



August 2013

# Varsity **FOCUS**

*A magazine of the University of Nairobi*

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**Dr. Idle Omar Farah**  
**Chairman University**  
**Council**



## **PROFILES**



***Sensitization on the constitution***



**Collaborations**



## **Our Vision**

A world-class university committed to scholarly excellence.

## **Our Mission**

To provide quality university education and training and to embody the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the global community through creation, preservation, integration, transmission and utilization of knowledge.

## **Our Core Values**

- freedom of thought and expression;
- innovativeness and creativity;
- good governance and integrity;
- team spirit and teamwork;
- professionalism;
- quality customer service;
- responsible citizenship;
- national cohesion and inclusiveness.



## Varsity**Focus**

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# In this Issue

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Chairman of Council,  
University of Nairobi, is a man  
of many hats and experiences**



## Celebration of academic excellence

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(UON) FETED 330 STUDENTS FOR  
THEIR ASTOUNDING ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE



## Launch of RRI on implementation of the constitution

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UON) BECAME THE FIRST  
INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING TO TAKE UP A  
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## Farewell to retiring members of staff

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI RECENTLY SAID GOODBYE  
TO SOME OF ITS LONGEST SERVING EMPLOYEES  
MRS. SALOME MUNAVU, UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN, MRS  
ELIZABETH ONGWAE AND MRS. GRACE WANGU HINGA,  
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY. MRS. HINGA HAS WORKED IN  
THE UNIVERSITY SINCE 1971



# Editorial



## **Welcome you to our second edition of the Varsity Focus which focuses on our activities in the second quarter.**

We congratulate the University for performing well in the latest Webometric Rankings after emerging top in Kenya and 14 in Africa. This top ranking corroborates previous rankings and government performance ratings which have consistently rated UoN at the top.

We also feature profiles of our Council Chairman Dr. Idle Omar Farah as our main story, highlighting his upbringing, professional and family life and his plans for the University. Other profiles focus on the journey of Prof. Okoth Okombo of the Department of Linguistics and the Coordinator, Kenya Sign Language Project and Edith Mwirigi Nkatha, a fourth year, Civil

Engineering student, who is the first elected female Secretary General of SONU.

On capacity building activities, the University held Intellectual Property workshop which targeted the management Board, Deans, Directors and Intellectual Property (IP) champions. The Intellectual Property Management Office has also reviewed and upgraded the IP Policy and drafted policies on plagiarism, Research Open Access which have been adopted by the University management.

On constitutional matters, the University embarked on a process of sensitizing staff, students and the alumni on the contents of the constitution and the public service integrity programme. This programme is being implemented as a rapid results initiative and targets all members of the University of Nairobi Community. The programme is facilitated by two government agencies: Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution (CIC) and The Ethics

and Anticorruption Commission (EACC). The programme kicked off in early August after the launch by the Chairman, CIC, Mr. Charles Nyachae. Different activities regarding sensitization have been scheduled in all Colleges.

In this issue we have featured interactive activities that took place in the University recently. Among them was Elgeyo Marakwet Senator, Kipchumba Murkomen who discussed devolution with staff and students. The subject is of great public interest.

We have also covered three members of staff who retired recently after long service to the University. Mrs Salome Munavu retired as the University Librarian after 38 years of service. Mrs Elizabeth Ongwae retired as Deputy Registrar after 25 years service and at the time was also acting Registrar, Administration. Mrs Grace Hinga retired as an Executive Secretary in the Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration and Finance, after 42 years of service to the University. We wish them well in their future undertakings.

These are among the stories that we have featured in this edition of Varsity Focus. Enjoy reading and feel free to give us feedback.

**Charles E. Sikulu**  
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# Commitment to reforms

## 2013 CONTINUES TO BE OUR YEAR FOR RE-ENERGISING THE UNIVERSITY AND TRANSFERRING THAT ENERGY TO THE NATION.

For a start, the University recently became the first state agency to roll out its sensitization programme on the role it is playing in the implementation of the constitution. It has launched several activities cascaded to the lower units targeting individual members of staff, students and alumni.

The University continued with its proud tradition of excellence by training a high number of professionals. This is part of the University's contribution to national and international development needs for high level human resource in specialised areas not catered for by any other institution of higher learning in the country.

The University is committed to promoting technical and leadership skills, and the virtues of enhancing quality, integrity and service to society. Our student body of 63,846 continues to be in the forefront in diverse development activities including free medical and legal camps, environmental awareness and clean ups, counselling and other outreach activities to the community.

