



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

CITATION ON

HIS EXCELLENCY HON. MWAI KIBAKI

CGH., MP, DSc. (Hon.) (JKUAT), DLitt. (Nairobi),
DSc. (HR Dev't) (MMUST),
PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE
ARMED FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA

ON HIS CONFERMENT OF

**THE HONORARY DOCTOR OF LAWS (LLD
(HONORIS CAUSA)**

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
AT NAIROBI, KENYA

17th October 2008



**HIS EXCELLENCY HON. MWAI KIBAKI,
CGH., MP, DSc. (Hon.) (JKUAT), DLitt. (Nairobi), DSc. (HR Dev't)
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MR. CHANCELLOR SIR, nations take giant leaps forward in their histories through the courage, commitment, dedication, vision and the inspiring leadership of those who are truly committed to scholarship, democratic ideals, and ensuring opportunity and fair treatment for all, especially for the vulnerable members of their society. Today, we are truly honoured to have in our presence a man who has not only cherished but practised these ideals throughout his life. This man is His Excellency, Hon. Mwai Kibaki, CGH., MP, BA, BSc, DSc. (Hon) (JKUAT), D Litt (Nairobi), DSc. (HR Dev't) (MMUST), the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya.

Hon. Mwai Kibaki was born on 15th November 1931 in Gatuyaini Village, Othaya Division of Nyeri District. He is the last-born son of the humble peasant farmers, the late Kibaki Githinji and the late Teresia Wanjiku. Like most of his contemporaries, Hon. Kibaki spent his early childhood assisting his parents to carry out typical family chores, one of which was taking care of the family livestock as a herd's boy. He at the same time managed to go to school, starting the long walk that would lead him through the corridors of some of the best schools and universities in this region and the world.

He started the walk at Gatuyaini School for two years, Karima Mission School for the next three years, then Mathari Boarding Primary School, the present Nyeri High School, between 1944 and 1946. Besides academic subjects, he learnt vocational subjects such as carpentry and masonry. From Mathari, Hon. Kibaki proceeded to Mangu High School between 1947 and 1950 and passed his Cambridge School Certificate examination with flying colours, obtaining a maximum of six points.

In 1951, this brilliant performance led to his admission to Makerere University College, Uganda, the then only institution of higher learning in East and Central Africa. At Makerere, between 1951 and 1954, he studied Economics, History and Political Science. Once again, he displayed his enormous intellectual abilities, obtaining a First Class Bachelor of Arts degree.

Besides his studies at Makerere, Hon. Kibaki took a keen interest in student politics. He was elected Chairman of the Kenya Students Association as well as one of the Vice-Chairmen of the Makerere Students Guild. His contemporaries still fondly remember his eloquence.

From Makerere, Hon. Kibaki joined the Shell Company of East Africa, Uganda Division, as an Assistant Sales Manager. In 1956, he won a Commonwealth Scholarship to the prestigious London School of Economics, University of London, where he specialized in public finance. He was awarded a Bachelor of Science degree with distinction.

With such an outstanding academic record, Kibaki was in 1959, appointed an assistant lecturer in the department of Economics and Political Science, Makerere University. His former students

rate him as one of the best lecturers in the department, as well as an inspiring role model. Besides teaching, Hon. Kibaki took interest in the welfare of students at Makerere, and this led to his being appointed as a Resident Tutor of Livingstone Hall. This won him enormous respect and goodwill among students.

Regrettably, and to the dismay and even disappointment of many, Kibaki's academic career at Makerere was short-lived. Kenya was undergoing frenetic political activity during the late 1950's and early 1960's as the preparations for the independence of the country got well underway. It does not seem that Hon. Kibaki needed much encouragement to return to Kenya to play his part. In March 1960, therefore, he took part in the founding of the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and became its first Executive Officer. Despite the financial uncertainties of the time, a far cry from the corridors of Queen's Court at Makerere, he diligently soldiered on without complaining – a young man truly dedicated to the cause of the liberation and dignity of his motherland.

