



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**ADDRESS BY PROF. PETER M.F. MBITHI, VICE
CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI DURING
THE 59TH GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD ON
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 2018 AT THE
CHANCELLOR'S COURT AT 7.00 A.M.**

- **Madam Chancellor,**
- **Cabinet Secretary for Education, Amb. (Dr.)
Amina Mohammed,**
- **Chairman of the Council of the University of
Nairobi, Dr. Julia Ojiambo,**
- **Council Members,**
- **Principal Secretary, Prof. Collette Suda,**
- **Chancellors and Vice Chancellors of Other
Universities,**

- **Executive Secretary of IGAD, Amb. Mohaboub Maalim and his delegation,**
- **High Commissioners and Ambassadors,**
- **State and Public Officers,**
- **Chairman and Executive Committee of University Of Nairobi Alumni,**
- **Members of University Senate,**
- **All CEOs here present,**

- **Partners from the Private and public Institutions,**
- **Members of the University Community,**
- **Parents and Guardians,**
- **Invited Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Madam Chancellor, Today's graduation is a very unique one!

We are proud and honoured to witness the award of the 5th University of Nairobi Post Doctoral Degree.

@vcuonbi congratulates and welcomes the newly appointed @uonbi Council

I congratulate the candidate, Prof. Julius Alexander Ogeng'o, the Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs for the great achievement.

He will be graduating with a Doctor of Science in Human Anatomy.

Ladies and gentlemen help me also to congratulate, Hon. Lelegwe Steven Ltumbesi, Senator for Samburu County for earning his PhD in Project Management.

In this graduating class of 2018 we have:

- 1. 1 Doctor of Science**
- 2. 75 PhD graduands**
- 3. 403 Masters Degree**
- 4. 2,845 Bachelors**
- 5. 571 Diplomas**
- 6. 14 Post Graduate Diplomas**

Congratulations to all the graduands!

You have made us proud and you have also made your families happy and given them the reason to celebrate and party. You will be joining big a network of our Alumni across the globe. Ensure that you stay emotionally connected if not physically with your Alma Mater. Our Alumni have been our source of pride.

Madam Chancellor,

The University of Nairobi has distinguished itself as a melting pot of cultures where global citizens converge to labour in search of truth and knowledge! In pursuit of values and philosophies that serve all mankind. This congregation not only represents all the ethnic communities of Kenya but also the global community!

We have diverse nationalities- Rwandese, Congolese, Ethiopians, Nigerians, Tanzanians, Malawians, Sudanese, and British.

We also have 20 students from Somaliland who were sponsored by IGAD as part of capacity building for Somaliland. We thank IGAD for this Partnership and we look forward to more of such partnerships!

Madam Chancellor,

The graduands that we are about to release to the market are not only educated in all aspects of life but also empowered with knowledge and relevant skills to serve the needs of their society. Some of them have already made a mark by venturing into the world of entrepreneurship and by becoming innovators!

The Quality of our products! Our graduates! Is what differentiates us from the rest!

Regional employability surveys continue to rate our graduates highly in the market because we stand for quality and jealously guard the integrity of our academic processes. We admit quality students and process quality.

Our infrastructure are licensed, regularly inspected and certified by all the regulatory authorities including Commission for University Education, KEBS, and other affiliated global standardization and certification bodies.

Madam Chancellor,

The University has gone through a difficult phase in the last three years that really tested our character!

We have experienced steady decline in resource mobilization occasioned by reduced capitation from government and the downward trend in student enrolment which is envisaged to continue into the next plan period 2018-2022.

I must also admit that the long Industrial action by staff and student unrests worsened the situation but

like the proverbial cat with nine lives we have picked the pieces together! We are back on track running!

UoN is like an aeroplane! When everything seems to be going against us, we take off against the wind and cruise through it like never before!

The strategic Plan 2018-2022 that is awaiting council approval will comprehensively deal with the challenges under three key thematic pillars namely

**Teaching and learning, Students Affairs ;and
research innovation and enterprises!**

**Our priorities will be centered on enriching the
learning experience for students, growing our
research portfolio and commercialization of research
outputs, increasing the internalization of the
University, expanding the space for partnerships with
the Industry and the government and embedding our
transformation agenda on a culture change program.**

Madam Chancellor,

**I want to extend our appreciation to you for
Commissioning the Kisumu Campus Complex in
2018.**

**Both Mombasa and Kisumu Campuses have been
granted licence by Commission for Legal education to**

offer UoN Law degree Programs up to Post graduate level.

