



## UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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### ADDRESS BY THE CHAIRMAN, UONAA, DURING THE

### 63RD UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI GRADUATION CEREMONY –

### FRIDAY 25/09/2020 AT UON GREAT COURT

The Cabinet Secretary, Education, Prof. George Magoha

The Chancellor, UoN, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi

The Chairperson, UON Council, Prof. Julia Ojiambo

Members of the University Council

Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Stephen Kiama

Deputy Vice Chancellors, Deans and Directors of Faculties, Schools and  
Institutes

Chairpersons of Departments

Members of Faculties and the entire Academic Fraternity

Fellow Alumni of the University of Nairobi

Parents, Guardians and Graduands:

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning

On behalf of the University of Nairobi Alumni Association (UONAA), I am humbled and grateful to be part of this auspicious occasion, when we come together albeit virtually, to celebrate the outcome of many years of intellectual labour by our students, staff and other stakeholders culminating in the conferment of Degrees and award of Diplomas to our graduands, today. I salute you the graduands for an excellent job which has enabled you to earn your various awards today.

On the same breadth, I highly appreciate the concerted efforts from other stakeholders, the National Government, Ministry of Education, Commission for University Education, County Governments, service providers, parents and guardians.

Though unique in its own way because its being done virtually due to COVID-19 pandemic, the occasion is as auspicious and memorable as any other graduation ceremony in this university.

As Chairman of the Alumni Association, and having stood in this same position 40 years ago now, I am proud that today's graduating class is stepping out to join an alumni community of over 240,000+graduates of this distinguished institution of learning, research and innovation. I wish to most sincerely thank the university administration for the unwavering support, which has helped to grow ourAlumni Association as an active forum for our graduates to engage, network and give back to their alma-mater.

It's also my pleasure on behalf of the Association to congratulate Prof. Stephen Kiama Gitahi for being installed as the 8<sup>th</sup> Vice-Chancellor of our great University. I promise him that as the Alumni Association will give him maximum support in the University reforms agenda he has initiated to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in our University.

In our endeavor to fulfill our mandate of service to our alma mater, theAssociation this year started on a high note with the official launch of UONAA Scholarship Fund on March 13<sup>th</sup> 2020. Thisinitiative,witnessed the handing over of academic scholarships to 52 needy and bright students in

their first year of study at the University. This Association has set a target of awarding 1000 scholarships over the next 5 years to needy and bright students at the institution to ensure that their studies are not disrupted.

Together with the scholarship, the awardees are also mentored and coached by other alumni's within the network on ways and means of coping with their studies and on other necessary soft skills which they need to compete and survive in the ever changing job market. I appeal to our alumni to come forward and help us in this initiative to enable us achieve this ambitious target.

I also wish to take this special opportunity, to thank the University Management, faculty, staff and students for their swift move to online services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is indication of an innovative and transformative University ready and well prepared to cope with changes, challenges and create opportunities for the future. By setting high standards and moving all services online – admission, teaching, student's assessment and now the 63<sup>rd</sup> graduation ceremony – I applaud

the University management and the stakeholders who worked hard to ensure the success of this online migration.

To our graduands, I would like to echo the sentiments of the late Steve Jobs when he said (and I quote), *Let's go invent tomorrow rather than worry about what happened yesterday*". As you step out, do not wait for yesterday or today but rather focus on your tomorrow by embracing the change that is happening and turn the *'The New Normal' into an everlasting opportunity*.

The Association empowers small teams referred to as Alumni Chapters to cascade the Association's activities as well as establish their own projects for the benefit of their disciplines and campuses. As members of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Congregation, we will be in touch with you soon on how we can engage with you to become members of UONAA and consider being part of the Chapters and Networks which will enable you actively participate in the activities of your Alma-mater. Currently the Association has 17 Chapters which are discipline, subjects, campus or class based. We host networking events that are meant to bring former graduates together so as to network,

reminisce and re-unite. The chapters play a critical role in providing guidance, role-modeling and shaping the future of faculties/schools and students in terms of curricula development and other related services.

Finally, as you now step out of University life, I remind you to conduct yourselves with patriotism, sense of commitment and decorum that others can emulate. I have no doubt that you will be great ambassadors and flag bearers of The University of Nairobi.

May the almighty God grant you more strength and wisdom to wisely use the skills you have acquired here to make yourself better and impact lives of many others positively.

**Isaac Awuondo**

**CHAIRMAN, UONAA**