

TEXT OF SPEECH BY MR. B.M. GECAGA, CHAIRMAN
OF THE COUNCIL OF UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI AT THE
INAUGURATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI AND
THE CONFERMENT OF DEGREES & AWARD OF DIPLOMAS
ON THURSDAY, 10TH DECEMBER, 1970 AT 3.00 P.M.

Mheshimiwa Baba wa Taifa Rais Mzee Jomo Kenyatta,
Mheshimiwa Rais Dr. Milton Obote, Mheshimiwa Mama Ngina Kenyatta
na wageni wetu wote waheshimiwa.

Nikifuata desturi yangu ya miaka iliyotangulia ningependa
kunena machache kwa lugha ya kikwetu, yaani Kiswahili, kwani hata
katika Chuo Kikuu hiki cha Kenya chenye kuongoza katika elimu ya juu,
inafaa kukumbuka ya kwamba watu au nchi isiyo na lugha yake halisi ni
kama mti usio na mizizi. Katika sherehe hii tuna wageni wengi kutoka
Vyuo Vikuu vya nchi za mbali, na hatungependa warudi kwao nyumbani
wakifikiri at sisi Wakenya hatuna lugha yetu ya kujivunia. Tukiwa na
furaha nyingi twawakaribisha kwa shangwe nyingi wageni wetu mkiwa
Wakenya na vile vile mliotoka nchi za mbali.

Sherehe hii ya siku ya leo ni ya muhimu sana. Ni kama siku ya kuzaliwa kwa mtoto. Hii ndiyo siku ya kuonyesha ya kwamba Chuo hiki Kikuu cha Kenya - yaani University of Nairobi - Kimekwisha undwa. Furaha yetu zaidi ni ya kwamba yule Baba yetu aliyetuongoza na kutusaidia sana kukuza Chuo hiki mpaka kikafikia hatua hii ametupa heshima ya kuwa hapa nasi siku ya leo. Basi Chuo hiki kikiwa kama mtoto mchanga tungenda hata kabla ya kuanza kutafuna chakula, kutoa shukrani zetu na adhama yetu kwa Baba wa Taifa letu, Mheshimiwa Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, kwa kumkabidhi cheo au degree ya kwanza kabisa, iliyo juu zaidi, ya chuo hiki, yaani Doctor of Laws of University of Nairobi.

Your Excellency Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya, Your Excellency Dr. Milton Obote, President of the Republic of Uganda, Your Excellency Mama Ngina Kenyatta, and all our honoured guests.

On behalf of the Council, the Academic and Administrative Staff as well as the students of University of Nairobi, I extend a very

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warm welcome and say 'karibuni' to all our guests, and more especially those who have travelled long distances from countries both far and near to honour us with their presence at this momentous ceremony of Kenya's emergent high seat of learning, the University of Nairobi.

The urgent commitments of those who come from distant lands may not allow them the time to see very much of our beautiful country, but we hope that what they are able to observe in a few days, including the academic activities in the growing number of Faculties in this University, will give them some insight of the youthful vigour and vitality as well as the accelerating momentum of progress which pervade our national life, and which characteristics of new Kenya we like to think are represented here at this University.

To-day we feel like a newly born child - we want to cry for joy, we want to breathe and fill our lungs with the Creator's free and fresh air so that as our lungs expand to the full, we may stand with our heads held high to survey the land which is our rightful heritage from our fore-fathers; to ponder its future and so prepare

its present to ensure the soundness of its foundations which we lay today that will constitute our legacy to those who are still to come and for whom, therefore, we hold the present in trust.

The development of higher education in East Africa can perhaps be traced back to Makerere College in Uganda in the early 30s. It is from that fountain that many of those who are now at the helm of the affairs of State in East Africa first tasted the sweet water of higher education. To Uganda, we in Kenya shall remain perpetually grateful. For ^alengthy period Makerere was the only institution for higher education in East Africa, but it was followed in 1956 by a similar institution in Nairobi, the then Nairobi Royal Technical College which became the Royal College, Nairobi in 1961. The subsequent transformation into University College, Nairobi was accomplished in 1964. Meanwhile Tanzania was hot on our heels and we rejoiced with them in the creation of the University College, Dar es Salaam in 1960. The three University Colleges - Makerere, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam - each of which had a special relationship with the University of London whose degrees they awarded to the ir

graduands - were joined together under the aegis of the University of East Africa in 1963.

It is a matter of great pride to us in Nairobi that both our neighbours, Uganda and Tanzania, have representatives of the highest rank at this ceremony - in the case of the former by the President of the Republic of Uganda, H.E. Dr. Milton Obote, Chancellor of the University of Makerere, and in the latter case, the former Chancellor of the University of East Africa, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere having been unable to come to Nairobi owing to Tanzania's current Uhuru celebrations, has sent three of his senior Ministers to represent him. May I extend a very warm welcome to H.E. Dr. Obote and to Dr. Nyerere's representatives as well as to the respective Vice-Chancellors of the Universities of Makerere and Dar es Salaam, all of whom we are very happy to see here.

Our predecessor the University of East Africa was a unique institution, transcending, as it did, three separate and sovereign countries. However, in the course of time it became increasingly

clear that the educational needs of East Africa demanded more than one University. Consequently, a Working Party on Higher Education was set up by the East African Authority in 1968, which on completion of its work, recommended the creation of three separate national universities in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. Tanzania and Uganda have already inaugurated their respective Universities, and we in Kenya are gathered here today to inaugurate our own University of Nairobi.

As we inaugurate the University of Nairobi, we are very conscious of the central guiding role which our former Visitor of University College, Nairobi and now to be installed the Chancellor of our new University has played in influencing its growth. He has indeed been the father not only of the Nation of Kenya but also of this infant University. Were it not for his inspiration, wise guidance and constant encouragement today's milestone in Kenya's university education might not have been achieved with such order and rapidity. His generosity to us has been boundless; it is therefore most fitting that the first and highest degree of the University of Nairobi should

be conferred on/7

be conferred on H.E. Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, First President of the Republic of Kenya and first Chancellor of our University, as a mark not only of our abiding gratitude to him but also of the high esteem in which we hold him. It is the considered and unanimous decision of the entire University of Nairobi that there is no one else to whom we would wish our first and highest honour to go.

I now call upon the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Karanja, to address the congregation and read the citation for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Laws (*honoris causa*) upon H.E. Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya.