



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROFESSOR GEORGE A.
MAGOHA, VICE-CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF
NAIROBI, DURING THE 34TH GRADUATION
CEREMONY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
HELD ON FRIDAY 9TH DECEMBER, 2005 AT THE
CHANCELLOR'S COURT**

Minister for Education, Science and Technology,

**The Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Dr. J.B.
Wanjui**

**Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education
Science & Technology, Prof. Karega Mutahi**

Chancellor of other Universities

**The Chairman of the University Council, Mr. John
Simba**

Members of the University of Nairobi Council

Vice-Chancellors of other Universities

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Deputy Vice-Chancellors of the UON

Principals of Colleges

**Deans of Faculties and Directors of Institutes and
Centres**

Chairmen and Heads of Department

Graduands

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to welcome you all to the 34th graduation ceremony of the University of Nairobi. I would like to congratulate all the graduands, we have gathered here to recognise your hard work, self-discipline and academic excellence.

Graduands, your parents and guardians have played a very important role in ensuring that you complete your studies successfully. We commend them for their valuable support.

Ladies and gentlemen, the graduands before us are drawn from the Colleges of Education and External Studies based at Kikuyu, Health Sciences based at Kenyatta National Hospital and Humanities and Social Sciences based at Main, Parklands and Lower Kabete Campuses. As you will recall we had a similar event for the other three colleges in October this year. It is worth noting that students,

parents and the general public have given us their feedback on the decision to have college based graduation ceremonies and they appreciate this progressive development.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, in our quest for world-class excellence, we have continued our long tradition of providing quality and relevant education to meet the needs of our nation. The University now has a total student population of 31,573. About 48% of them are self-sponsored. This year we have admitted 7,088 students which include 913 who

are external students. 61% of the internal students are on the regular module I Programme. Today a total of 3,682 graduands will be awarded diplomas and degrees. These men and women will join the 90,000 graduates of the University of Nairobi who are found in every sector of the economy and industry. We at the University are determined to continue playing our part in the development of our country by providing highly skilled manpower.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, as is the trend world-wide, the University has also embarked on major reforms whose objective is to revitalize the University to ensure it realizes its vision and mission. To begin with the University is restructuring its managerial and administration organs. At its last meeting held on 24th of November, 2005 Council approved the establishment of new University Statutes to allow implementation of the recommendations of the Committee on restructuring of the University. The effect of these changes is that Departments, Faculties, Institutes, Schools and Centres have

either been created, collapsed merged or rationalized with sole purpose of ensuring efficient and improved quality service. The heads of these units will be appointed soon.

As I have indicated in the past, the University of Nairobi is determined to ensure that it continues to offer quality and relevant courses that are responsive to the needs of the society. The notion that are introduction of Module II programmes at the University of Nairobi has comprised standard, Ladies and Gentlemen, is highly misplaced. To the

contrary the programmes have strengthened the academic programmes and improved our capacity to serve this country.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, some of you may recall that in 1986 Universities were challenged by the then Head of State and the Chancellor of all Public Universities to find a lasting solution to the problem of backlog of students admission into Universities. In 1998 the University of Nairobi took up the challenge and opened up its doors to thousands of promising and deserving Kenyans

who would not otherwise have been able to access University Education. To study at the University under Module II programme is much cheaper compared to other countries. Students learn in a familiar and more friendly environment. Through this programme, we have been able to save the country Kshs 2 billion which parents would have spent on their children's University education abroad annually. We have also been able to maximize the use of available resources ensuring that both the physical space and our academic staff are occupied continuously.

Ladies and Gentlemen, before the introduction of Module II programmes most of our academic staff were moonlighting. The reason why this practice was rampant was because the salary paid by the University was too low. Today hardly any lecturer has time or reason to moonlight because they are now better remunerated and more committed to the service of the University. This is the impact of the Module II programmes.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the core function of the University is to teach and conduct research. We will make sure that the quality of our programmes remains of international standard. In that regard we have put in place a Service Charter and a management system to assist us to identify staff who do not perform to our expectation. We are dealing with issues of indiscipline and will continue to weed out staff and students who indulge in unprofessional and unethical behaviour.

Apart from staff and students discipline, Senate has continuously reviewed its programmes and introduced new courses in virtually all faculties. Among the new courses that have been introduced include; a Postgraduate Diploma in Topical Diseases, Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Conservation and Natural Resources Management and Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies among others. It is important to note that all our examinations are subject to external examination as way of ensuring International quality control.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, while its true that the double intakes of the mid eighties and early 90s together with the introduction of Module II programmes to some extent increased pressure on the available space, the university through the income earned from Module II programmes and other income generating activities, has been able to expand the accommodation, teaching and research space, available to cope with increased demand. To date the University has spent a total of Kshs.750 million in maintaining and renovating the existing

facilities and also completing some of the hitherto stalled projects. Specifically the university has undertaken the following projects among others: completion of two lecture theatres with a sitting capacity of 500 each and a state of the art mortuary for 120 bodies at chiromo campus. At the College of Health Sciences construction of a new building to house the department of Nursing Sciences, the construction of a large lecture theatre and laboratory each with capacity for 300 students have been completed. At Kikuyu campus two lecture theatres with a capacity of 300 each

and a tuition and administration block have been completed. There has also been extension of the Civil Engineering building and rehabilitation of Main Campus and Upper Kabete Campus facilities.