Although the political bug had hit him, Hon. Kibaki had immense interest in education and scholarship. In his hand-written resignation letter, dated 3rd November 1960, he wrote, "I shall continue to take keen interest in the future development of Makerere as well as the sister universities in Kenya and Tanganyika".

In the 1963 pre-independence elections, Hon. Kibaki threw his hat in to the political arena by successfully contesting the Donholm seat, Nairobi before shifting to Othaya constituency in 1974. He has been a Member of Parliament for forty five years. During that long period, he has held many leading public positions, including: Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Finance between 1963 and 1965; Minister for Commerce and Industry between 1965 and

1969; Minister of Finance and Economic Planning between 1970 and 1978; the Vice-President and Minister for Finance between 1978 and 1982; the Vice-President and Minister for Home Affairs between 1982 and 1988; and finally the Minister for Health 1988 – 1991.

It should be noted that Hon, Kibaki was the Minister for Finance for thirteen years, during which the Kenyan economy witnessed its fastest growth. This tremendous growth was once again witnessed during his presidency. His leadership in the economic affairs and financial management of the country earned him international recognition. Indeed, in 1981 the Time Magazine rated him among the top 100 people in the world, who had the potential to lead in the 21st century.

More recently, he has played a major role in the multi-party politics and the political transformation of the country. On the repeal of section 2A of the Kenya Constitution, which restored the multi-party system, he abandoned KANU and founded the Democratic Party of Kenya (DP) on 25th December 1991.

In the 1992 and the 1997 general elections, he contested for the presidency and emerged third and second respectively. In December 2002, following the dramatic creation of a most emotional and formidable united front ever seen in Kenyan politics, the National Alliance of Kenya (NAK) and the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) merged into the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) effectively creating a juggernaut, with Hon. Kibaki as its torch bearer, overwhelmingly winning the country's third Presidency.

The inauguration of Hon. Kibaki on the 30th December 2003 thrust our country squarely at the thresh-hold of a new epoch,

of a new political dispensation, of a new dawn in its history. The words of his speech are still fresh in our minds. He called the times, "a critical moment in the history of our country". He used, most touchingly and tellingly, the metaphor of being awoken that morning by "rays of sunlight, which had bathed his room in such brilliance that it felt completely new" to describe a country that was in the process of renewing itself and of attaining a new consciousness of what must be done and how it should be done, a clarity of a vision that is evident in the rising of the sunlight. It was the moment of re-awakening, a point of departure, of renaissance, remarkable and excitedly located the people of Kenya at the verge of making a new history, of a nation strongly united and diligently at work to create a better life for itself; simply "a working nation" according to Hon. Mwai Kibaki.

How fitting, how relevant, how challenging and inspiring is that metaphor for our nation, and indeed for the University of Nairobi on this day as it honours His Excellency the President, for the second time.

But, the long journey of Hon. Kibaki to the Presidency was not always a smooth ride. For example, his parents could not always afford to pay his fees or buy him the necessary school requirements. For that reason, the young Mwai assisted them by working as a "turn-boy" for Othaya African Bus Union. In order to go for further studies in the United Kingdom, because of the political uncertainties in Kenya of the late 1950's, Hon. Kibaki was forced to use, at one time, a Ugandan passport, and, at another, a British passport. We further recall the determined political machinations of the 1960's, which he outsmarted by deftly and timely changing his political base from Nairobi to Othaya, Nyeri. These and other many hurdles and frustrations during the 1980's culminated in

his losing the Vice-Presidency, but only to succeed in taking all of them in his stride and calmly setting out, with beguiling diligence and humility, to make a mark in his new assignments.

Obviously, his humility and courteousness, combined with his rather quiet determination and perseverance, his academic and gentlemanly demeanour, thoughtful and critical approach to issues made some to mistakenly assume that this was a sign of weakness.

His humble background, which culminated with the eventual rise to the Presidency of our country, is a fitting denouement for a peasant's son, a fitting role model for the youth of this country. In his entire life, his philosophy has been that the truth shall set you free. Not even an accident on the eve of the victory in 2002 could dim the flames, the flames that he and others, had so brightly lit. He had practically demonstrated that hard work, commitment, and determination are the essential ingredients that lead to success, not one's background.

