UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

REMARKS MADE BY PROF. G.A.O. MAGOHA, VICE-CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI ON THE OCCASION OF SWEARING-IN OF SONU 98’ OFFICIALS ON TUESDAY, 2ND MAY 2006 AT 2.30 P.M. AT THE CHANCELLOR’S COURT
The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, (Administration and Finance)

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs)

Colleges Principals

Deans of Faculties/Directors of Institutes and Schools

Dean of Students

Chairmen and Heads of Departments

SONU ’98 Congress

Students
Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Am pleased to once again witness over the swearing-in ceremony of the new SONU ’98 officials.

I take this opportunity to congratulate the new team for successfully contesting the elections for the umbrella student organization.
I also wish to commend the supervisor of Elections, Prof. Peter Wanyande, the Dean of Students, Father Dominic Wamugunda and the entire electoral team for overseeing the most peaceful and organized student elections seen in recent times.

It is noteworthy that during the last one and a half years, the University administration has enjoyed peaceful relations with the student community. The
current tranquillity being experienced can to a large extent be attributed to the responsible manner in which SONU 98 has managed student affairs. By rejecting confrontational politics in favour of dialogue, the student leadership has been able to work with the administration more effectively in their endeavour to improve the welfare of students. I urge the new leadership to emulate their predecessors in ensuring that relations between SONU and the University management remain cordial.
I wish to assure the new team that the University administration would like to see a vibrant SONU that will serve the student community effectively and leave an indelible mark in the progress of the University.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there is no reason why local student leadership should not be comparable to that of student bodies in other Universities elsewhere. I challenge the new SONU leaders to embark on a
journey that shall take the union and the University to greater heights of development.

My administration is open to student leaders for consultation on matters concerning students’ welfare. We do appreciate positive criticism because it enables us to correct our mistakes and improve service delivery. You must however avoid confrontation, threats and use of force as means to achieving your
objectives. SONU is now a legitimate student body that has representation in all the University’s key decision-making organs including Council. I want to ask SONU leadership to make use of these channels to bring to the attention of the administration, any issue pertaining to student welfare which needs to be addressed.

I wish to reiterate like I did last year that acts of indiscipline likely to disrupt academic programmes...
will not be tolerated. Like any civilized community, the University has its own rules which students are expected to observe. Of course those who break the laws of the land know what to expect.

Ladies and Gentlemen, one of the biggest challenges facing this country at the moment appears to be that of leadership. To many Kenyans, the tendency of leaders to place personal interests above public interests has contributed to many of the problems
bedevilling the society. As newly elected SONU ’98 officials, you have a very important responsibility. You must ensure that student interests come first before individual interests. Anything short of this amounts to contempt of the electoral mandate which you have been given. Beware of external forces that wish to use your youthful energy to further their own selfish agendas. SONU is the training ground for future challenging responsibilities. Please take this assignment seriously.
Today’s event marks the formal transfer of power from the old team to the new one. Let the losers of this election join hands with the new officials to service the student community. Avoid divisions and unnecessary alignments that injure your mission and disrupt institutional goals and objectives. Be wise with the choice of friends you bring to SONU. It is significant that you see yourselves as Kenyan patriots. Avoid ethnicity at all costs in all that you do. Do not
allow yourselves to be used by politicians. The Kenyan constitution guarantees your freedom for individual political expression without hindrance. “The University of Nairobi as a corporate body only believes in good governance as stated by the properly elected government of the day. We do not have a political opinion as a University. Therefore do not use the University corporate name for a political opinion.”
The responsibility of turning the University of Nairobi into a centre of excellence cannot be left to the administration alone. The role of SONU is critical; we need each other to built on the gains that have been achieved in recent times to revamp the image of the University.

Am happy to note, Ladies and Gentlemen, that the number of female students elected to leadership positions has been on the increase. In the new team,
more than five ladies are holding senior positions in the executive. I wish to congratulate the student community for this progressive development. We at the University are committed to reducing the current gender imbalance in all spheres. We hope the rest of the society can learn something from us.

With these few remarks, let me thank you all for availing yourselves to witness this event and wish the new SONU team a successful term in office.