



EMBU UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

(A Constituent College of the University of Nairobi)

SPEECH BY DR. VIJOO RATTANSI,
OGW, CHANCELLOR, UNIVERSITY
OF NAIROBI DURING THE 1ST
GRADUATION CEREMONY AT EMBU
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ON 30TH
SEPTEMBER 2016

Chancellor's Speech during the 1st Graduation Ceremony at
Embu University College (30 Sep 2016)

**Chair of Embu University College
Council, Dr. Margaret Gikuhi
Chancellors of other universities
Vice-Chancellor Prof. Peter Mbithi
Members of Embu University Council
Principal, Embu University College,
Prof. Daniel Mugendi
Members of other University Councils
Vice-Chancellors from other
Universities
Members of University Management
Boards and Senates
Embu University College Staff and
Students
Distinguished guests
Graduands
Fellow country men and women**

**Years ago before the advent of saw
dust and other trappings of
modernity, I am informed that British**

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publicans used to spread sand on bar floors to catch slops, spills, spit and so on. This sand was delivered by the so-called sandboys. Hauling sand in the sun was thirsty work.

For this reason sandboys were part paid in free drink and this kept them terribly happy. So ladies and gentlemen, any sand boys around this morning? Are you all happy to be here this morning?

I am happy to be here. 5 years ago, the Embu University College ship set sail. 6 months and a week ago today, I made my maiden trip here for the official launch of the University College's current Strategic Plan. It is rare and perhaps befitting honour to be back and to be alive and present as we celebrate this historic occasion at the end of a successful 5 year odyssey. I bring with me hope and greetings of the people of University of Nairobi.

This 1st Graduation is of great symbolic even sentimental significance in the life of this University College. It bears testament to the defiance of this University College to the roughness of the seas and the battering winds against her sails; it bears testament to the resilience of her people, the refusal to sink and the determination to make a safe landing. It is indeed on this basis that on my maiden address to this university, I echoed the words of Henry Ward that we should not judge people by their peak of excellence, but by the distance they have travelled from the point where they started.

Allow me therefore, to thank most sincerely, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi and the Council, management, staff, students, pioneer graduands, government, sponsors, parents, Embu community and other well-wishers of the University for this outstanding accomplishment. Let us clap for ourselves. Thank you.

This College portends a blank slate from which the governors, staff, management and students may together fashion a model university. You neither have history nor traditions to shackle and insulate you from progress; you neither have deep rooted political nor personal interests yet that may derail you; you are children of fortune with nothing less than a bright future before you. The University charged with laboring this college to fully chartered university status, looks to you to augment today's foundation with the right formulae, support structures, discipline and dedication to secure tomorrow's university of excellence.

Graduates, you graduate at an exciting time in the history of this country. We are at the innovation age. No generation in the history of man's existence has been confounded with the sheer magnitude of technology

that is now at your disposal. You can leverage technology for self-sustenance constantly evolving and retooling yourself to fit in to the future generation. Your aspirations must at all times remain attuned to the direction the world is moving in. The Nokias and the Blackberries were the tech firms of this world few years ago; today they barely exist. Few years ago the High 5's and MySpace were the social networking sites, now facebook and twitter have confined them to the museums. So you can only ignore the global direction at your own peril. Without constant self-renewal, the universe will declare your skills obsolete.

The University has equipped you with basic survival skills. The world offers you an opportunity to harness this and apply them in solving everyday problems or stimulating new demands for personal and societal gain. The road will be hard and tough but you

are all tough cookies...show the world what you got! You are equal to the task before you, you are equal to every challenge that may stand in your way...you must not give up.

God gives us duty for us to discharge it, problems to face struggle with and overcome. Set your eyes yonder and aim for the skies. You are the captain of your ship, the master of your soul.

This University will always be your home. Call on us whenever you need our wisdom, partner with us whenever you have opportunities, donate to us whenever you have excess, share with us your experiences in the world and mentor and inspire your younger brothers and sisters.

I wish you well in the world. Your whole life is ahead of you. As you leave our gates, let the words of Paulo Coelho encourage you...that if you're

brave enough to say goodbye, life will reward you with a new hello.

The future holds no promises, only mysteries and surprises. Whatever you do, don't spend it chasing after somebody else's dream. Be brave to follow your own. Own it and pursue it relentlessly with all your might. You once had a dream to graduate, today you're an achiever. Keep learning, keep trying, and keep accomplishing.

I wish you God's blessings and many happy returns.