

# Tough times for the less tough

By Maina Kigaga

For many of the postgraduate students, life is a constant struggle for survival.

The postgraduate students cannot get accommodation at the university due to the large number of undergraduates who joined the institution last year. The threat of expulsion from the halls of residence hangs like the Sword of Damocles for the few postgraduate students who managed to secure rooms there.

The hardest hit are the self-sponsored and unemployed students. Onesmus Kilonzo, a postgraduate student at the School of Journalism and an employee of the *Daily Nation* asked: "If life is hard for those who are employed and sponsored, what about those who are unemployed and self-sponsored yet they have to meet other basic necessities?"

Many postgraduate students have been dependent on their parents/guardians and friends for so long that they have just grown tired of their numerous and incessant demands. Those who are sponsored still have to look for their own accommodation, which is not cheap.

"I've been here for so long," says one student who has been in the campus since 1990, "but since I am

not employed, at the age of 30, I still have to depend on my rural parents instead of providing for them in their old age."

It is worse for some students who have been at the university longer than necessary because of delays in their programmes. An example is the Department of Sociology where 25 students were registered in 1995. Only one so far has graduated! A surprise indeed.

Another postgraduate student who requested anonymity told the *Anvil* that due to lack of accommodation at the university, students experience many problems like transport, thugs or police harassment which undermine their safety and studies. They are unsettled.

"Woe unto you if you happen to produce a student identity card. As you know the relationship between university students and the police more often is like that of a cat and a mouse," he lamented.

It is high time the university administration looked seriously into the problem of accommodation for postgraduate students with a view to solving it once and all. Alternatively, they could propose to future sponsors of students joining the institution to increase the monthly stipend to enable them cope with the demands.