



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH BY DR. VIJOO RATTANSI, OGW,
CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI,
DURING THE 62nd GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD
ON FRIDAY DECEMBER 20, 2019 AT THE
CHANCELLOR'S COURT AT 8:00 A.M.**

- **Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, Prof. George Magoha**
- **Cabinet Secretaries present**
- **Chancellors of Sister Universities**
- **Your Excellencies, the Ambassadors and High Commissioners Present**
- **Chair of the University of Nairobi Council, Prof. Julia Ojiambo,**
- **Members of the Council of the University of Nairobi.**
- **Chairpersons of Sister University Councils**
- **Prof. Isaac Mbeche, Ag. Vice-Chancellor, UoN**
- **Vice-Chancellors of sister Universities**

- **Mr. Lintuo Wu, Director of Global Education Partnership**
- **Mr. Isaac Awuondo, Chairman ALUMNI Association**
- **Deputy Vice-Chancellors**
- **College Principals and Senate**
- **Graduands, Parents and Guardians**
- **Staff, Students**
- **Partners of the University**
- **Invited guests**
- **Distinguished ladies and gentlemen**

Hamjambo?

Let me begin by echoing my colleagues' very warm appreciation of your presence to celebrate with us the achievements of our 62nd graduation cohort. We are awed by your holding us in such high esteem and hope to perpetually exceed your expectations of us and what we do.

Secondly, I wish to register my most sincere gratitude to our Deputy Vice Chancellors and especially the Ag. Vice Chancellor Prof. Isaac Mbeche. In the absence of the captain, you have steadfastly held fort and deftly steadied and steered the ship. For a fairly new team, you have rendered a good account of yourselves. I therefore want to urge all of you to keep up the good work.

Thirdly, I must not forget to thank our staff and students and respective union heads. The Chair of Council has eloquently enunciated many grounds to be grateful to you for but I want to mention just one. During this transient period of recruitment of the Vice Chancellor, you have exhibited exemplary conduct. You have been calm and accommodative of the process and your words and actions have been manifestly modest, dignified and well measured. In presenting yourselves in this way, you have

brought honour to this University. You have proved that succession ought not to be a noisy and messy affair, adjectives which often attend succession processes of similar institutions. I therefore cannot thank you enough. From the bottom of my heart, *asanteni sana*.

Fourthly, I want to commend the Council under the astute leadership of Prof. Julia Ojiambo. Weighed down by the heavy yoke of responsibility attending your

appointment, you have cut your teeth with military precision. You have brought to the fore pinpoint strategies, impeccable dexterity, instructive calmness and unconventional wisdom. I therefore salute you for this. I believe we can count on systemic efficiencies and synergies that will inevitably follow the successful conclusion of Vice Chancellor. Prof. Ojiambo, as you and your team embark on your next frontier of interest, I wish you well; I wish you success.

Next month, a new decade will dawn upon us. New challenges and opportunities alike will unfold. By sharpening our tools of trade, the University will be ready to take full advantage of these opportunities; we will be ready to stake our seat on the table and make meaningful contribution to our nation. I am delighted to note that the Council shares this selfsame recalibration proposition and is already expending substantial effort in this line. I want to assure the Council that you can always

count on my support in all reforms that will shape the future of the University.

In line with the future proof proposition, I am glad to note that the Ministry of Education under the tutelage of Prof. Magoha (*whose distinguished presence I hereby recognize*) has already identified gaps that need to be bridged to better equip our graduates for future demands of the labour market. The Education Sessional Paper No.1 of 2019 themed reforming education and training for

sustainable development in Kenya serves to give policy pointers to the direction we should be heading, that is demand driven training. Robust implementation of such a strategy at our university level will undoubtedly deliver compelling value to our students, future graduates and the nation as a whole.

To all who are graduating, we are gathered here in your honour. I am very proud of you and your monumental achievement. Many began this journey with you but a

number fell by the wayside. By sheer effort, unwavering support of your families, God's abundant grace and alignment of many factors, you have made it to this day. Your parents or guardians seated here today have sacrificed a great deal to see you through University, that you may use this opportunity to carve a better future for yourselves. Some have had to pull all your other siblings from school to sustain your university studies. Some have nothing left to their names but the family pride that they

genuinely wear by your graduation today. Be magnanimous in your successes. However high you fly, you must not lose the respect that you have for those who made you who you are.

As you proceed to the labour market, I wish you well. Some will be lucky to land job offers straight away, others not so lucky. When you do not immediately get a call for that interview, keep hopeful. You may not get that dream job straight away but you can volunteer your

skills. It may be the master key that forever unlocks your window of opportunity. I pray that you find success in all its forms and that your lives may be fulfilled. May life, light and all good things be in thy stead now and forever.

Always remember:

to all be good; to all be kind; to all be gracious; to all be respectful.

If you do this, you will go far in this life.

Finally, we often encourage our graduates to pull together and create economic opportunities. In line with matching talk with action, I am happy to guarantee personal support, for a year, to a group of 2 to 3 from this graduating class that will conceive a winning idea at the 2020 Nairobi Innovation Week. I believe 9 months is sufficient gestation period to finesse the idea.

I invite each of us, in our small ways and in our spheres of influence, to contribute in moving the job creation agenda forward. If we don't do this, unemployment is one smouldering powder keg that will implode with catastrophic consequences.

May the Almighty bless you all most abundantly.

Asanteni sana.

**DR. VIJOO RATTANSI, OGW
CHANCELLOR,
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

