UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS BY DR VIJOO RATTANSI, CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI DURING THE 5TH OPEN DAY AT THE GREAT COURT ON THURSDAY MAY 8, 2014 AT 10:00 A.M.
Dr. Idle Farah, Chairman, University of Nairobi Council (represented by Mr. Pascal Koskei)
Prof. George Magoha, Vice-Chancellor
Deputy Vice-Chancellors
Principals of Colleges
Deans and Directors
Members of Staff
Students
Parents
Prospective Students
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen
Let me start by thanking you for the very warm introduction. I wish to express my sincere appreciation to, the Chairman of Council Dr. Idle Farah and the Vice-Chancellor Prof. George Magoha for the invitation to grace this occasion. It is indeed a great pleasure for me to be here with you today as the University of Nairobi showcases all it has to offer and all that her experience is all about. Let me extend a warm welcome to all our distinguished guests including you, our prospective students.

This year’s Open Day theme “University of Nairobi: Providing Holistic Education that Guarantees Your Success” is indeed befitting. It captures the very essence of and worth of University of Nairobi
education. The University of Nairobi is the place where many future leaders spend their formative years gaining both intellectual exposure and leadership skills. It is the place where those first crucial professional networks are made. It is where professionals return to for seminars, debates and advanced studies. Over the last 50 years, the University has produced thousands of graduates, many of whom have gone forth to make significant contributions to Kenya, the continent and the world over.

Open Day is historically an information gathering event. Therefore, the information that you will gather today, as a prospective student of higher education, will undoubtedly be useful in making one of the most
important decisions of your lives: whether to go to university, and to which university and why University of Nairobi should be the obvious choice for most if not all of you.

Over the years, I have been privileged to observe the evolution of the University and I am gratified that it’s management has ably led it to this point. The University takes pride in arming whoever walks in through her gates with requisite knowledge, skills and the right attitude. Every UoN alumnus is therefore well equipped for lifelong success in whichever field they chose to make their careers.
It is a universal truth that the more education one has, the more opportunities will present themselves. The global economy is increasingly knowledge-based, and for Kenya to claim her rightful place on the global arena, we need more people who have reached levels of education high enough to effectively drive our participation in it. Young ICT savvy and knowledgeable people with the intelligence, skills and tools to apply that knowledge to new challenges and the courage to find homegrown solutions to local problems are required. I know no better place for such enrichment and preparation for the global knowledge economy than this university.
The decision to continue with education at university level is for most people, the right one. Is just being at any university enough? Will a successful career automatically follow graduation? What sets one university apart from others?

I want to share with you this morning the answers to these pertinent questions and why University of Nairobi would be the university of choice.

In my world, as I hope it will be to many of you, UoN is an acronym that also means "unique offer or none". One can apply this concept to look both at yourself and your personal strengths. The UoN has unique qualities that make it a very good choice for tertiary education.
Today, prospective students, you have an opportunity to reflect on your unique offer, what makes you special. You also have a chance to consider those areas in which you excel, those areas you are naturally inclined to or have the greatest potential. Today is a good opportunity to think more about what you really like doing and learning.

It no doubt is an opportunity to find out more about this university’s unique selling proposition and to ask the staff here what this university has to offer you. The university you choose needs not help you develop your interests into a career but also achieve your own goals.
Why the University of Nairobi?

A day is not long enough to observe all the best selling propositions of UoN. I will therefore, mention just a few.

The UoN prides itself as arguably the highest quality tertiary institution in the region. UoN focuses on quality and continuous improvement is her mantra. The University of Nairobi, School of Business for example, is amongst the best ranked in the continent.

As you explore the University today, please note the impressive secure and comfortable facilities, the beautiful surroundings, the lively atmosphere and the
beautiful people. Those are but some of the aspects that allude to the "high quality" to which I refer.

UoN is widely recognized and known by employers. UoN graduates go on to work at some of the most well-established and highly-regarded private and public sector organizations in the region and internationally. UoN graduates are also very successful in securing places in postgraduate programmes in all parts of the world. In a nutshell, your prestigious degree will be portable if you wish to work or study abroad.

In addition to the learning that takes place in the classrooms and laboratories through lectures each semester, there are guest seminars and panel
discussions that address the most pricking issues of the day. There are regular debates amongst well-known public figures that further enrich the understanding of the real world by the students. Academic field trips run as part of the courses. This gives the students the opportunity to explore and learn by doing and experiencing first-hand the real world challenges and enhance problem solving skills.

Within each faculty, student progress is monitored regularly so that any issues are flagged early, and any extra support required can be provided right away. At UoN we want our students to succeed, and so, rather than by compromising our high academic standards, we provide a wide range of easily accessible assistance to
any student who needs a little extra help to meet those standards.

The UoN is committed to the success of every student who walks through her doors. This commitment permeates all facets of the university. You will see ample evidence of this today.

Commitment to success also implies a commitment, to stretching and challenging those students who are most able and ready to take their learning to the next level. Such students are encouraged to involve themselves in research, to apply for grants and awards and selected to participate in student exchange programs involving international travel.
UoN's commitment to its students' success does not end at graduation. The expanding Student Placement Services within the Dean of Student’s Office seeks to address the work placement needs for graduates who have left university as well as continuing students by facilitating employment, industrial attachments, vacational and voluntary employment. The UoN Alumni network, holds a number of events and functions that bring the UoN Alumni together for networking.

I encourage you to be inquisitive. Gather as much information as possible. As you review the information at home with your families, you are bound to have further questions. I advise you to stay engaged with the people you meet today, and to seek answers to
those queries, for the decision as to which university is best for you, is highly important.

Carefully consider how you personally will assess what is best for you and then approach the decision confidently in your unique offers. Carefully consider how the university you are choosing will help you develop your special qualities and abilities into a career. After all is said and done, I am sure you will agree that the UoN is where you ought to begin building your dreams.
It is now with great pleasure that I declare the 5th University of Nairobi Open day officially opened.

Thank you.