



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

**SPEECH BY PROF. JULIA OJIAMBO, PhD, CBS, EBS,
MBS, CHAIR OF COUNCIL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
NAIROBI, DURING THE 63rd GRADUATION
CEREMONY HELD VIRTUALLY ON FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 25, 2020 AT 8:00 A.M.**

Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, Prof. George Magoha

Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi

Your Excellences the Ambassadors and High Commissioners

Council Members present

Vice Chancellor Prof. Stephen Kiama Gitahi

University staff

Parents and guardians

Distinguished guests from across the globe

Our graduands

Good morning?

Let me start by extending a very warm welcome to you all and to the 63rd Graduation Congregation of the University of Nairobi. As you already appreciate, this is a unique graduation ceremony; unique because it marks the foray of the University of Nairobi into virtual graduation events. The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated changes in the way we conduct our university business with the primary objective being reduction in transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus hence the coronavirus disease. Today's virtual event (*the second such public event after the installation of our 8th Vice Chancellor in June*) is testament of our resilience and commitment as a university to the attainment of our vision despite the challenges of everyday existence.

Ladies and gentlemen, our march towards attainment of a world class university status continues. Undoubtedly, this process will from time to time, require that we change the way we do things hence the clarion call for reform. I believe it bears re-emphasizing that reform in our business processes is a necessary intervention that will allow us to rise above the culture of mediocrity, break out of the mould of averageness and cast ourselves into the realm of excellence. Currently, there is harmony in the reform agenda informed by the Chancellor's Visitation report, the Council's own strategic plan and the university's strategic plan. These fuse seamlessly with the Vice Chancellor's own informed zeal and stewardship of the reform agenda for the benefit of the university. I want to take this opportunity to therefore appeal to our university

community for support towards our meaningful interventions in all areas that matter to us.

Our university continues to grapple with financial challenges. Rest assured that we are doing all we can to address this by stemming revenue leakage as well as considering a myriad of alternatives geared towards revenue growth. This, admittedly, is and continues to be an uphill task but I believe that together and in the long run, we have the right mettle to overcome this challenge and build and secure a legacy of a self-sustaining university. It will not happen overnight but assuredly I say to you, consistency of thought, purpose and action will eventually yield perfect results.

I wish to thank our graduands today for giving us a reason to be here. Today's graduation will mark an important milestone in your life and the many things that we have prepared you for. The COVID-19 pandemic, however, teaches us that no university will ever be exhaustive in educating anyone about the school of life. To paraphrase the words of Matshona Dhliwayo, the most successful amongst us will neither be the clever graduate who learns from acquaintances nor the shrewd graduate who learns from enemies but the wise graduate who learns from all. Life is a great teacher; to survive it we need to be in a constant state of learning, unlearning and relearning! I wish you the very best of life and all success in all your endeavours that you may make a mark in this life and beyond.

With those few remarks and on behalf of the council, I take this opportunity to affirm our commitment towards making the University of Nairobi the gold standard by which our peers measure their excellence in academic pursuits, character formation, talent nurturing and relevance to society.

*Unitate et labore...*in unity and work we strive.

Asanteni sana and may the Almighty God bless you all.