



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

SPEECH BY VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. GEORGE A. MAGOHA, DURING A BOOK LAUNCH BY DR. JOSEPH B. WANJUI ON JULY 28, 2014 IN THE VICE-CHANCELLOR'S PARLOUR AT 5.00 P.M

Chief Guest, Dr. Joseph B. Wanjui

Chancellors

Deputy Vice-Chancellors

College Principals

Deans and Directors

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is truly my honour to welcome all of you today to this ceremony that marks the launch of “The native sons Experiences of a Kenyan Entrepreneur” by Dr. Joseph Wanjui.

I would like to begin by acknowledging that we are gathered here together at a University that is the beneficiary of a flame of rebrand initiated by Dr. Wanjui. Dr. Wanjui helped us to anchor the University to 10 years of development. Dr. Wanjui challenged us to change our management style when he stated that the status quo was not an option.

Buoyed by these words, the management took up reformation of the university including in hiring the top management. I was the first Vice-Chancellor to be appointed competitively and we undertook to cascade the process to all other positions, a practice now evidently taken up by government to identify leaders for the various sectors.

Ladies and gentlemen, as the CEO of a busy Organization, one of the concessions I had given up on was reading, more books and especially those that impact on management styles and governance. It

was my pleasure, when Dr. Wanjui requested me to write a forward, to this book reading it cover to cover. I was intrigued then and now by how an entrepreneural spirit extended the possibilities of organizational development and I began to understand more how it is that Dr. Wanjui's challenge that the status quo is not an option had translated to infrastructural development, increases in student numbers, cutting edge progress, good corporate governance systems, and a strong asset base. He taught us, he instructed us on how to create a branded product and to raise our standard to

Gold. A world class University is one that society admires and emulates. The UoN must take a leadership role, being a point of reference for the nation and the city of Nairobi where she draws her name. As you read this book, you notice this pride in the a brand, this brand of making a difference, and it is a challenge to us to make our institution proud, to talk well of our nation to outsiders, to appreciate and have pride in our brand so that we sell it by word and action.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is not easy at such an occasion as this to list down all the things you liked or loved about a book. You want to talk about the character bits that made you laugh, the bits that made you cry without following the anticipation of the readers. I admit being challenged by the book. As I followed his career, the choices to make in selecting opportunities, changes in jobs, surviving colonialism, disarmament, political disposition, I cannot but help thinking that I must also be a change agent, that I must do my best.

Again, I liked Chapter 5, and his thoughts or wasted opportunities. As CEO of the oldest, biggest, public University, I have been reflecting on wastage of resources, be they financial and human, thinking that it is criminal as a human being to waste opportunities, to wallow in regret every-time we fail, to be so shallow that we cannot turn our failures into opportunities for learning and moving on. This is also an exercise in giving one confidence to excel.

Ladies and gentlemen, this book is a candid expose on many issues that I am afraid many of us could

never have the guts to speak out. As a father, husband, a CEO, I can only applaud what Dr. Wanjui remarks about family values, I can only learn lessons about motivating and inculcating a sense of worth in the youth of this country. A great lesson of course is that as CEO, I must know my human resources away from looking at the bottom line.

Another lesson that I can identify with is audacious saving. Saving he says is a discipline which he never hesitates to recommend. As a University CEO, I appreciate these words more and more as we

undertake Performance contracting that requires us to account for funds and to observe fiscal discipline. This advice could be applied to Kenya, where we need to curb the spirit of spending more than we create. Countries and organizations that prosper are thus those that master the art of saving and investing well.

Ladies and gentlemen, Dr Wanjui's book challenges all of us to a new work ethic. It is evident in many public institutions where we don't keep time, we don't respond to complaints, we don't research, we

are slovenly in dress and attitude and we do so while being critical of government, the top management in the case of an organization. We need to do as suggested in the book, we take our own responsibility for making systems work as he says in the book “unless we as a people learn to do our assigned jobs well, at whatever level we find ourselves in, we should stop making a fuss about being able to govern ourselves”. These no doubt sound like harsh words in what we like to think should be in an autobiography. But it is Dr. Joseph Barrage speaking from 30 years of experience. On local or

International bonds, where his contribution to African Entrepreneurs has been per excellence.

As I close my remarks, I just want to wish Dr. Wanjui well, and of course to challenge him to continue with energy to serve. Dr. Wanjui, we salute you for the style of leadership and management that you enthused through systems at our University. As a “Professor of practical business and dynamic change management, you will no doubt publish another piece, and the Press of Choice which will welcome your contribution in the University of Nairobi Press,

**where you are already a repeat and valued client.
Karibu.**

**With those remarks, it is my honour and privilege to
declare this book officially launched.**

Thank you.