In keeping with our tradition as an institution which cherishes free intellectual debate, the University continued to host prominent international personalities in "town

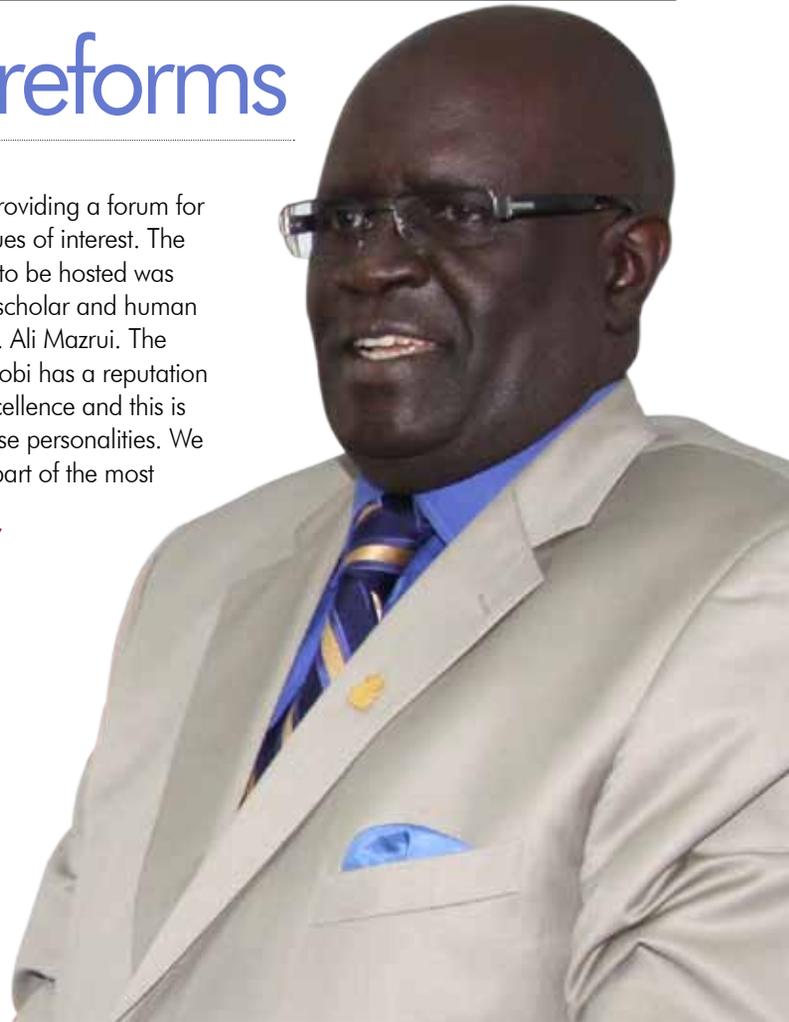
hall" meetings, providing a forum for discussion on issues of interest. The latest personality to be hosted was world renowned scholar and human rights activist Prof. Ali Mazrui. The University of Nairobi has a reputation as a centre of excellence and this is why it attracts these personalities. We are proud to be part of the most

***The University continued with its proud tradition of excellence by training a high number of professionals.***

important national institution of higher learning whose contribution to national development is comparable to none.

The University continued with collaboration programmes with industry, academics and professionals in the search for a better society. In the past year, the University strengthened and established many academic links and exchange programs which placed the institution at the cutting edge of knowledge.

I am proud to report that our academic programs remain of the highest quality. According to the web



**Prof. George A.O. Magoha, Vice-Chancellor**

rankings of world universities, we are the top university in Kenya, and 14 in Africa. Our digital repository was also ranked the first in Kenya and 11th in Africa.

The government has also continued to support us, not only by giving us freedom to pursue intellectual interests, but also in encouraging us to transform our governance structure independently. We therefore pledge to work with government, our greatest benefactor, especially in raising capacity for developing Kenya.

# A journey of Dr. Idle Omar

***Dr. Idle Omar Farah, the Chairman of Council, University of Nairobi, is a man of many hats and experiences***

Currently the Director-General of the National Museums of Kenya, he has also served as a member of the Commission for Higher Education, and the Chairman of the Board of the Centre of Heritage Development in Africa.

Idle Farah is a primatologist with a PhD from Uppsala University, Sweden and a prolific author. Indeed, Idle Omar Farah is not the typical African playing at corporate politics but rather, is the quintessential scholar and manager.

Speaking to Varsity Focus, Idle Omar Farah



# Farah, Council Chairman

shares his triumphs, challenges and concerns.

Idle Omar Farah was born in Wajir town in the mid 60's. His father, a career civil servant and pioneer educationist, was an early influence in his life. Born in a Muslim family, on a day of sacrifice, he was named Idle (day of pilgrimage), the name should be read in Arabic and not English, he quips.

