

**ALUMNI SPEECH DELIVERED BY DR. CLEOPA MAILU, MEDICINE  
CHAPTER CHAIRMAN ON BEHALF OF DR. BETTY M. GIKONYO,  
CHAIRPERSON, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 47<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI HELD ON FRIDAY, 24 AUGUST 2012**

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The Minister for Higher Education, Prof. Margaret Kamar, MP

The Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Dr. Joseph Barrage Wanjui,

The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education,

Chairman, Commission of Higher Education,

Chancellors of Sister Universities,

The Chairman of the University of Nairobi Council, Mr. John Simba,

Members of the University of Nairobi Council,

Vice-Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Prof. George A. O.Magoha,  
Vice-Chancellors of Sister Universities,  
Deputy Vice-Chancellors,  
Principals of Colleges,  
Deans of Faculties and Directors of Institutes,  
Lecturers and Staff,  
Fellow Alumni,  
Graduands,  
Parents and Guardians,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to witness today the graduation of 5,550 graduands who will now be joining over 130,000 Alumni who have since 1961 gone through this prestigious University. The Alumni has and will continue to play a very important role in the development of this institution and it is against this backdrop that a Council's decision of 2004 to come up with Alumni Association saw the repealing of University Statues XXVIII on convocation into an Alumni Association thus giving birth to the University of Nairobi Alumni Association. The proposed Universities (Higher Education) Bill 2012 further recognizes the role of Alumni in article 36 that says,

*“Universities may establish an Alumni Association, which shall consist of graduates of the University and such other members as may be declared to be members under the charter” ...*

Seven years down the line, the Association has charted the course of setting its infrastructure and as Interim Executive Committee, we are proud to have laid the foundation and are now comfortable to hand over the mantle to a new crop of leaders. The Interim Executive Committee has achieved a lot during its tenure of office. Amongst the projects are University Scholarship Fund (Kshs.9M); Alumni Networking Forums (10M); Students and CSR activities (Kshs.2.4M); Alumni Office Renovation at Kenya Science Campus (Kshs.2M);

Alumni Office Operations (Kshs.5.4M) and investment towards Alumni Centre (Kshs.36M) all from membership and convocation fees, thanks to the support of the University management.

During the 46<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony held in December 2, 2011, we reported that the Association is in the process of recruiting Executive Director to manage our affairs. I am happy to report that we now have an Executive Director whom the University has assisted to pay the salary for one year and in a few days time, you will see in the papers an advertisement for the other positions. In addition, the University has given us a spacious office in a serene and quiet environment at Kenya Science Campus which has been renovated

and equipped to world class standard. We are indeed grateful! The Kenya Science Campus Alumni Office will be a '*transition office*' as we embark on building our ultra-modern green Alumni Centre at Arboretum Drive where the University has donated a 2 acre piece of land. Our main campus Alumni office located at the Administration Wing Room 107 will still remain our central office due to its proximity to alma mater and accessibility by our members. It will have a full-time staff to transact the business on behalf of the Association at the Main campus.

Allow me to let you know that, in the next one year, the focus will be three fold; 1) to strengthen the secretariat in terms of personnel and infrastructure; 2) to embark on membership recruitment drive to increase our membership from the current 23,000 to 50,000; and 3) to market and fundraise for the Alumni Centre. To achieve this, we hope to set up an ICT platform that will provide online registration and payments systems (through M-PESA, NationHela, Visa Card, PayPal etc), develop an interactive website where members can communicate to each other and give Association feedback and suggestions via online as well as integration of social media features such as twitter, LinkedIn, facebook etc. We believe that this is the time our Alumni goes virtual.

Further, the Association will develop elaborate and comprehensive fundraising strategies that will target all Chapters, Alumni, Diaspora, Corporate and likeminded donors to help achieve our dream of Alumni Centre which will be a home for all the alumni. The Alumni Centre will comprise of several facilities such as chapter offices, library and resource centre, recreation centre, hotel services conference facilities amongst others. The project is estimated to cost Kshs.900M and the University has donated a land worth Kshs.300M to the project. The Association has set aside seed funds amounting to Kshs.36M and the fundraising campaign will be geared towards raising the balance of Kshs.864M. We therefore call upon all Alumni, donors and well-wishers to partner with us in achieving this dream.



As I conclude, I would like to register my sincere appreciation to all our partners who have helped us set up and grow the Association through the sponsorship of our Alumni events and advertisement in our Alumni Newsletter which has continued to serve as platform to share our vision, mission and activities. As we gear towards the new political dispensation, the role of Alumni will be imminent in the implementation of the new constitution. The Association is exploring partnership with Commission for the Implementation of the New Constitution (CIC) to sensitize University staff and students on the new constitution through our newsletter and other fora in all colleges and campuses.

To the Graduands of today, I take this opportunity to wish you success in your future endeavors. As you face the world a head, know that you have been equipped with knowledge and skills from one of the finest Universities in the world. We know that you have imagined and at times seen a bright future ahead. This is good but whether you succeed or not is predicated on hard work, commitment and how fast and well you adapt to the world out there. The Alumni of this University are ready to embrace and assist you in the world of work and Academia. We are confident that despite the challenges and cloudy moments, you will always ride with the tide towards success.

Thank you and May God bless you!