



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR,
PROF. GEORGE MAGOHA DURING THE 45TH
GRADUATION CEREMONY ON SEPTEMBER 9, 2011
AT THE CHANCELLOR'S COURT**

The Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui

Minister for Higher Education Science & Technology, Hon Prof. Margaret Kamar

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Technology

Chairman of the University Council and members of Council present

Vice-Chancellors from sister Universities

Deputy Vice-Chancellors

Principals of Colleges, Deans and Directors

Members of Staff

Graduands, Parents

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my pleasure to welcome all of you to this great University and in particular, to the 45th graduation ceremony of the University of Nairobi.

Graduands, parents and guests, we are proud to have you here during this ceremony. I also take this opportunity to congratulate the class of 2011 for their hard work and sacrifice which has ultimately earned you a position in this Congregation. Some courses like architecture take as long as six years, and require commitment, focus, patience and sacrifice to get to the finishing line. You have made this Institution proud,

**and this ceremony possible, and once again
Congratulations for the good work.**

**This ceremony, Ladies and Gentlemen, features
graduands from four colleges, namely: Agriculture and
Veterinary Sciences, Architecture and Engineering,
Biological and Physical Sciences and Education and
External Studies. The remaining colleges of
Humanities and Social Sciences, and Health Sciences
will present their graduands during the 46th ceremony
to be held later this year on 2nd December 2011. In
essence, we are releasing into the market, top class**

engineers, architects, scientists in various fields, agriculturalists, veterinary doctors, teachers and many other professionals. I would like to assure the market that, our graduands are highly trained professionals who will meet the needs of various sectors of the country's economy. Internationally, our graduates have continued to put up an excellent performance. I wish to congratulate Hon. Prof. Margaret Kamar, on her appointment as Minister for Higher Education Science and Technology. The University of Nairobi welcomes your appointment and wishes to assure you that we will collaborate with your ministry in implementing the

government's development blue print envisioned in the Kenya Vision 2030.

As Management, we recognize the role played by a vibrant student union in managing and modeling students. In this regard, management structures have been created at the level of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs) to mainstream the management of student activities in the University. The first holder to this position appointed by the University Council, is Prof. Isaac Mbeche, who has vast administrative experience in the University. He will be backed up by

the existing structures which have been strengthened to support student welfare.

I commend the Student's Affairs Division, which successfully conducted the 2011 student union (SONU) election and our students who conducted themselves maturely specifically in the run up to their union elections .

Equally important, is the mainstreaming of the research component that, has for a long time been run as a department within the academic division. The University Council, appointed Prof. Lucy Irungu, to

head this research docket as an independent division. With Prof. Irungu's vast research and administrative experience, it is expected that besides teaching and research, grant raising activities will be upscaled and given more prominence in our operations. Towards this quest, the Division embarked on training academics on research grant proposal writing. It is envisaged that through this training, our staff will have the skills to compete for international research grants, rather than, waiting for government funding.

It is worth noting that the University research portfolio has increased almost eight fold from over Kshs. 300 million in 2004/2005 to Kshs.2.5 billion in 2011/2012. On top of the list of our researchers this academic year are Professors Omu Anzala and Walter Jaoko jointly from the Department of Medical Microbiology and Parasitology, Dr. James Kiarie from the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Professor Elizabeth Obimbo from the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health. But the newest research grant worth 250 million Kenya shillings has just been confirmed and the Principal Investigator is Dr. Jared Mecha of the

department of Clinical Medicine and Therapeutics. Mr. Chancellor Sir, all these researchers are from the College of Health Sciences. I therefore commend the Principal, Prof. Isaac Kibwage and researchers of the College of Health Sciences for being on top this year and encourage the other colleges to continue the good work as they have all improved.

The most prolific publishers this year include Prof. Julius Ogeng'o from the Department of Human Anatomy with 30 peer reviewed publications so far, Prof. Nancy Karanja of LARMAT with 13 publications,

Dr. Julius Juma Okello of Agricultural Economics with 12 publications, Dr. Dalton Wamalwa and Prof. Ruth Nduati with 8 and 7 publications respectively both from the Department of Paediatrics and Child Health.

