



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**REMARKS BY PROFESSOR GEORGE A.O.
MAGOHA, VICE CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF
NAIROBI, DURING HIS ADDRESS TO 1ST YEAR
STUDENTS ON 15TH OCTOBER, 2009 IN TAIFA
HALL AT 2.30 P.M.**

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs), Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration & Finance), Prof. Peter Mbithi

Principals of Colleges

Deans and Directors

Heads of Departments

University Administrators

Student Leaders

All first year students

Ladies & Gentlemen

It is with great pleasure that I welcome all of you to the University of Nairobi. I also take this opportunity to congratulate you for your excellent performance in the 2007 KCSE Examination which enabled you to gain admission to the most prestigious institution of higher learning in the country and region.

The University of Nairobi has over time provided quality higher education to more than 109,000 students who are offering distinguished service in the private and public sectors worldwide. With a staff complement of over 5000, and a student population of 46,000, enrolled in both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, the University of Nairobi is undoubtedly among the largest and well staffed universities in Africa.

We have a good staff complement and adequate physical infrastructure that has been continuously upgraded to deal with the emerging changes in higher education. We have in the recent past completed many projects that had stalled and initiated new ones to cope with the rising demand for higher education and improve the quality of services rendered by the institution. The latter has since been corroborated by the award of the ISO certificate as a mark of proven quality services being rendered.

The University is an institution of higher learning whose core activities are teaching research and dissemination of knowledge. You will be expected to attend all classes and do your assignments as

directed by your lecturers. Do not squander this chance by engaging in pursuits likely to distract you from your studies and result in either poor performance or failure.

In the past, the University of Nairobi was in the news for the wrong reasons. We were constantly affected by student protests and demonstrations, which quite often disrupted our academic activities, inconvenienced the general public and battered our corporate image. However, for the past five years you may have noticed the tranquillity that now exists at the University. This has enabled us to complete our programmes on schedule and improve the corporate image of the University. These changes have not been easy; they have been brought about by embracing

dialogue in resolving conflicts between the administration and the student community and more important; strict adherence to the rules and regulations governing the conduct of students.

You may also have experienced a lot of freedom on campus than in your previous institutions. Indeed, more than what you may get in your own homes. This freedom ladies and gentlemen is expected to be exercised with a lot of restraint to avoid infringing on the rights of others. To ensure that you are properly protected and informed, there are sets of rules to guide you while on campus and strict penalties for those who disobey them. Please ensure that you acquaint yourself with these rules to lead a smooth life on campus.

The university has a governance structure that is clearly spelt out in the statutes. This structure enables the university to meet its mandate which include; meeting students expectations while at the University. The structure runs from the departmental level all the way to the Vice-Chancellor who reports to the University Council and the Chancellor. You are encouraged to utilize these offices to solve your problems

The University encourages the participation of the students in the management of its affairs through the various students' organisations. The umbrella students' body, SONU whose membership is compulsory is represented in all University organs. In addition there exist professional and welfare organizations whose

membership is voluntary. All these organizations exist to articulate issues concerning student welfare. For more information on student activities, please contact the Office of the Dean of Students in your respective Colleges.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as I indicated earlier, University life will accord you a lot of freedom, which most of you may not have experienced. This freedom comes with its own social risks. Among them is the HIV/Aids pandemic that is claiming many lives in the country. I urge all of you to lead responsible lives and avoid risky sexual behaviour. Let abstinence be the norm and if you cannot, please use condoms which are readily available in our University Health Services free of charge. We also have voluntary

counselling and testing services which are available in the University – please utilize these services. An HIV/Aids policy document is also available in libraries and on the website. I urge you to acquaint yourself with it and desist from activities that may ruin your life.

As you all know drugs have ruined many promising careers worldwide. Locally, I am sure many of you have a relative or a friend who might have succumbed to the menace. From a legal point of view, possession and use of illicit drugs both in and outside the University is both a breach of the rules and regulations governing the conduct of students and also a criminal offence punishable under the penal code respectively. Health wise drugs are very addictive, expensive

and have destroyed many careers worldwide. Please resist the temptation to engage in these destructive habits because the consequences are dire.

The University of Nairobi is located within the city centre and its environs. This has many advantages however; there are a few problems that arise from this vantage location. Typical of many urban areas worldwide, there are notorious crime spots within the city and a few around the university. Some of these areas that should be avoided especially at night include but are not limited to Nyerere Road, Serena Bus Park and the adjoining footpath, Chiromo Bridge, the Museum Hill Roundabout and the Uhuru Highway Tunnel. In addition, when venturing outside the

University in the evening, please ensure that you are accompanied to reduce the risk of being mugged and avoid walking on lonely and dark streets.

Ladies and gentlemen, like other reputable universities in the world the University of Nairobi has not prescribed any formal a dress code for both students and staff save for the College of Health Sciences. It is however the responsibility of all students and members of staff to observe standards that subscribe to modesty and decency in both dress and manner. Avoid forms of dressing that are likely to cause discomfort to those around you or attract unnecessary attention to your sexuality. All cases of sexual harassment must however be reported to the

relevant authorities immediately for appropriate action without fear of intimidation.

Today we are formally inducting you into University community, with other orientation activities especially at the residential and college level expected to continue until you start your classes next week. The orientation will usher in the most unforgettable and rewarding experiences in your life as you build your career at the University of Nairobi. This will ultimately determine the direction of your professional life and the valuable social networks that you will eventually build. On our part, we shall provide a conducive environment to ensure that you realize your professional ambition and prepare you adequately to meet the expectations of the

world.

**With those remarks, I wish you the most fulfilling
and rewarding experience at UoN.**

Thank you