



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH TO BE DELIVERED BY THE VICE-
CHANCELLOR PROF. GEORGE A.O. MAGOHA
DURING THE 47TH GRADUATION CEREMONY ON
AUGUST 24, 2012 AT THE CHANCELLOR'S COURT**

The Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui

The Minister, Ministry of Education, Science & Technology

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Technology

Permanent Secretaries

Chairman of the University Council and members of Council present

Vice-Chancellors from sister Universities

Deputy Vice-Chancellors

Principals of Colleges, Deans and Directors

Members of Staff

Graduands, Parents

Distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to our 46th graduation ceremony. This year we graduate a total of 5,550 graduates including 22 PhD's and 750 Masters. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the graduands, you remained dedicated and worked hard to complete your course. Your parents, guardians and relatives also ensured that you kept your nose to the grindstone and I wish to acknowledge their contribution to your success, thank you.

Mr. Chancellor sir, the graduands before you are drawn from the four colleges of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences; Architecture and Engineering; Biological and Physical Sciences; and Education and External Studies. The most improved College is that of Engineering and Architecture with five PhD's, and Education and External Studies with four PhD's. The College of Biological and Physical Sciences is top with 10 PhD's. The discipline based professionals that we graduate today are diverse and include engineers, architects, actuarial scientists, agriculturists, veterinary doctors, land developers, teachers and trainers, scientists, and computer specialists among others. These are highly skilled and essential components for driving

the economy of the nation towards the achievement of vision 2030.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University continues to excel and to outperform in competitions. In the evaluation carried out by the government for performance contracting in 2010/2011, the University of Nairobi emerged top in the State Corporations Category scoring the Excellent score, the only state Corporation to ever achieve that score since the government introduced performance contracting in the entire public service in 2004/2005. This is no mean achievement and my staff deserve to be recognized. In this regard I wish to request you to

intercede so that our staff are paid one month Excellence salary due to them and which in my opinion the Government is silent about despite several gentle reminders. This is part of performance contracting process and we would like the Government to honor its part without further delay.

At the international level, the University of Nairobi also scored well in the world webometric ranking. The latest ranking places University of Nairobi as 1st in Kenya and number 14 in Africa out of 800 Universities and number 1435 in the world out of about 20,000 Universities and Colleges. This is no

mean feat and in fact is the best position ever attained by a local University.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, our brand as a leading institution of higher learning has received visibility worldwide. This year “the campus in the heart of Nairobi” hosted several international visitors who engaged the University in lively debate on political, economic and social development in Kenya. Niccolo Rinnaldi, Member of the European Parliament; Senator Chris Coons from Delaware State; Andre Liveris, Chairmen and CEO, Dow Chemical Company; and Korean Premier, Kim Hwangsik among others, were testimony that our institution is an attractive destination in the

country for intellectual discourse by great leaders. I want to assure the congregation that the University will strive harder to remain a model institution of higher learning in the country, the region and the world at large, which indeed is one of the tenets of Kenya vision 2030.

Ladies and gentlemen, the past one year has been challenging and yet exciting in terms of international links, and collaboration. We have increased ties with local and international stakeholders to boost scholarship. The University of Nairobi has over 300 links with external institutions of higher learning all over the world. 156 of these links were active during the year. The

Vice-Chancellor and his 4 deputies among others visited some of these institutions to strengthen links and sign new agreements which have resulted in billions of shillings in research funds. Needless to say that we have to continually benchmark with leading international universities as is the practice worldwide.

I would like to thank our international collaborators for enhancing their links with the University and for contributing to strengthening our academic programs. I wish to reiterate that our academic programmes have been reviewed regularly and bench marked with other programme favorably. During the year, the University also

signed 11 MoU's with various industries which will provide internship for our students and research opportunities for staff.

Ladies and gentlemen, in 2012 the research portfolio of the University of Nairobi stands at Kshs.3 billion, largely through the research activities of academic staff members. The top researchers for this year still all come from the College of Health Sciences and include Dr. Jared Mecha of the academic department of Medicine who has a total of Kshs.771 million per year from two projects. He is followed by Prof. James Kiarie of the department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology

and Dr. Dalton Wamalwa of the department of Paediatrics and Child Health with Kshs.178 million per year, Prof. Elizabeth Ngugi of the School of Public Health with Kshs.142 million per year and Prof. Omu Anzala of KAVI with Kshs.123 million per year.

