



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PROF.
GEORGE MAGOHA DURING THE 39TH GRADUATION
CEREMONY ON OCTOBER 17, 2008 AT THE
CHANCELLOR'S COURT**

H.E. Hon Mwai Kibaki, President of the Republic of Kenya

The Right Hon. Raila Odinga, Prime Minister

Hon. Kalonzo Musyoka, Vice-President

H.E. Dr. Kofi Annan

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

Hon Dr. Sally Kosgei, Minister for Higher Education Science & Technology,

Cabinet Ministers

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

**Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher
Education, Science & Technology**

Permanent Secretaries

**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 the 39th graduation ceremony of the University of Nairobi. The University is privileged to host you in this special graduation ceremony.

In particular I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the head of state H.E. President Mwai Kibaki, the Prime Minister, Right Hon. Raila Odinga and H.E. Dr. Kofi Annan for accepting to join us during this auspicious occasion and more importantly for accepting to be honoured by

**University of Nairobi during this congregation.
This is despite your very busy schedules.**

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University of Nairobi Senate decided to honour the three dignitaries for the role they played in restoring peace in this country after the post-election mayhem that followed the announcement of Presidential election results. Through their sacrifice and bold decisions individually and jointly they managed to prevent our beloved country from sliding into anarchy. Indeed the Kenyan example has since been adopted

by one other African country to try and solve the political impasse that has persisted in that country for quite sometime.

Your Excellency, the last time you joined us in a similar function in 2004 we honoured you for your role in democratizing the nation and your ascension to the Presidency. Today you are being joined by the Prime Minister and Hon. Dr. Kofi Annan to receive honours for your joint role in helping to avert a national crisis. As a University our operations were disrupted for two months and

we indeed lost a member of staff and a student during the violence. The University of Nairobi Community were jubilant when the peace accord was finalized and normalcy returned to the country. I am happy to report to you Sir, that University has since made up for the lost time and our academic programmes are fully back on track.

Your Excellency, the University of Nairobi has continued to embrace the government reform programme that was put in place by yourself in the last five years and is realizing its benefits. All our

staff including the top management are now competitively hired, sign performance contracts and are evaluated by the University Council and the Central Government on quarterly basis.

Through these reforms, Your Excellency, the University has been able to complete many projects that stalled in the 1990s due to inadequate funding. We have also been able to upgrade our existing infrastructure and initiate new projects to cope with increased demand for new facilities.

Ladies and gentlemen, in response to the government's call to expand access to higher education to more Kenyans, the University pioneered in introducing Module II (self-sponsored) courses by the then Vice-Chancellor Professor Francis Gichaga, targeting students who missed university admission due to limited government funding. The overall enrolment has consequently increased to about 45,000 students, half of whom are self-sponsored.

Your Excellency in the past, University of Nairobi students were often in news for all the wrong reasons. Today I am happy to report that our students have changed and fully embraced dialogue with the administration whenever they have an issue to sort out. As a matter of fact, we have been able to run this University for the last four years without any major conflict with students. This has ensured that we complete our academic programmes and hold graduations on time. Indeed our corporate image is now significantly better. We commend our students and their leaders for

this exemplary conduct and appeal to all Kenyans to join the University of Nairobi community in rejecting the use of violence as a means of solving disputes.

In an effort to improve service delivery to our clients, the University has put in place a quality management system that attained ISO 9001 – 2000 certification in August this year. We are proud to have reached this international standard of excellence.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the University of Nairobi has continued to conduct cutting edge research in various areas of academic and practical interest. Notably the University has made its contribution in the health and agriculture sectors particularly in combating Malaria and the HIV and AIDs pandemic. Our contribution in the political, social and economic sectors is well documented. To augment this contribution, the University has set up research Fund of over Kshs.700 million that is sustained through our internally generated resources, government and international

collaborators. These research funds are accessible to our staff who are actively involved in research.

Today ladies and gentlemen, is a very special occasion for the graduands who sacrificed resources and time to realize their educational dreams. This achievement was realized under the guidance of a dedicated team of staff who worked tirelessly during the entire period. As the fruits of this effort, we are going to confer degrees and award diplomas to more than 4500 graduands

among them PhDs, masters, undergraduates, postgraduate diplomas and ordinary diplomas. We are also going to award the first earned Doctor of Science degree to one of our senior scholars, Prof. John Kokwaro.

This graduation is also a milestone because we are going to graduate 100,000th alumni of this University to join our wide network that is spread globally. I challenge the graduands of today's

ceremony to join our Alumni association and participate in building their *Alma mater*.

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