Idle Omar Farah started his primary school in Garissa, where his father had been transferred. He passed the CPE exam and was the only candidate from NEP admitted to Alliance High School, where for six years he endured the cold weather as well as enjoyed the experiences of a multicultural, multi-religious setting. Idle Farah was in the hockey team, but as he laughingly states, "I did not qualify to be in the athletics team, and the school choir." Idle Farah enjoyed being exposed to virtually every Kenyan community.

After his A levels, during the vacation, Idle Omar Farah, worked as a clerk and also taught at Garissa and County high schools. "I pursued the Mathematics/Chemistry/Biology (MCB) combination in high school and therefore I wanted to help students in high school to build on the sciences." It was also during the long vacation that Idle Omar Farah attended the NYS pre-university course which he found not too bad

in terms of discipline and character building. "This program could have been better structured so that pre university students get a chance to serve their community but that is water under the bridge now." He quips.

When Idle Omar Farah was admitted to the University of Nairobi for undergraduate studies, it was a toss up between pharmacy and chemistry. "The fact that I was admitted to BVM is not a fluke, because of the terrain that I come from and the socio-economic livelihood of livestock it made sense to study vet medicine. Even as he

pursued undergraduate studies, Idle Omar Farah was conscience that he would have to pursue advanced studies. "You see, I knew that at some point, because some of my brothers had started their master's degree, I would have to go beyond the first degree". In 1989, just before he commenced his fourth year of study, the government released a policy that vet graduates would no longer have direct employment in government. The future for vet doctors was cast, they were to either undertake postgraduate studies or pursue other careers.

During 4th term, in the last two years of study, Idle sought internship at the Institute for Primate Research (IPR) where he was charged with looking after the monkeys, washing and feeding them and observing their general health. This attachment stood him in good stead so that after graduation, and a short stint as a volunteer or intern, he was recruited by IPR as a veterinarian and he commenced what has been a life-long research on vaccines and thus a journey as a scientist.

In 1994, Idle Omar Farah commenced master's level work at Kabete, where he attained credits and distinction in his course work, but he did not complete the project year because he was offered a scholarship to pursue PhD studies at Uppsala University, Sweden. At Sweden, the

***"You see, I knew that at some point, because some of my brothers had started their master's degree, I would have to go beyond the first degree".***



**Dr. Idle Farah awards a student during the recent prize giving ceremony. Looking on is Dr. Manu Chandaria, one of the donors.**

research work that he had carried out at IPR, enabled him to enter a vaccine development program on schistosomiasis; in essence, his main course was elevated to PhD studies. At Sweden, Idle Omar Farah also engaged in more research, writing papers and monographs, and working on projects, so that by the time he actually graduated in 1999, he was a prolific research scientist in primate science.

In 2000, while working as Director of IPR, he received a call from the ministry of home affairs informing him that he was being considered for the post of Director General of the Museums. The ministry was also in the process of constituting a board of directors for the museum. The offer

## Dr. Idle Omar Farah

was not surprising given that the predecessors of the position had also been directors of IPR and therefore, Idle was willing and ready to take up the offer. Idle Omar Farah was therefore appointed Director -General of the National Museums of Kenya in May, 2003. Later in 2004 he was called to serve at CHE (now CUE), the University of Nairobi, and the Kenya National Committee for UNESCO.

One of the challenges that Idle Omar Farah has faced is how to revitalise the Museum and evolve sustainable acceptance by policy makers and community that museums can help Kenya. Most policy makers do not realize that museums are not just sites for conserving and preserving things for posterity but rather, are centres for research at all levels including biodiversity, anthropology and development. Because of the legacy entered by the Leakey's, funding of the museum had always been external and thus it was a task to let the government appreciate

that the National Museums of Kenya is a national institution that requires direct budgeting and funding. In the last ten years therefore, the National Museum has been refurbished, restructured with external funders (Europe Union), services have extended to regions in Mombasa, Kisumu, and Lake Turkana, for research.

According to Idle, expanding interest by local people and attracting people is a huge challenge because one has to compete with shopping malls. So what Idle's administration did was to put up shops, restaurants, and photography sites that have transformed the museum into a gathering place. Financing and increased operation to optimum and sustainable use is a goal that continues to challenge. Museums must be made sustainable in the sense that one generates revenue while balancing between commercialization and not making our national

heritage very cheap to appreciate- Kenyans have a right to their heritage without being charged to see it

Idle Omar Farah’s experience at the Museum has prepared the business side of his mind. In a real sense, Idle Omar is the consummate entrepreneur, “a business sense is critical, you cannot just smile at research and not contribute to the economy of your country” It is this reasoning that Idle Omar Farah is bringing into academia and in governance of the University. As an alumnus, he has associated with the University in terms of student life, research and academia; his publications are in joint collaboration with staff and he has a good liking for the University” I believe in the separation of powers”. This means that the university can take off when the good governance. The Council can provide the right linkage that the government and CUE require, but the University management, should, on a quarterly basis, deliver on operational matters and legal matters. Good governance is requisite for assisting UON to move into implementing the constitution and deliver on services to be felt at country level.