Ladies and Gentlemen, offering high quality education is not possible without good facilities. In order to maintain a high level of training, the University has continued to expand its learning facilities. This year, we managed to complete three science laboratories and a large lecture theatre sitting 500 Pax at Kenya Science Campus at a cost of Kenya Shillings 3000 million to

boost the science facilities at the University. We also completed a new mortuary that is now used for learning by the School of Medicine, and a bigger facility to offer embalming and other related services to the general public. We also intend to complete the residential halls in Lower Kabete and add another floor to the Medical Library at Kenyatta National Hospital to cope with a larger number of medical students. The University has expanded its Law School to Mombasa and Kisumu, and the programmes have been accredited by the Council for Legal Education which is a testament of the quality of the UoN brand.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, we have continued to improve the quality of our human resources through offering training skills to members of staff to prepare them adequately for the modern dynamic environment in higher education. It is important to note that most of our teaching staff are qualified members of various professional bodies; qualified to teach and certified to practice in their various professions. Essentially, our professional courses also have the relevant approval from professional bodies.

Our training is thus in line with the University strategic plan, which recognizes imparting new skills as a new way of empowering staff. This management approach, that began six years ago with the embracement of public sector reforms, has yielded positive developments at the University. These developments are reflected in our top ranking in the Performance Contracting, in which we were ranked the top performing university and third overall in the State Corporations category out of 169 State Corporations. In this ranking, the University of Nairobi was ahead of all public corporations which have more resources.

This performance is also reflected in international rankings in which we remain top locally and among the leading in the region and at number 14 in the continent. I wish to thank the Chancellor, Council through Chairman John Simba, Senate staff and students for upholding high quality standards.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, we are not relenting on our position, recently we re-launched our Reviewed Strategic Plan and were ISO recertified, to give impetus to our development agenda. This positive performance by the Institution has increased our networks with

other leading institutions. Only recently, universities from America, Europe and Asia have signed MoUs to collaborate with us in virtually all fields. These international links will not only expose our students and staff to global trends, but is also a pointer that the University of Nairobi is a recognized centre of excellence by its peers in other parts of the world. This is further testified by the large number of world leaders who find the University of Nairobi a choice destination for interacting with students and staff, the last being the German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, we are grateful to you and the government for appointing the new Council, which was inaugurated last month ago. The reconstituted Council has the right mix of experience and new blood to ensure continuity, and injection of new ideas, respectively. On behalf of Management, I affirm that the Council will be accorded adequate support to ensure smooth governance of the Institution and that the strict financial discipline instituted in the University will continue to be maintained in accordance with the Rules and Laws of the land.

Congratulations to the team, led by the Chairman, Mr. John Simba.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in our quest to become a world-class university, we encounter various insurmountable challenges. The perennial shortage of funds, as alluded to by the Chairman of Council, suggests that we cannot expand our facilities to meet the increasing demand for higher education in Kenya. This University also lacks adequate learning and accommodation facilities. I appeal to the government, through our parent ministry,

to provide more funds for the expansion of facilities and as well as upgrading of the existing ones.

The University also faces the challenge of retaining its staff, owing to the increased number of public and private universities which have been busy attracting our staff with promotions and other benefits. Furthermore University of Nairobi has continued to provide skilled academic manpower to the central Government through appointments to all Commissions, Permanent Secretaries, the Judiciary, the Diplomatic Service, State Corporations Chief Executives just to

mention a few. While the University Council recognizes staff welfare as key to the success of the University, I request for more incentives from the government, to attract and retain staff.

In concluding, let me once again congratulate all the graduands on their achievement and wish them every success in their future endeavours.

Let me also most sincerely thank the Government for the freedom they have accorded us to run the

University without interference as was the case in the past.

It is now my pleasure to invite the Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Prof. Margaret Kamar to address the Congregation.

Thank you.