



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**REMARKS BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. G.A.O.
MAGOHA DURING THE 46TH GRADUATION CEREMONY
ON FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2011 AT THE
CHANCELLOR'S COURT**

**Minister, Ministry of Education, Science and
Technology**

Chancellor, University of Nairobi

Chairman, University of Council

Deputy Vice-Chancellors

College Principals

Graduands

Parents and Guardians

Staff

Students

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to this auspicious occasion of the 46th Graduation Ceremony of the University of Nairobi. It is indeed a joyous occasion to have students, parents and guardians here to witness the crowning of more than 4600 graduands.

To the graduands, I am proud that through your gallant efforts, it has been possible to hold this ceremony To the parents, it is your financial sacrifices and wise counsel that ensured that these young fellows before us today were able to receive quality higher education and complete their studies as scheduled. Thank you.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the graduands before you this morning consist of students from the Colleges of

Health Sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences, Ph. D students university wide, and a few others who for one reason or another failed to graduate during the 45th Ceremony held last September. In essence therefore, majority of those graduating today are professionals from various fields among them: doctors, pharmacists, dentists, nurses, lawyers, business executives, social scientists, among others.

Of special mention Mr. Chancellor Sir, is the increased numbers of postgraduates who initially constituted less than 10 per cent of the graduands to the current 25 per cent. Today we have ... Ph Ds. ... Masters and ... Postgraduate diplomas. This shows that this University, particularly our students and staff have not only taken

postgraduate studies seriously but have also realized that the growth of our economy and realization of the Kenya Vision 2030 is hinged on highly trained manpower.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the University of Nairobi's research portfolio has grown to an impressive figure of over Kshs. 3 billion up from 2 billion last year, through research activities of members of staff. In this regard, I wish to single out Prof. Walter Jaoko for raising Kshs.700 million from the Global Fund Round 10 to be awarded to the School of Medicine to conduct research on HIV prevention and treatment.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, recently, public universities have been in the limelight over the standoff between the government and unions on the remuneration of staff members. The strike paralyzed most universities and indeed some closed while others rescheduled their academic activities. At the University, ladies and gentlemen, though our activities were also affected, we did not reach a point of closing. Indeed, many of our academic activities including examinations and planning for this ceremony went on as scheduled. In this regard I would like to thank members of staff and students for remaining calm and at the same time thank the government and the unions for agreeing to return to the negotiating table to ensure that normal academic functions proceed without interruption. This

was indeed a practical confirmation that dialogue as opposed to confrontation always succeeds.

On our part, the University management has continued to ensure that employee welfare is addressed. Recently, through joint negotiations with the unions, we increased allowances within our jurisdiction, to all cadres of staff. They included commuter allowances, subsistence allowances, health allowances and baggage and passage allowances among others. Management will continue to engage the unions to ensure a mutual relationship that secures the interests of both parties.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to address the question of student discipline, which has been challenging, given a few incidents in the past few months that include arson, stoning of innocent motorists, and other criminal acts. I wish to remind the students that they are here at the University through the largess of taxpayer for one reason only; to get an education. I wish to assure the stakeholders that the administration is going to take the necessary action to ensure that this gross misconduct by students is dealt with firmly and permanently to save the public from inconveniences and secure our corporate image.

Ladies and Gentlemen, quality higher education remains a priority to the University Senate, management organs and staff of this great University. All our students undergo a rigorous education system comparable to leading universities worldwide. It is no wonder that when our graduates join foreign universities for higher studies, they always emerge tops; a confirmation of the quality higher education foundation that we offer. We also receive an overwhelming number of local and foreign students expressing interest to join our programmes every academic year; a pointer that our programmes are popular beyond this region. Indeed, today we have graduands from foreign countries graduating at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I wish to report that the University has continued with its sterling performance in the public sector reform programme otherwise known as Performance Contracting. In the last three years, the University of Nairobi has maintained the top spot in the higher education category and among the top two in the State Corporation's category. On behalf of management, I would like to thank members of staff for this achievement and also assure our stakeholders that we are on course to improve on this performance .

Mr. Chancellor Sir, over the recent years, this University has been receiving capitation from the government to the tune of 39 per cent of its budget. The rest of the funding has to be sourced internally

mainly from module II programmes and other benefactors. I would like to appeal to the government through the minister for higher education, science and technology, to increase capitation to the University of Nairobi to at least cater for the payroll, so that income from other activities can go towards increasing and improving facilities – some of which are in dire need of a facelift, while in many areas, we need to increase capacity by putting up new ones.

Through our own initiatives, Mr. Chancellor Sir, we have been able to complete many projects in the last 10 years in all campuses, put up new ones and acquired others in the strategic parts of the country to extend our academic activities. These projects have cost over

Kshs 2 billion and have given the University a new face and are accommodating many of our activities. We are now in the process of constructing the state of the art ‘green towers’, at the Main Campus, to be sandwiched between the Education Building and the Gandhi Memorial Library Building, overlooking the Great Court. The building to be called ‘University Towers’, will be a 14-floor-storey that will house the University of Nairobi Graduate School, the Graduate School of Business, two lecture theatres with a capacity of 500 students each, four lecture theatres with a capacity of 300 students each, several smaller lecture theatres with a minimum capacity of 60 students, Senate and Council Chamber and Senior management offices. This project will cost us approximately Kshs 1 billion,

provide additional capacity for 4000 students and will help us in addressing the perennial problem of inadequate learning space in the medium term as management strategizes for the long term solutions.

This country has many rich individuals and organizations yet very few extend a philanthropic hand to support education. However, one lady has particularly touched me for the time I have been Vice-Chancellor. The lady is Mrs. Vijooh Rattansi, who through the Rattansi Educational Trust, has been supporting higher education annually to the tune of Kshs 12 million for many years. I take this moment to appreciate her kind gesture and urge more Kenyans to come forward and support the poor to access higher

education. The Rattansi Trust has actively supported the University of Nairobi and other universities for the past 13 years on various projects among them the donation of eye equipment. Please let us applaud her efforts.

Today, Ladies and Gentlemen, belongs to our graduands without, whom this ceremony would not have been possible. They will be joining over 124,000 past graduates who have successfully proven the quality of the University of Nairobi brand. In this regard, I am requesting you to be our worthy ambassadors in the market, are welcome to join us again for higher education and also in our Alumni Association to help in

building this Institution. I wish you success in all your future endeavors.

With those remarks, it is now my pleasure to invite the Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology to address you.

Welcome madam minister.