There are good prospects for the University to take the lead role in allowing access, in an adaptable way, to University education, with flexibility, and yet ensuring that standards of academic curricular are adhered to. Ideally, quality education should be delivered in a flexible way such that access

to education should not be a compromise on quality.

As Chairman of Council, Idle Omar Farah is quite satisfied with some of the strengths of the University which include its good standing and its basic infrastructure and established academic programs. The main challenge that UON faces include maintaining the infrastructure through continuous funding and finding capital input to keep it up to scratch. With the advancement of rapid expansion of universities and the need to raise the necessary number of students and staff, there is the temptation to massify programmes and to do away with those which offer little return and the resultant threat of a university losing its niche is inevitable.

The challenges notwithstanding, Idle Omar Farah is firm in his assertion that remaining competitive in research and retention of staff must be addressed. It is not all to do with raising salaries, but rather, motivating staff by perhaps access to financing, hospital, consultancy and good housing. In terms of students, the University must, as a national institution, reflect the national diversity of the country, representing all ethnicities at all levels. This will also call for addressing issues of equity in Module I vis a vis Module II programmes.

Idle Omar Farah would like to see the University take advantage of the open higher education policy, to think critically and innovatively

on how to reprogram cutting edge delivery and research, which must be applicable, relevant for uptake at community level “We now have a platform-ICT infrastructure- and thus must take advantage of this to automate operations, backed by full proof technology.”

One reflection, Idle Omar Farah, who comes from a background based in the North, feels it is a privilege and honor to have been asked to serve as the Chairman of Council, at a university that is well known, ranked highly, prestigious and which he admits it is his intention to leave a legacy that will have shown a difference however slight. The idea is to consolidate all the gains the university has made and make a difference in the institution.

***Ideally, quality education should be delivered in a flexible way such that access to education should not be a compromise on quality***

# UoN ranked top local university as SOB leads other business schools

## THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UON) HAS MAINTAINED ITS TOP POSITION AMONG KENYAN

universities following the release of the July 2013 Ranking Web of Universities- Webometrics. UoN was ranked position 14 in Africa and 1624 in the world.

The Ranking Web of Webometrics is the largest academic ranking of Higher Education Institutions and is aimed at promoting academic web presence and supporting the Open Access initiatives for increasing significantly, the transfer of scientific and cultural knowledge generated by

the university to the whole society.

Maseno University took position two in Kenya after recording an improvement in its overall web ranking. Harvard University took first position in the world ranking, while the University of Kwazulu Natal leads the ranking in Africa.

In related news, the School of Business has been ranked the top business school in Kenya by the Eduniversal Business Schools Ranking by Palmes. Further, the School was positioned 94 out of 396 business schools in the world. According to Eduniversal, the School of Business meets the highest category of 3 Palmes of Excellent Business School by

scoring the Dean’s recommendation rate of 108 per cent.

The Eduniversal Palmes indicate the international reputation level of an academic institution and is awarded on the basis of the research work carried out by the International Scientific committee, which compiles the list of internationalization criteria, together with the assessments made by peers: The Deans’ Vote. The subdivision of the Palmes into leagues allows for a horizontal and intercontinental comparison, which is different from the vertical comparison established by most international classification systems.

Strathmore Business School and United States International University-School of Business took the second and third position respectively scoring Deans Recommendation rate of 54 percent and 55 per cent.

***The Ranking Web of Webometrics is the largest academic ranking of Higher Education Institutions and is aimed at promoting academic web presence and supporting the Open Access initiatives***



***Student Forum on Risk Management in the Banking Sector.***

# Dr. Wanjui donates for the Alumni Centre

The University of Nairobi Alumni Association (UONAA) received a major boost today when the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui made a donation of Kshs. 1 Million towards the setting up of an Alumni Centre.

This is the first individual contribution towards the Alumni Centre project. Speaking during the cheque presentation ceremony Dr. Wanjui challenged other alumni to come forward and support the project by endowing their resources. He noted that philanthropy was not common and that the private sector needs to do more in terms of supporting trusts. Dr. Wanjui noted that it is important for the University to develop linkages that will promote the growth of the Alumni Association.