This should be good news for people from Western Kenya and Coast region who have been urging us to extend our premium programs to them.

Madam Chancellor,

Allow me to appreciate the immense support that we have continued to receive from our stakeholders! The

government of Kenya , the University of Nairobi Alumni, the Industry, the foundations, research partners and many networks of global partners that work with us.

The government has been kind in its support for the sector by initiating favourable policies and programs for the Universities especially in the field of research and innovation. However we continue to note, with a

lot of pain, the declining trend in budgetary support from the exchequer.

I strongly believe that there is need to review the current funding model for Universities.

If we truly want to sustain the quality and the competitiveness of our higher education, it should be imperative for the government to dialogue with

the higher education stakeholders to avert what I may call “the quality crisis” in future!

I also want to urge the government to give a chance to give local Universities to participate in the design and implementation of the Big 4 projects. We have a lot of idle capacity that can be mobilized through affirmative action to help in the delivery of the Big 4 projects.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

**There are men and women of this University,
amongst our midst, who have won global accolades
and brought honour to this country and the
University in the course of their duties.**

Please join in me appreciating the following staff for their sterling performance in their fields of specialization.

- **Prof. OMU Anzala -Viral research and HIV/AIDS (KAVI)**
- **Prof. Otieno Abinya -Cancer research(CHS)**
- **Dr. Jane Ambuko- Innovation in Post harvest Technology**

- **Prof. Jackson Mwangi Mbuthia- Lead Investigator for the Ist Kenyan Satellite that was deployed into space this year!**
- **Dr. Mwangi and his team - Plastic Surgery(CHS)**

Join me also in congratulating the following staff of the University of Nairobi for receiving national honours from the head of State for their immense contribution in the struggle for women

empowerment, promotion of gender equality,

International relations and Diplomacy:

- **Prof. Wanjiku Kabira-(CBS) Chief of Burning Spear**
- **Prof. Maria Nzomo- (MBS) Moran of the Burning Spear**

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I mentioned during the CEO's roundtable meeting that was convened during the Chancellor's, Career fair on 13-14 August 2018, we have opened our doors to the Industry to create more opportunities for mutual benefits.

We are keen to work with the Industry to develop innovative solutions that can help them become more competitive and sustainable. In the process,

they provide space and opportunities for our youth to secure employment and internship opportunities.

It is indeed very encouraging that many of our students now have a positive attitude towards the Industry and the Community. The dividend of such maturity and strong partnerships is evident and is reflected in the improved discipline of our students!

In this respect I thank the 60 Industries that participated in the chancellors' career fair and recruited minimum of two students each –either as interns or full time employees.

Let me also thank the following partners for consistently giving scholarships and other support to our students:

DAAD

Mitsubishi Corporation,

Chinese Embassy

Indian High Commission

Gandhi Society

University of Nairobi Alumni

Rattansi Foundation

Chandaria Foundation

Ford Foundation

Barclays Bank

CARTA program

Rotary Club of Nairobi

**And many others that I have not mentioned by name
including individuals.**

We appreciate you and urge you keep up the spirit!

Finally,

Ladies and gentlemen,

The future situation does not look very rosy at all. We are headed for tough times and we have already started implementing austerity measures to keep us buoyant! I appeal for support and understanding from the entire University community. I believe that in the long run we are going to rebound strongly. Greatness always emanates from endurance and triumph over difficulties.

In the words of Robert H Schuller-“Tough times never last but tough people do” and I believe we are!

This University will continue to grow and excel as we have done consistently from number 29 in 2009, number 9 in 2014 Africa and number 5 this year in global webometrics rankings! and our target now is to conquer Africa.

Thank you and God bless you!

PETER M.F MBITHI, PhD, EBS

VICE-CHANCELLOR

AND

PROFESSOR OF VETERINARY SURGERY