



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. G.A.O.
MAGOHA DURING THE 50TH GRADUATION CEREMONY
ON DECEMBER 6, 2013 AT THE CHANCELLOR'S
COURT**

Dr. Vijoo Rattansi, Chancellor, University of Nairobi

Secretary, for Education, Science and Technology

The former Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui

Chancellors of Universities

Chairman, University of Council, Dr. Idle Farah

Chairpersons of other University Councils

Vice-Chancellor's of sister Universities

Deputy Vice-Chancellors

College Principals

Graduands

Parents and Guardians

Staff and Students

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to the University of Nairobi's 50th graduation ceremony. In particular I welcome all our graduands without whose hard work, this ceremony could not have been held. Congratulations to all the graduands for meritorious this achievement.

Most importantly, I take this opportunity to congratulate Dr. Vijoo Rattansi on her appointment as the Chancellor of the University of Nairobi. Allow me to briefly introduce our Chancellor, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi to you. Dr. Vijoo Rattansi was born in 1948 and completed her early Secondary School in 1964 obtaining certificates from Oxford and Cambridge.

Dr. Vijoo Rattansi is among leading local philanthropists, and her family through the Rattansi Educational Trust has supported education in Kenya from 1956. Over the last ten years, the Rattansi Educational Trust has contributed over KES 120 million to support needy students in public and private universities.

Dr. Vijoo Rattansi is the Chairperson of the Rattansi Educational Trust, Daisy Eye Cancer Fund and Trust of the Michael Blundell Trust among others. Dr. Vijoo Rattansi has wide experience in Institutional development and Conflict mediation in institutions. She is the consummate fundraiser and networker, and has skills and competencies in corporate governance,

strategic planning, gender and development among others. To her advantage she is fluent in English, Kiswahili and Italian.

Dr. Vijoo Rattansi has received national honors i.e. Order of the Grand Warrior (OGW), and an honorary doctorate (D. Litt.) from Moi University in recognition of her efforts in supporting needy students in higher institutions of learning in the country.

We are grateful to the government for this appointment which will ensure that this ceremony and other activities go on without any hitch. With your reputation Madam, I know that you are the right person to take the University of Nairobi to the next

level of development and we warmly welcome you on board. Madam Chancellor you have taken over from another gallant son of this country, Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui, who has successfully completed a ten-year tenure as the Chancellor and ensured that the University experienced exponential growth in all sectors including infrastructure, good corporate governance, financial management, academic performance and growth among others. This University is now the undisputed gold standard in this country and region and to date still remains the only government entity to have achieved the grade of Excellence in Performance Contracting in the whole Public Service. All these I attribute to the ever present leadership of Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui. Thanks to

him, we now run the University more efficiently doing much more at the same time. I wish to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Wanjui for the time and efforts that he sacrificed for this great institution and wish him well in his other undertakings.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this ceremony coincides with our country's celebration of 50 years of independence. Upon reflection on the state of our nation and without fear of contradiction, I dare mention that this country will not have realized all these great developments without the contribution of the University of Nairobi. Our over 160,000 alumni are in key positions in both public and private sector, at national and international levels. The 50th graduation ceremony is yet another

milestone in our University and country that will usher in another group of graduates to play their role in the development of our country. Well done the graduands of the 50th congregation and congratulations to the country as we celebrate 50 years of independence. This ceremony is also part of our national festivities of Kenya @ 50. Early this week, we were privileged to host the retired head of state, H. E. Hon Mwai Kibaki in a lively interaction on developments in the country since 1963.

I also take this opportunity to thank all those individuals who in one way or another contributed to the development of the University of Nairobi in the past 50 years. More particularly, my predecessors, Dr.

Arthur Thomas Porter, the late Dr. Josephat Njuguna, Karanja, the late Prof. Joseph Maina Mungai, Prof. Philip Muide Mbithi, Prof. Francis John Gichaga and Prof. Crispus Makau Kiamba who through their efforts, at different times, made this University what it is today.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the 50th congregation is historical in its own right. It is releasing the largest number of graduands in the history of the University. About 9,000 students will graduate at different levels, signaling the role the University of Nairobi is playing in shaping the human resource capacity of this country. The congregation comprises mainly graduands from the Colleges of: Humanities and Social Sciences, and

Health Sciences and a few graduands from other Colleges who for one reason or another did not make it for the 49th congregation held in August this year.