While lauding the move by the Chancellor, Dr. Betty Gikonyo, Chairperson, UONAA, said that at the beginning of the year, the Association embarked on a fundraising campaign for the project



**Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui hands over a cheque of KES 1 million towards the construction of the alumni centre to the Chairperson of the Association, Dr. Betty Gikonyo. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha and his deputies were present during the occasion.**

by reaching out to alumni and friends of the University. The move has seen the Association engage with various corporates interested in supporting the noble cause.

The Alumni Centre is a viable project which the alumni can identify with and act as a means of pooling resources towards development activities at the University through partnerships. The Centre will be on a two-acre land along Arboretum Drive which the University gave the Association as its contribution towards the project.

Present during the ceremony were members of the University

Management Board led by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha and members of UONAA Executive Committee.

**Dr. Wanjui challenged other alumni to come forward and support the project by endowing their resources.**



**Prize recipients Mapili Millicent Mapili and Elbusaidy Hemed Mohammed. They were valedictorians of 2010.**

# Celebration of academic excellence

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UoN) FETED 330 STUDENTS FOR THEIR ASTOUNDING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 academic years.

The award ceremony at the UoN was presided over by the Chairman of the Council, Dr. Idle Farah who lauded the 74 donors among them institutions and professional organizations for their continued effort to enhance the prizes to reflect the changing economic realities. He

affirmed the institution's commitment to continue restructuring its systems to operate and deliver efficient services in order to meet the challenges ahead.

"I wish to compliment our donors, who have continued to support this initiative, this is a firm statement that you value academic excellence, and specifically that you have faith in the brand of the University of Nairobi," he added.

Speaking on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor Prof. George Magoha, Prof. Peter Mbithi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor,

***"I also urge students to remain competitive and challenge more organizations to volunteer prizes for our best performing students," Prof. Mbithi added.***

Administration and Finance, challenged other organizations in public and private sectors to come on board and support activities that will improve the quality of academic programmes at the University.

"I also urge students to remain competitive and challenge more organizations to volunteer prizes for our best performing students," Prof. Mbithi added.

He acknowledged the need for students to maintain excellent performance so as to cope with the competitive market. "We have embarked on a long and difficult journey of transforming the University of Nairobi into a model institution of higher learning in this country and region. The fact that we are here today to celebrate excellence is indeed confirmation that our efforts are already bearing fruit."

Elbusaidy Hemed Mohammed and Mapili Millicent Mapili emerged the Gandhi Smarak Gold Medalists for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 respectively. Gandhi Smarak is a prize in the form of a gold medal to the best overall student in the whole University with the highest proficiency in both academic and extra curricula activities. The two between them garnered a series of other prizes in performances at faculty, college and professional level.

In a related development, seven new donors have come on board and will award best performing students from the next academic year.

## Procurement staff sensitized on integrity testing programme

**A** SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP ON ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGIES and implementation of the Integrity Testing Programme was conducted for the Procurement Department staff members at the Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (INST) Boardroom. The sensitization workshop covered a wide range of corruption related issues and the appropriate strategies to fight/eliminate corruption touching on the operations of the University.

The workshop was organized by the Legal Office and it involved presentations on strategies to eliminate corruption from key University operation units including the Human Resource Department, Deans of Students, Estates, Audit, Finance, Academic Division, Legal Office and Procurement Department, respectively.

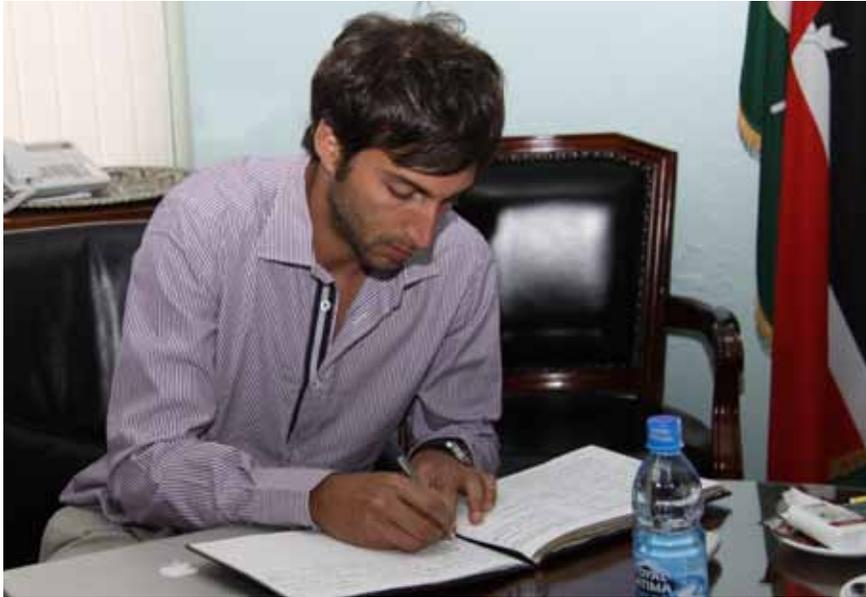
The participants were sensitized on the Integrity Testing Programme as they watched a video on the same by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (formerly Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission). The Chief Legal Officer, Ms. Rebecca W. Ngondo, took the participants through

