



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**REMARKS BY DR. IDLE OMAR FARAH, CHAIRMAN,
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI COUNCIL, ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 52nd GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
NAIROBI AT THE CHANCELLOR'S COURT ON FRIDAY
DECEMBER, 5TH, 2014**

- **The Cabinet Secretary for Education, Science and Technology, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi,**
- **Dr Vijoo Rattansi, Chancellor of the University of Nairobi**
- **Prof. G. A. O. Magoha, Vice-Chancellor, University of Nairobi**
- **Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors from other universities**
- **Council Members**
- **University Staff**
- **Parents and Guardians**
- **Graduands**
- **Distinguished Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is yet another momentous occasion for the University of Nairobi, as we celebrate and commemorate the 52nd Graduation ceremony. First and foremost, I wish to convey my most sincere congratulations and heartfelt felicitations to the graduating class of 2014. No doubt years of persistent hard work and struggle has paid off handsomely culminating into this special day when you will be given the powers to read and do all that appertains to your academic achievements. Pongezi sana to all the grandaunts and I salute you all.

As we celebrate your achievement, it behooves you to remember that the country is undergoing rapid development in an increasingly digital world. It is thus important that you

make use of the excellent skills that you have acquired at this University to serve your fellow countrymen and humanity at large.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this year, the University has had a number of challenges and successes. One of our key achievements is that we maintained and enhanced the good standing of the University at all levels, nationally, regionally and even globally. Indeed, this year we have demonstrable quality work in research, teaching and corporate social responsibility.

The Web Ranking of Universities re-affirmed the University of Nairobi (UoN) as the leading University in the region, at

position nine (9) in Africa out of 1307 ranked universities. The ranking confirms the scholarly competitive edge that the University of Nairobi (UoN) has steadily maintained in the country, in Africa and the entire world. This is something that we must celebrate as we look forward to 2015, to better enhanced ranking of the university. We have had some disruption mainly through the transition but also briefly during the Implementation of the CBA, I am glad that we finalized this and I thank the members of staff for upholding industrial peace, conducting themselves with restraint and dignity.

The University of Nairobi Council is endowed with talent and I believe that together, we can commit to ensuring that the

University meets and advances its core objectives and obligations to society. I wish to affirm therefore that the Council, will continue engaging the unions in order to reach amicable solutions regarding their welfare. Further, I also challenge the students' union to emulate members of staff by reaching out to the authorities whenever they have outstanding issues and to embrace dialogue. Indeed, I am aware that the delayed HELB loans, the purported fee increase, were thorny issues that caused challenges and turbulence, but happily these did not cause as much disruption to the academic programme.

Ladies and gentlemen, the 52nd Graduation ceremony marks the final graduation for our long serving CEO and Vice

Chancellor, Prof George Magoha. Indeed, the last ten years, have been time for tremendous change for the University under his command The UoN has made great strides in all aspects including but not limited to fiscal discipline, academic excellence, infrastructure development and capacity building. During this period, there has been an exponential increase in the number of student, academic programs offered and alumni numbers. A firm foothold has been attained in what I like to call a good working culture, good corporate governance, and in upholding academic excellence. As part of the institutional culture, the University has been a force in the community with its focused corporate social responsibility.

As Chairman of Council, I can attest that not only did he respect the council, but also that he was a committed team player, partnering with council and meticulously implementing council decisions. Allow me Ladies and gentlemen to mention some of the key achievements made under Prof Magoha ; his major contribution to the University in a decade of service include: restructuring the University, entrenching performance contracting, performance appraisal systems, launching a Service charter, carrying out intense training for change management, pursuing ISO certification, and review and revitalize the University of Nairobi's Strategic Plan. The one legacy that will live long after him is the University of Nairobi Towers. You cannot have more commitment than this. As he transits from

administration, we welcome him to clinical and teaching work that awaits him at the College of Health Sciences and at the Medical Practitioners Board.

Prof. Magoha, we will still be calling upon you to give wise counsel, advice and to share your experiences on best practices in management at the University, and in particular as we complete the University towers.

Ladies and gentlemen, in my address to the 51st Congregation in August 2014, I noted that when the tenure of Prof George Magoha comes to an end, the Council, will deal with the transition in a timely manner and a transparent fashion. I am delighted therefore that following

the interviews and selection process, Prof. Peter, M.F Mbithi, is the new Vice Chancellor- designate. I wish at this juncture to thank the Council, the Chancellor, Dr Vijoo Rattansi, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for having been steadfast throughout this process and the unity of purpose during the entire process. On behalf of the Council, I welcome Prof. Mbithi to the team, and affirm that the Council will support him in our quest to forge ahead in the development of this University.

Ladies and gentlemen, the University Act, 2012, has given authority to councils as oversight authorities, to manage the resources and assets of the university and to ensure that the university acts in compliance with all laws and legislations

related to a public institutions management. As the council continues to assert itself, there may occasionally be friction between the council and other university organs, such as UMB, Senate etc. my only appeal is that we resolve such overlaps/issues amicably and towards common vision and policy point of view. I wish to assure the congregation that as a Council and going forward, the Council is fully cognizant of its role as an oversight authority and will take it up more forcefully and as required by the rule of law and the Act.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Council and the chancellor have been working as a team and we have developed a common vision for this university which augers well. I wish to inform the congregation that in 2015, we will embark upon a

process of ensuring that the student experience of the University is wholesome. This is in respect to welfare, health and life skills. Already, Dr Sanjay Advani , who is a member of the council, has agreed to take up a mentorship program and internships for students. We will provide leadership training to all prospective student leaders' i.e. SONU, before and after elections. We also want to ensure that the University maintains its competitive edge at international level, this is ongoing, and we will be informing all as it progresses.

Madam Chancellor , while the University has been able to discharge its mandate effectively because of the support that

we have received from our stakeholders, there is need for the government to continue to provide finances for the recurrent expenditure that we require to run this institution; we appeal to the government to increase funding beyond the current 38 per cent budgetary support, so that our internally generated funds can be directed towards research and infrastructural development. On its part, the University will continue to generate cash flows to supplement government capitation.

Once again, congratulations to the class of 2014. It is our hope that you will have a positive and lasting impact on the society you will be serving; do not just look at the possibility of employment in the public or private sphere, but rather,

seek alternative ways of engaging yourself fully. I want to encourage you to join the alumni association and seek to make significant contributions to your alma mater.

Thank you. God Bless the University of Nairobi, God bless Kenya