The following projects are on going: completion of a Library complex at Kikuyu Campus with a capacity of 300, completion of lecture theatre, library and staff offices at Lower Kabete Campus, completion of computer laboratories and a teaching block at Chiromo Campus, and completion of the ADD Building among others.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I want to take this opportunity to commend in particular members of academic staff, without whom the Module II programme would not have been successful. They have worked tirelessly, sometimes under difficulty circumstances.

I wish also to recognise and commend UASU University of Nairobi Chapter for the improved relations between the union and University management. We in the management are available

and willing to engage UASU and its members on matters of staff welfare and general maintenance of academic excellence.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, no university can ever dream of becoming world-class without research. The University of Nairobi has pioneered research in various areas including agriculture and the search for an HIV/Aids vaccine, among others. We are committed to the continued strengthening of innovative research and as stated earlier will establish a research vote in every academic

department starting from the new financial year. Further, academic department websites will continuously upgrade published research materials by all staff from the end of this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am proud to announce that the University of Nairobi will have registered a Science and Technology Park at Chiromo Campus by the end of January 2006. The main goal of the Science and Technology Park is to provide a focal point for research development and innovation. It is intended to create business support and

technology transfer initiatives and encourage and support start-ups and incubation of innovation-led, high growth, knowledge-based enterprises. It will also provide an environment in which Science-based enterprises can develop specific and close interactions with the University community. We are grateful to Kenya Industrial Property Institute (KIPI) for assisting the University develop its Intellectual Property policy.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in order for the Science and Technology Park project to succeed it will need to

partner with the industry and other stakeholders.

We are therefore calling upon African entrepreneurs, many of whom are our alumni to come forward in support of their university.

A world-class University must also have an external orientation in order to attract quality international students and scholars. In this regard, I am proud to report that the University of Nairobi has established a Chinese Language unit, the only one in Africa which will be officially launched on 19th December, 2005. With such partnerships, Ladies

and Gentlemen, we can truly assert an international character. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chinese government for supporting the establishment of the unit at the University of Nairobi, donating equipment, books and other materials and also seconding two Chinese Language Lecturers. I would also like to thank the Government of Kenya for identifying the University of Nairobi to host the unit.

Ladies and Gentlemen, poor performance by most Public institutions has been a major source of

concern. If we want to be a world-class university, we must fight all the vices like graft, inefficiency and in effectiveness. I personally together with my Finance Officer and the Chief Internal Auditor recently attended training in South Africa on how to detect and deter fraud. I can assure you that if you are crook the University is the wrong place to be. As mentioned earlier the University has also put in place a Service Charter which outlines the kind of service our customers expect in every unit. The public should expect and indeed demand nothing short of quality service.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University has been at the forefront in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Our researchers have been actively involved in the search of a vaccine for the deadly scourge, and we are the first in all the Public Universities to have an HIV/AIDS policy in place, a clear indication of our leadership role. I wish to assure the parents here today that the university cares for the well being of all the students. The University has also launched an HIV/AIDS common

course which is compulsory for all undergraduate students and we want to empower our young and vulnerable to make informed choices.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I wish to report that the University of Nairobi so far has been able to meet its performance targets and will submit the quarterly performance reports for the second quarter of the 2005/2006 financial year to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology on schedule. We are renewing our commitment to serve this country and the world at large.

Mr. Chancellor sir, the University of Nairobi is continuing with expansion and improvement of teaching and research facilities. A case in point is the development of computing labs for the School of Computing Informatics. These facilities which were constructed at a cost of Kshs. 31 million will be handed over by the 15th December this year. Another development is the construction, completion and commissioning of state of the art cold storage facility with individual compartments

at the Chiromo mortuary with a capacity of 120 bodies.

Living as we do in the information age, the University of Nairobi cannot afford to be left behind. The University has invested a considerable amount of money in up-grading connectivity in the Library and Colleges. Phase one of ICT Network Project at College of Health Sciences and College of Education and External Studies is now ready and will be commissioned on the 20th of this month.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, not so long ago, many people would have laughed at anyone who dared to suggest that the University of Nairobi will finish a whole academic year without disruption. The good news, Ladies and Gentlemen, is that this indeed did happen. I must commend our students for the mature manner they conducted themselves during the recently concluded referendum. By refusing to allow themselves to be manipulated by politicians, both the students and their leaders have demonstrated that they are responsible and mature citizens who deserve to be respected by

society. The University Management recognizes the positive role played by SONU in the improvement of relations between the students, staff, management and the community. Our doors are open at all times for consultation to ensure that all conflicts are resolved amicably.

Graduands, the relationship between you and the university is a life long affair which will not end after your graduation. With effect from the year 2006, all graduands will automatically become members of the University Alumni Association

through which you will have an opportunity to contribute to the development of your alma-mater. Be our good ambassadors wherever you go for in doing so you will be contributing to our endeavour to become a world-class institution.

In concluding, allow me Mr. Chancellor Sir, to thank you for having found time to preside over the 34th Graduation of the University of Nairobi. I also wish to thank the graduands, parents, guardians, staff, our distinguished guests and those who contributed in one way or the other towards

making today's event a reality. The graduands before you have been prepared well and are ready to play their part in the development of their country. With these few remarks, it is now my pleasure to invite the Chairman of Council, Mr. John Simba to address the congregation.

Thank you