*Presenters emphasized on the need for staff members to uphold integrity values at the work stations to ensure that instances of corrupt activities do not occur*

an Overview on Corruption Eradication at the University and expounded on the Integrity Mandate of the University.

The presenters emphasized on the need for staff members to uphold integrity values at the work stations to ensure that instances of corrupt activities do not occur as they pointed out possible scenarios that could lead to the vice and appropriate ways of handling the same.

# Female students to benefit from South Face scholarships



**South Face President, Mr. Borja Juez.**

**S**OUTH FACE WILL INCREASE A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME TO BENEFIT FEMALE STUDENTS at the University of Nairobi. The Spain based nonprofit organization has entered into a structured arrangement with the University to support needy and talented female students. Currently, the programme has benefitted three female students from the School of Engineering and will increase in the next disbursement to benefit four students.

The South Face President, Mr. Borja Juez said that the scholarship

*The University sources funds to support needy students thus ensuring that they get university education and contribute to the development of society.*

began with the sponsorship of three third year female students from the School of Engineering. The Organization is keen on supporting education and enhancing development in Africa and believes in the philosophy that Africa should educate Africa. In addition, South Face is working towards establishing relationships with corporate organizations in Africa to assist sponsored students to secure internships and possible employment.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha thanked the organization for choosing to support UoN female students. He said that the University sources funds to support needy students thus ensuring that they get university education and contribute to the development of society.

The two institutions agreed to work together to ensure that more students can benefit from the programme. Present during the meeting was Prof. Isaac Mbeche, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Affairs, Prof. Henry Mutoro, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs and Prof. Godfrey Muriuki, Special Students Advisor.

# Partnership leads to realization of National Gender Research and Documentation Centre

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UON), IN A JOINT INITIATIVE WITH THE GOVERNMENT through the Ministry of Devolution and Planning and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has launched the Gender Research and Documentation Centre. The Centre, a product of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed by the three institutions in January 2013, will be located at UoN's Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library.

The Centre will facilitate documentation of research on gender and peace building activities. Through analogue and digital means, (virtual) scholars who value generation of knowledge in the area of gender will be able to source information from Kenya, the Great Lakes region and the entire world. The concept, gender is a common word, which appears in many documents including development and work plans of almost all organizations, however, ensuring that the principles of gender equity is put in practice remains a challenge to many organizations.

While launching the Centre on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Henry Mutoro, the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, assured stakeholders of the

University's full commitment not only to the study and documentation of gender issues but also to mainstream gender in all its activities. To this end, UoN has a division dedicated to gender mainstreaming, whose functions include establishing public-private partnerships for research collaboration, networking and funding; establishing and maintaining a resource centre; promoting gender equality in staff recruitment, training and promotion; ensuring that gender parity in student enrolment and

performance is improved across disciplines; raising and sustaining gender awareness within the University and promoting gender sensitive language in all forms of communication.

Others who spoke during the launch include Mr. Mohammed Djelid, Director, UNESCO Regional office for Eastern Africa, Marcel Rudasingwa, UN Resident Coordinator and Prof. Winnie Mitullah, the Director of the UoN Gender Affairs Division.

***The Centre will facilitate documentation of research on gender and peace building activities***



**Mr. Mohammed Djelid, UNESCO, Prof. Henry Mutoro, UoN and Protus Onyango of min of Devolution and Planning launch the National Gender Research and Documentation Centre.**

# Professor of Linguistics and a great enunciator of words in English

**When he was a child, his siblings gave him the name Duncun so that he could be baptised in the local SDA church.**

**I**N THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE VILLAGE, AT LEAST WHERE HE WAS BORN, IT IS DISRESPECTABLE TO CALL YOU BY YOUR GIVEN AFRICAN NAME. So “I am Okombo as the given family name or surname, and for the first part of my life, my Christian name sort of replaced the praise name given in the village”

Today, we know him as Okoth Okombo, Professor of Linguistics and a great enunciator of words in English. So how did “Duncun” become so interested in linguistics, was it his first love? Okoth-Okombo was born in the early 50’s at Rusinga Island. Here, he led the usual life of the village, attending the local primary school at Kaswanga. “This school is currently the Tom Mboya secondary school. I did class 1-4 at Kaswanga a District Education Board (DEB) School. I did my intermediate or class 5-7 at Kaswanga. A DEB school is probably the equivalent of what is known as public school, differentiated from mission or independent schools. Originally Kaswanga had been owned by the SDA church but it was handed over to the district education board. DEB schools were often built better than the mission school.