Among the most improved from the graduating Colleges include Prof. Tim Waema from College of Biological and Physical Sciences who brought in 1 million dollars spread over 3 years and Prof. James Ochanda of CEBIB with 21 million per year. From College of Architecture and Engineering Prof. Peter Ngau brought Kshs.19.5 million per year while Prof. George Rading brought 18 million per year.

These new efforts and many others are thoroughly commendable.

The current trend worldwide however is for research to translate into policy. I am therefore happy to report that the University of Nairobi is one of 24 universities taking part in the Development Research Uptake in Sub-Saharan Africa (DRUSSA) program. The University is ensuring therefore that research and other relevant work reaches and directly impacts on policy and practice in this country. The University has put in place research and management structures that ensure that it remains relevant to the community.

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the challenges that we face perpetually is dwindling financial resources from the exchequer for capital development. In spite of the low funding, the University has completed many projects and acquired new facilities in various parts of the country. It is these outposts so to speak, which have enabled us to expand our capacity and extend our academic programmes. In terms of capitation, the University has been receiving 38% of its budget, sourcing the rest from internally based sources that includes modular programmes, stakeholders and other benefactors. I wish to appeal to the government to increase capitation to the University to enable us to meet not only the

payroll, but also some funds for capital infrastructure. As the oldest public university, we are in dire need of a facelift for many facilities and to increase our capacity by putting up new facilities. I also wish to repeat an earlier call to many rich individuals and organization to extend the hand of philanthropy by supporting higher education. A partnership with industry is critical for supporting the poor to access higher education. I wish to thank the government for supporting us in our endeavor and particularly granting greater independence in the management of University.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, discipline in the University has improved in the last five years. While we commend

the student body for their discipline, good conduct and ability to engage constructively on their problems, we wish to reiterate that we will continue to serve them through the office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs) Dean of Students, and the Student Affairs Management Board. Again, we will address governance issues through open dialogue, open house and training of student leaders and associations. The University's corporate social responsibility will include mentorship and partnership with volunteer organization for exposing students to life beyond the University. In this way, we hope to provide a holistic education for our students and to prepare them for the challenges and opportunities out

there. We believe that the students will respond favourably and take more responsibility for their behavior and attitude.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University management has continued to ensure that it addresses employee welfare. We have continuously engaged the unions to ensure mutual relationships in the interest of all parties, indeed the testament that we have succeeded in dialogue is the industrial peace that we enjoy, such that, staff have been patient following the delay of the implementation of the Harmonization of Terms of Service in the Public Service. I wish to appeal to staff to continue to exhibit the maturity and sacrifice so far made,

because at the end, we envisage better staff emoluments and other benefits. I applaud staff for their gallant commitment to duty and to raising the quality of our brand; which has enabled the University to quickly earn extra income to fund our activities.

Nevertheless, I must now implore the good government of Kenya to very quickly provide the public University Councils with the authority and ability to negotiate with the three recognized staff Unions in order to avoid needless industrial action.

Ladies and gentlemen, the management of the University is vested on the University council,

whose head is Mr. J.P. Simba. I wish to acknowledge Mr. Simba for his firmness, fairness, guidance and direction on how to implement reforms and governance in the University. As management, we appreciate his results based and strategic approach to leadership. I wish to assure Mr. Simba that the management will not relent from the path of continuous improvement.

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Ladies and gentlemen, I wish recognize and applaud the absolute dedication and most sincere commitment to this University of Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui, our Chancellor since 2003. He has made us appreciate what it means to espouse transformative leadership. We have appreciated that the University has diverse resources that should help us to keep it's lead as a centre of excellence. Dr. Wanjui has not been averse to bringing his vast experience and discipline from Industry to add great value to the University. We have been persuaded to restructure the University, introduce and maintain performance contracting, performance appraisal systems, launch service delivery charters in all units, train staff intensively

for change management and review our strategic plan. I thank Dr. Wanjui for challenging us to set very high standards, to be a point of reference that is not only the pride of the city of Nairobi, but also the nation at large. I assure Dr. Wanjui that we will continue to revitalize and engineer ourselves daily and to be audacious in our plans and objectives. On behalf of Council, staff, students and stakeholders, I say, thank you for being selfless in your service to the University.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the men and women that are present here represent the best in our community, they comprise 2,173 women and 3,376 men, and we are proud of them. They have worked hard,

diligently and smartly and we have no doubt that we are releasing into the job market, a University of Nairobi brand which is undoubtedly the gold standard for this country. As I conclude, I wish to once again thank the academic staff for their meritorious and exemplary service to this University. I wish to congratulate all granduands for their achievement and wish them every success in their future endeavours.

It is now my pleasure to invite the Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology to address you.

Thank you.

