



## **UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

---

**SPEECH BY DR. JOSEPH B. WANJUI, CHANCELLOR,  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI, ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
44<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY AT THE CHANCELLOR'S  
COURT ON FRIDAY DECEMBER 3, 2010**

**Hon. Prof. Hellen Sambili, MP, Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology**

**Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and High Commissioners**

**Prof. Crispus Kiamba, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology**

**Mr. John Simba, Chairman, University of Nairobi Council**

**Council Members**

**Prof. George Magoha, Vice-Chancellor, University of Nairobi**

**Deputy Vice-Chancellors**

**College Principals**

**Deans and Directors of Faculties, Schools and Institutes**

**Parents and Guardians**

**Students and Staff**

**Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

**As the Chancellor of this premier institution of learning, it gives me great pleasure to join you as we celebrate the 44<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony. The number 44<sup>th</sup> is also of significance to us since it is the number of the first American president with direct family links to us Kenyans, President Barack Obama. His rallying call of “Yes, We Can” is inspirational to all of us. It restores hopes and belief in ourselves that no matter the challenge in front of us, we can surmount it. This graduation is a celebration of the fruits of the ‘Yes We Can’ spirit. It is a culmination of a long and challenging journey in pursuit of academic excellence.**

**It is only a few years ago that the young and fresh professionals graduating today joined this institution from all corners of this country and beyond. They were anxious about the new environment and eager to**

**embark on the various programmes they had admitted to. Above all, they had the “Yes We Can” mindset that has seen them through the rigours of academic life. On the other hand, their parents, guardians and sponsors had confidence in the institution their children had selected. Today’s ceremony is therefore a testimony that their faith and their investment were not in vain. They were right in their judgment and we are proud to release to them, and indeed to society, positively transformed human beings.**

**For us at the University of Nairobi, It is always our pride to take our students through a programme successfully from the beginning to the end. Successful design and implementation of various programmes is in line with our mission and vision. We are therefore delighted to witness another successful cohort receive**

**the power to read and do all what appertains to their degrees. This is gratifying not only to us as professionals but in terms of fulfilling our obligation to society to provide the economy high level human resource.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen, the responsibility of providing the society with high level human resource is both an honour and a great challenge. It demands the commitment and ability to identify, design and implement programmes that will equip the learners with the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them provide solutions to society's problems. It also demands that our institutions provide the facilities and conducive environment that will make this happen. In addition, we must be in a position to nurture, mentor and coach our students so as to transform from**

**freshers into young professionals who are ready and willing to serve in their various areas of specialization.**

**This challenge has been growing with time. Since independence, the demand for access to education has been increasing rapidly. As a public university, we urgently need to think of ways and means of reducing the waiting time for the students to join the university especially through the regular programme. The University of Nairobi is already doing a commendable job of increasing access to education especially through the module II and III programmes.**

**This is quite encouraging since not only are students getting more opportunities to benefit from university education, the university is also getting extra income that go a long way in supplementing funding from the**

**exchequer. The challenge lies in creating a balance between increasing access to education and maintaining quality of education.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen, it is also important to note that the first lot of free primary education have just sat for the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE). This is the biggest number of candidates that has sat for the examination since independence. The first Challenge is how to accommodate all those who pass in the available secondary schools. However, in four years time, they will be looking for places in universities. We therefore need to urgently embark on plans to expand facilities so that no deserving cases miss places in universities because of lack of space.**

**We also recognize that parents, guardians and sponsors are spending huge amounts of money educating their children abroad. A number of countries are regarding education as an important export commodity. We have a responsibility to do whatever it takes to reduce the exodus of our students to universities abroad. This will not only reduce the burden on parents and sponsors since local universities are cheaper, it will also help in channeling the realized savings to other deserving sectors of the economy.**

**At this juncture, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I take the opportunity to thank the Government through the parent Ministry, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, for continued support. This support is essential if the university is to enhance its**



**efforts to fulfill its mandate, mission and vision. We therefore look forward to continued support.**

**One of our strategic objectives is to strengthen existing partnerships and develop new ones. The private sector is one of our biggest stake holders. We are expected to supply them with appropriately skilled personnel. We are also expected to partner in areas of research, product development and innovation. I therefore wish to appeal to them to engage in constant consultation so that we are aware of their needs and projections for the future. That way we will be able to design programmes that are aligned to market needs and expectations. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank those who are already partnering with us in various undertakings. In particular, I would like to thank those organizations who provided prizes that**

**were presented recently during the University of Nairobi Prizes Presentation Ceremony.**

**May I also appeal to other companies to come forward and offer prizes not only for purposes of motivating the students for better performance but also promoting specific areas in which you have interests.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen, today we are releasing to the labour market another cohort of young professionals. These students came to the university because they had emerged as the best in the country and that is why they won spaces. They have gone through the best institution of learning. We guarantee that they have been equipped with the knowledge, skills and attitudes and they are therefore ready for any openings available to them in their respective fields of study.**

**The only challenge that majority of them have is lack of experience. However, It should be noted that experience is very important if the future is a repetition of the past. If the future is different, then experience may be baggage. The way the world is the only constant is change. Industry will therefore require highly flexible employees who are highly adoptable and capable of initiating and anticipating change. Today, we offer you fresh minds that have no baggage from the past. The certificate we offer is our guarantee that they have been tried, tested and found to be worth of the awards they will get today. Give them a chance. You will not regret it. Even our celebrated performers started by being given a chance.**

**At to you our graduands, we are proud d of you. Once again you have successfully completed another cycle of**

**your education. You have proved you did not come here by chance. You are here by right. Today is a great day for all of us. You are our reason for being here and this is your day. We are here to celebrate your victory.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen, as I conclude, allow me to once again congratulate all the graduands for excelling in their studies. I wish them success in their future endeavours. May I also take this opportunity to thank all of you present here for sparing time to come and celebrate with us.**

**The festive is with us and I would like to take this opportunity to wish you a Merry Christmas and happy, prosperous new year.**

**Thank you and May God bless you all.**