When he passed his exams, Okoth was admitted to Mbita Secondary School, a walking distance, but the school was

not ready to admit students until the second term when it was complete. “In high school I was confused about which subjects to pursue. So I did both arts and science subjects, I have always found choosing difficult so I just did what was being offered.” High school at the time was an interesting place to Okoth. The school was young and was the project of the late Thomas Mboya who had wanted to create similar facilities with those at Starehe where he was the patron. The school had good teachers, and the English teachers were British. Again, the school had facilities such as bathrooms and toilets, in the dormitories, which at the time, were not existing in the good schools such as Maseno, which had pupils bathing outside in the open.

It is interesting that although English was taught by Brits, Okoth did not have the

specialist mind to do English. This is because the foundation for grammar was laid in primary school. “The only thing I got from the wazungus was the speech part of English, that is, elocution and pronunciation”.

After high school, Okoth took the option of training to be a teacher. A crash program for training secondary school or SI’s had commenced at KSTC, Kenyatta College and Egerton. Okoth was selected to join Kenyatta College and his usual general refusal to specialise meant that he trains as a teacher of English and Mathematics. Ideally, most schools required teachers for these two subjects. Okoth only taught for one month, after graduation. “Although I personally had refused to fill the forms for special admission to



**Prof. Okoth Okombo at the Fountain of Knowledge, Main Campus.**

# Prof. Okoth Okombo

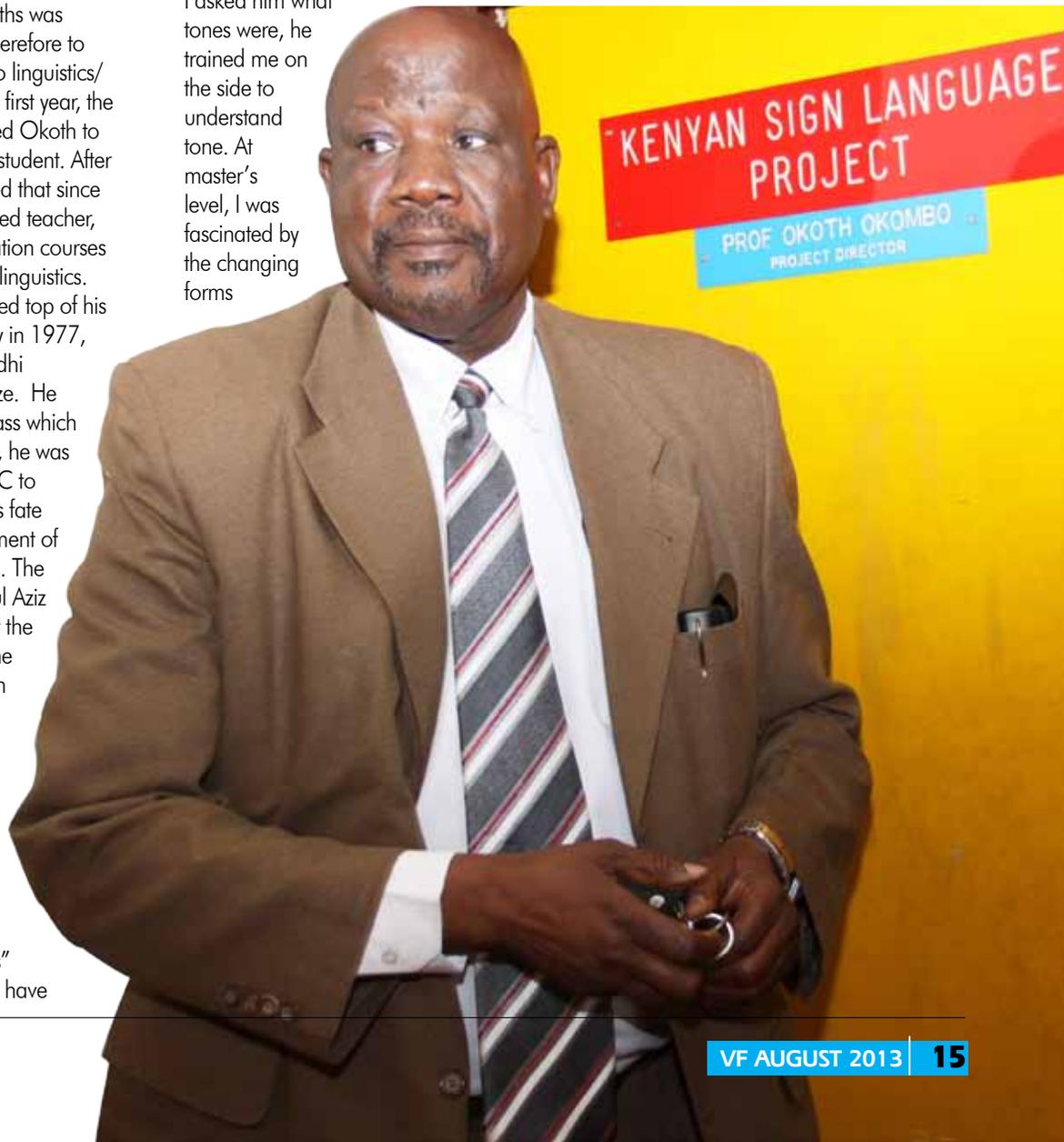
university, my teachers filled the forms for me. I only learnt this after I reported to my school in Kisii, and the head teacher told me that he had seen my name on the list of admission at the University of Nairobi."