In terms of numbers and specialization this congregation will confer honours to 275 doctors, 82 pharmacists, 32 dentists, 395 Lawyers, 3214, business executives, 2629 social scientists, among others. Collectively, we are graduating 72 PhDs, 2549 Masters, 5459 Bachelors, among others. Most important is the award of the Doctor of Science to Prof. David Ndetei, who becomes the third University of Nairobi scholar to receive the award, in five years. This year, the University of Nairobi has ushered into the market over **14,207 well educated graduates comprising of 2 DSc's**

92 PhDs, 3,373 Masters 8,522 Bachelors, 105 PGDs and 2,112 Diplomas ready to participate in the development of this country by offering skills and solutions to the problems affecting our society. Among this 2 DSc include 95 PhDs and 3470 Masters. This steady growth has only been possible due to an enabling environment provided by the government. In this regard, I would like to thank the government of Kenya led by H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta and Deputy President William Ruto who have been forthright in helping us to achieve our goals. In addition, I would like to thank members of cabinet for their support to this University. We are optimistic that this cordial relationship will be maintained for mutual

benefit. This way our successors will find a firm foundation to enable them to achieve greater success.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the University of Nairobi remains the Gold standard not only in the country but also internationally. We remain the first choice University with a very strong brand for those wishing to pursue higher education at all levels. Indeed, in the government sponsored programmes the University of Nairobi has the highest cut off points because of the many first choices we get from applicants. All our courses fill to capacity before other universities get a chance to fill their vacancies. Our leadership has also been validated by ranking agencies and the government which consistently places us at number 1 and among

the top in the region and Africa at no. 14 out of a staggering 974 universities.

Madam Chancellor, you are therefore joining a well performing organization which in a nutshell has grown over the last 10 years, improving its reputation by increasing its fixed assets from less than Ksh.10 billion to over Ksh. 100 billion and whose pension fund is over Ksh.10 billion and posting surpluses to boost members savings - in the last two years we have increased members savings by 20 percent and 23 percent respectively out of prudent investment decisions. This is up from eight years ago when the scheme was indebted to the tune of over Ksh. 1 billion. As part of moving into the future, we are enhancing our

infrastructural capacity by constructing the 22-storey University tower at the main campus to house our increasing academic activities. Construction work is progressing well albeit slowed down by lack of a 24-hour license which may affect our projected timelines. Other infrastructural activities include the School of pharmacy complex and the expansion of the Kisumu campus whose works are on schedule.

This Ladies and Gentlemen, demonstrates that our strong brand equally has strong supporting systems that make our higher education environment not only conducive but interesting for learning. Indeed, last weekend I collected a prize in recognition of the College of Health Sciences as a centre of excellence,

from H.E. Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Summit of East African Heads of state. This good performance is also evident among our staff who have boosted our research portfolio to over KES 3.5 billion. As I have mentioned here before, no institution of higher learning can claim excellence without a solid research portfolio. In this regard I would like to commend our scholars for not only concentrating on teaching but also on research and in participating in corporate social responsibility activities. This has ensured that the University maintains strong links and collaborations with other universities, organizations, and key stakeholders worldwide.

Our students have also not been left behind. Through their leadership in SONU, they have steered clear of the activities that bring the name of the institution to disrepute. Rather, they have focused on activities that enrich their professional life. In this regard I would like to commend the SONU leadership led by its Chairman, Zack Kinuthia, Secretary General Edith Mwirigi, Vice-Chairman, Administration and Finance, Philbert Kongola, Vice-Chair Academic Affairs, Maggy Nyokabi and the Treasurer, Jane Chege who have provided exemplary leadership to the student community and helped in improving the University's corporate image.

Madam Chancellor, the University always takes its place as a responsible corporate, mindful of the welfare

of its stakeholders and the nation at large. Slightly over 100 days ago, the University embarked on an audacious programme to sensitize its staff and students on the contents of the Constitution. This programme involved stakeholders from the Judiciary, Parliament, Executive, lawyers, academia among others, in interactions with our staff and students on the provisions of the constitution 2010. The outcome of this process was six publications, including a video on the process, an online resource repository, and more importantly an enlightened University community that is ready to exploit the opportunities provided by the constitution to develop our country. This exercise made the University of Nairobi, the first government agency to undertake this task. I urge other

organizations to follow suit so that Kenyans are aware of the constitution and its invaluable opportunities.

Madam Chancellor, this University is committed to improving the welfare of its members of staff. This has effectively been done through dialogue and mutual understanding on issues affecting their welfare. We understand that as management, the only way of increasing productivity is through key incentives that motivate our staff. My appeal to the government through the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) is to hasten the framework for remuneration for our staff and to effect current CBAs to boost the morale of our staff. It is ironical that the proposed remuneration for members of the county assemblies,

pits their pay higher than that of scholars yet it takes a lot more investment to nurture an academician. My appeal to the government is that it should review the remuneration of University staff to reflect the critical role they play in the social economic development of this nation. This will help in stemming the serious brain drain the country has been experiencing especially to more developed economies.

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.

I wish all of you happy holidays and a prosperous 2014.

Thank you.

It is my pleasure to invite the Cabinet Secretary, for Education to address you.