His role in the broadening the democratic space of this country speaks for itself. He ardently believes in the need to create the environment for the maximum release of the creative potential of the Kenyan people; in the need to adhere to the principles and practice of the rule of law; in the need to conserve the national environment, the need to develop Kenya's resources, and the need to protect our national heritage. He takes a devotedly inclusive, thoroughly devolved and innovatively responsible approach to the decision-making process about the affairs of the country, demonstrating a practical yet truly democratic style to national politics, sometimes to the chagrin, if not bafflement, of lesser leaders, but extremely inspiring and empowering to the

country's citizenry. During his first term, the combination of his wit, landslide victory and the peaceful political transition that emphasized healing, reconciliation, reconstruction, due process, accountability, and transparency in public office, redeemed the dignity of the people of Kenya and, more importantly, restored Kenya's image in the community of nations.

Hon. Mwai Kibaki's belief in the urgent need to demystify centralized power and the unwarranted fettering of our public universities, started to become a reality upon his relinquishing the Chancellorship position to all public universities and seeing it fit to appoint others.

His efforts as a peacemaker, a bridge builder, have been prodigious, if not always successful. Working tirelessly for harmony, understanding and co-operation and coalition between the many communities, groupings and parties of Kenya, Hon. Kibaki has given us a truly instructive lesson, a priceless gift to our nation, an important legacy for future generations.

Above all, Hon. Kibaki will be well remembered for a number of milestones during his presidency. His bold and dramatic declaration, which brought, literally overnight, almost two million children to school through the free and universal primary education. And now, this has been extended to secondary schools. More recently, he has expanded educational opportunities at the university level through the upgrading of tertiary institutions to campus or constituent colleges of the public universities.

Hon. Kibaki has directly, and compassionately, confronted one of the worst development and health crises of our time by not only effectively declaring a must-win war but personally leading the pamoja tutashinda crusade against HIV/AIDS pandemic in Kenya.

He has spearheaded the economic recovery of this country. In his first term as president, the Gross Domestic Product grew to seven per cent.

Hon. Kibaki, has provided a roadmap for leading this country towards prosperity through the vision 2030 which he has personally steered as the Chairman of the National Social and Economic Council. The economic pillar underpins the vision for prosperity, while the social pillar seeks to create and build a just, cohesive society; with equitable social development, in a clean and secure environment, and the political pillar in turn aims at realizing a democratic political system.

His government has given the general populace enormous political space. These days no one fears to speak his mind, even when picking on him. And characteristically, he takes this in his stride without a murmur.

The mayhem that followed the disputed presidential elections of 2007 almost threw Kenya into the abyss. It took courage and self-sacrifice on Hon. Kibaki's part to accept to negotiate with his opponents regarding power sharing. The formation of a grand coalition government is a milestone in this country, if not an example to the rest of Africa. That political solution has saved Kenya from destruction as a nation. It is fitting, therefore, to recognize Hon. Mwai Kibaki set aside his personal considerations for the sake of Kenya. For that alone, he deserves our commendation and full support.

Thus, for the second time, University of Nairobi would like to honour Hon. Mwai Kibaki for his undoubtedly outstanding academic record, brilliant economic and financial management, outstanding patriotism, political acumen and visionary leadership.

Indeed, his career is a fitting model and source of pride for the youth of this beloved country.

Here then is an enlightened and consummate national leader who has a great vision for his country, a gentleman, a family man, and an intellectual that the University of Nairobi is proud to be associated with and is privileged and deeply honoured to recognize for his life-long achievements.

MR. CHANCELLOR SIR, I am greatly privileged to request you to confer the degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD.) (Honoris Causa) of the University of Nairobi upon His Excellency Hon. MWAI KIBAKI, CGH., MP, BA, DSc (Hon.) (JKUAT), D Litt (Nairobi), DSc. (HR Dev't) (MMUST), President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya.

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, HIS EXCELLENCY
THE PRESIDENT.**