

**ALUMNI SPEECH DELIVERED BY DR. BETTY GIKONYO,  
CHAIRPERSON, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI ALUMNI ASSOCIATION  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 48<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY OF THE  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI HELD ON FRIDAY, 7<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 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 congratulate the over 7,550 graduands today who will now be joining over 136,000 Alumni who are alumni of this prestigious University. The Alumni has a great role to play in the Advancement of this University.

The higher education landscape in Africa is changing very fast and Universities are seen as a catalyst for social-economic transformation in the emerging Africa. However, these institutions are constrained in terms of resources to deliver on their mandate as social catalysts because of the diminishing Government funding and reliance on students fees as source of income and hence the need to craft new strategies for fundraising and

resources mobilization. The Association is grateful to the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) for capacity building to our association in advancement training.

The University Advancement is one of such strategies. University Advancement comprises of alumni relations, fundraising, marketing and communications. The University of Nairobi Alumni Association (UONAA) will play a key strategic role in the University Advancement by mobilizing resources from the alumni membership and convocation fees, corporate and donors' funds, philanthropists and gifts from friends of the University.

As Nelson Mandela said, *“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world”* as alumni, we hope to contribute to the Alumni Endowment Fund through alumni contributions, fundraisings and seeking donations from well-wishers and friends of the University. Our target is to raise Kshs 1 billion by 2015 as a seed capital towards this Fund and in regard to that, we are planning to launch a National Fundraising Campaign in 2013.

Behind every great university is the strong and unwavering support of its alumni. There has been a lot of communications from our Alumni on the need to establish a Alumni Endowment Fund as a key priority where funds are invested for the long-term, and earnings from those investments help support

outstanding faculty, innovative programs and student scholarships. The university's endowment is essential to sustaining academic quality because it provides a guaranteed, never-ending source of income to support professorships, student scholarships, innovative programs and learning opportunities. Donors don't support institutions that have needs but those that meet needs! Donors who contribute to the endowment do so because they want to support the university and positively impact students and academic programs 25, 50 or 100 years from now.

We are benchmarking with universities in the developed world and we have a lot to learn from them. We have discovered there is direct correlation between the university endowment and world class distinction status and hence the need to focus our resources and effort in building university endowment fund that will help us support University's research activities, scholarships, bursaries, awards, infrastructural development among other University's activities. We also want to link with the current students who are our future alumni in developing their skills, values and virtues that will enable them to clinch top notch jobs, align their careers with realities in the job markets, invest in psychometric and assessment centres to help them discover their passion and potential while still in the University, carry out leadership

assessments, develop them and provide them with opportunities to deploy their passion, skills and competence in terms of internship and industrial attachments in addition to academic credentials. We want our graduates to be the best and most sought after in the global market.

The UoN Alumni Linked Group has continued to request us to establish the Alumni Endowment Fund where they can channel the funds to support the bright and needy students. We are going to do that. To achieve the above objectives, we are transforming our membership subscriptions and donations from manual to online through e-payment solution systems. To share our plans and aspirations, we plan to invite our key stakeholders, internal and



externals to forums such as strategy retreat, Alumni Re-Union Day, CEOs Forum in order to get their views.

In this era of performance and accountability, as alumni association we shall strive to remain relevant by delivering benefits/value to our Alumni and our Alma Mater and finally as Kenya undergoes a political transition in March 2013, we also plan to undergo a leadership transition within the Association by holding the first Annual General Meeting (AGM) in July 2013 in order to hand over leadership to a new crop of leaders to steer the association to greater heights. Register as a voter and vote wisely.

As I conclude, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our partners who have continued to support our events and activities, our almar mater that has continued to nurture us, college principals, schools / faculties / institutes' deans and directors for your unwavering support in the establishment and maintenance of alumni chapters and champions and to all our alumni and particularly UoN Alumni Linked Group who have continued to encourage us to do more in order to create a greater impact to our almar mater.

Thank you and May God bless you!