



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

SPEECH BY PROF. JULIA OJIAMBO, PhD, CBS, EBS, MBS,
CHAIR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI COUNCIL,
DURING THE
64th GRADUATION CEREMONY HELD VIRTUALLY ON
FRIDAY DECEMBER 11, 2020 AT 8:00 A.M.

~~Principal Secretary, State Department for University Education, Amb. Simon Nabukwesi~~

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?

On behalf of my Council and the entire University of Nairobi fraternity, allow me to associate myself with the warm welcome extended to you all by our Vice Chancellor. What a pleasure it is to be accompanied by all of you, both virtually and in person, in celebrating the achievements of our graduating class!

Today's class is the culmination of many years of hard work! We are testament to the resilience of the university from the very humble and tumultuous beginnings of the , down the clamour for multiparty democracy of the 80s, the sheer greatness of the 90s, the abundance of the turn of the 21st century and finally, the solemn reality of the present. Over the years, the unity of purpose nurtured within our boundaries have served us in good stead and confirmed that a house united shall not fall. You are the finest products of five solid decades of life and times of this university.

Our founding father of the nation and inaugural Chancellor the late *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta likened a graduation to a passing out parade. Graduates leave the university fully trained and equipped in various disciplines. The real test of proving oneself in the battleground of nation building, however, is yet to come. If you are to make a mark in the world, then of necessity you need teamwork, self-discipline, respect for self and others, realism and in varying measures, the innocence of a dove and the proverbial shrewdness of a serpent. Only then will we play our rightful role in national development and contribute to the common struggle against poverty, ignorance and disease.

Down the years, great alumni have occupied the positions that our graduands occupy today; they have been faced with enormous challenges, some more monumental than faces our current cohort. COVID-19 pandemic has plundered and continues to ravage economies of many nations. Such is the Goliath that stares you, proverbial Davids, straight in the face. Yet if the great book is anything to go by, we also know that David, a tiny speck in comparison to Goliath, managed to slay the mighty giant! I believe it is so with you.

You must never accept defeat despite deprivation and desolation that may come your way. Take comfort in knowing that the will of God will never take you, where His grace cannot keep you; where His arms cannot support you; where His riches cannot supply your needs or where the power of God cannot endow you. Indeed, you are children of the universe, no less than the brothers and sisters that passed this way before you.

So we send you out today, as our ambassadors to the world. May you soar high on wings like eagles; May you run and not grow weary; May you walk and not faint. It is your time for glory; let neither friend nor foe dim your light.

Asanteni sana and may the Almighty God bless you all.