

The face of main campus set for a major transformation

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Proposed University of Nairobi towers whose construction commenced on May 17, 2013. Facing page: ground breaking ceremony by the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui.



THE OUTLOOK OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI IS SET FOR MAJOR CHANGES after the ground breaking ceremony was held on May 17, 2013 to pave way for the construction of a 22-storey building at the Main Campus to accommodate the increasing academic activities and administrative services. The ceremony was held at the construction site between Education building and Gandhi Memorial Library Building in an elaborate ceremony

presided over by the Chancellor Dr. Joseph Wanjui. The last major building to be constructed at the Main Campus was the Multipurpose Hall commonly referred to as the 8.4.4 in 1990.

The University Towers will have 22 floors with learning facilities to accommodate 3000 students and house the following facilities: the Vice-Chancellor's Suite, All the Deputy Vice-Chancellor's



Suites, Senate Boardroom, Council Meeting Room, one lecture theatres of 500 persons, four lecture theatre of 300 persons, and several lecture rooms to cater for a minimum of 60 persons, a floor for the Graduate School and a floor for the Graduate School of Business. It will also have a helipad.

The project will be financed mainly by internally generated funds and donations. Leading businessman and philanthropist Manu Chandaria has pledged KES 125 million. Owing to this contribution, the building will be named the Manu Chandaria, University of Nairobi Towers and will also have the Manu Chandaria Theatre for Performing Arts.

The University is developing a visionary state-of-the-art tower block leading the way in ecologically sustainable design in its Main Campus. It is envisaged that the Tower will not only provide the much-needed teaching space but also assert and affirm the position of the University of Nairobi as the leader of architectural thought, innovation and champion towards the provision of environmentally friendly-solutions.

According to the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, the University of Nairobi, is seeking to construct an ecologically sustainable building to house the top University administrators and several teaching facilities. The building will be world class particularly in its aesthetics and its environmental design considerations. It is expected to meet stringent carbon foot print criteria achieving close to 100 percent carbon neutrality. The new building will meet the indicated spatial requirements and demonstrate leadership in the development of a holistic green environment and must attain the highest green rating standards globally. The building will also demonstrate a new approach to workplace design and create a model for others to learn world-class acoustic treatment.

The building will enhance the quality of outdoor space and the balance between indoor and outdoor spaces. The University of Nairobi Towers is expected to be an inspiring and attractive showcase of "green" buildings and once realized, the final facility should attain signature status in all aspects of cutting-edge architecture. The facility will be a place where users shall be proud to undertake world-

class scholarly work, receive global leaders, scholars, the private sector, as well as other prominent guests.

The architect for the building is Waweru and Associates who won the project through an architectural design competition held in November 2011, in an exercise presided over by an international jury comprising various experts. According to the architect, Gathecha Waweru, The University of Nairobi Towers, is a bold, innovative, sustainable building, which draws from the University's Great Court's strong architectural character, fits into Nairobi's urban context, harnesses its tropical location to design advantage, as it unapologetically explores, formal, material and technological innovations of the future.

The North-South oriented tower, and the podium upon which it sits, is conceived as a green building, incorporating natural ventilation, day lighting, room acoustic design, rainwater harvesting, and grey-water recycling, passive ventilation design for good indoor air quality.

The building's podium, through design, creates harmony with the existing scale and character of the Gandhi Memorial Library Building, and the Education Building, and becomes the further thoroughfare through which the Great Court will be accessed, expounds Architect Waweru.

The contractor of the project, China Wu Yi, has pledged to complete the towers within 120 weeks as scheduled. The contractor has a 24-hour license to ensure that his work is completed on schedule. The building is mainly funded from

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University tower to reshape main campus

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internally generated funds. The University Towers is among the projects that the University has embarked on to increase its capacity to absorb increased academic and administrative activities. Other ongoing projects include the construction of

the School of Pharmacy building and the construction of the Kisumu Campus towers.

The construction has come with some disruptions to our routine. Parking space and entries to Main Campus have been reorganized

to accommodate the construction. Consequently the entrance opposite Fairmont Hotel has been relocated to the Uhuru Highway slip road during this period of construction.

Those present during the ground breaking

ceremony included Chairman of Council, Dr. Idle Farah, top managers, businessman Dr. Manu Chandaria and his wife, the architects of the building, staff from Waweru and Associates, students and staff.