sincerely thank our Chancellor, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi, for the way she has continued to provide guidance as

we steer this University to greater heights of development.

My gratitude also goes to the University Council, under the able leadership of our Chairman, Dr Idle Farah, for ensuring that we are facilitated with the right environment and resources for use in the discharge of the University mandate.

Madam Chancellor, the University remains committed to improving the welfare of the members of staff. This has been achieved through dialogue and

mutual understanding with the staff unions on issues affecting staff welfare.

I wish to thank the University staff for serving the institution diligently, thereby improving service delivery. Indeed, your work speaks volumes by itself – even this graduation and its products are a result of your work. As Vice-Chancellor, I personally want to thank each one of you for remaining calm and focused and standing in defence of this August Institution.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate the University of Nairobi Alumni Association(UONAA) for electing new office bearers in their elections held on April 9, 2016. I can assure you that the members of UONAA and the University expect a lot from the new team, led by Mr. Isaac Awuondo, who is with us here today.

Madam Chancellor, in terms of resource mobilization, we continue to be grateful to the Government for the support through monthly capitation, which goes a long way in assisting us deliver on our mandate. We

also appreciate the support of various partners and donors who have sponsored our programmes and activities.

To the government, collaborators and donors, we thank you most sincerely. In the face of ever competing needs, you have kept your faith in us. In the face of challenges, you have stood with us.

As I conclude my remarks, I would like to thank all our key stakeholders for remaining supportive of the University of Nairobi. As Management, we promise to

deliver on the mandate of this University and move it to greater heights of development.

To our alumni, I invite you to partner with us in nurturing and developing the next generation of leaders through student mentorship, sponsorship and internship.

This day belongs to our graduands, who will be joining over 188,000 alumni who have successfully proven the quality of the University of Nairobi brand. You have sacrificed personal time in your academic

journey and have eventually been found worthy of academic recognition. We assure you that the quality you have received from this University remains unparalleled in the region.

As alumni of this University, you are our strength and we have faith in you.

I now urge you all to be our worthy goodwill ambassadors in the market as you pursue your careers. I further welcome you to join our Alumni Association and give back to your alma mater.

Thank you.

PETER M.F MBITHI, PhD, EBS
VICE-CHANCELLOR

AND

PROFESSOR OF VETERINARY SURGERY