In 1974 therefore, Okoth was admitted to the Bachelor of Education course. "When I joined the University, the option of linguistic/maths was not available. I was told therefore to change my combination to linguistics/literature. At the end of his first year, the head of department wanted Okoth to pursue studies as a 3.1.1 student. After consultations, it was agreed that since Okoth was already a trained teacher, he did not need the education courses and thus could transfer to linguistics. Ultimately, Okoth graduated top of his class and top of the faculty in 1977, receiving prizes from Gandhi Smarack and the Shell prize. He was invited join the MA class which he did and on graduation, he was planning to go back to TSC to his job as a teacher, but as fate would have it, the Department of Linguistics had other plans. The Chairman, Professor Abdul Aziz sent a telegram to say that the university had agreed to the proposal to appoint Okoth as tutorial fellow in the department.

"I joined teaching because I liked being a teacher. Looking back this feels and sounds naïve but then when I was a child, professors were very big people in my eyes" As a linguist, the fact that I have

never liked to specialise led me to take practically everything being offered and I even took course in sociology, I did phonology, syntax and semantics, my BA dissertation was written out of a passion and interest in Dholuo tones. One of my lecturers and mentor, Kevin Tovel, was working on Gikuyu tones and when I asked him what tones were, he trained me on the side to understand tone. At master's level, I was fascinated by the changing forms

of singular words in Dholuo-morphrphology, and I wanted to explain the strange changes. When I did my PhD, I concentrated on syntax. Syntax is reference to sentence formation and concentration. The challenge was to explain to them sentence formation and I chose to do so in an approach grounded



in logic and mathematics. Actually, my mathematics mind stood me in good stand at this time and at an interview, Prof. Francis Gichaga, an engineer, was amazed at what I was doing with mathematics in social sciences.

“My passion for sign language began in the early 90’ when a group of deaf people came to the University in the company of some Swedish scholars. The group had come to say that they also had a language and during a departmental seminar, they fascinated me intensely because I found that sign language is based on the sound principals of linguistics and could be explained to a large extend on the principles that we use to explain spoken language. “We have often assumed that sound is the substance of language but we had forgotten that language is a sign system because when you use sound you don’t see it as a sign “the deaf are the most oppressed people in the area of human communication because their language is ignored”. This realisation ignited my passion for social justice. At the University, I have seen people with all manner of disabilities, but only two types have never been recognised. These are the mentally disturbed and the hearing impaired. Deafness seems to be condemned to the same fate as those with mental disability. In Kenya we have been used to a situation in which language minorities learnt the language of the majority for their survival.

Now that we are faced with a minority whose disability is that they could not join the majority “we needed to be serious about liberating them. We needed to address the deaf and sign language thus could be the liberation of the hearing impaired.” Today the world of the deaf has opened up at the University, the deaf are now coming to university, there are interpreting

facilities for them and we even have a hearing impaired lecturer teaching in the department of sociology. If this is not empowerment, then I don’t know what it is.

Okoth has had many moments of happiness but few doubts about his calling to be a ‘teacher’ he finds it beautiful to be a don of language “it is beautiful, whatever, the market forces may say or determine about you in terms of opportunities, you know that you are sitting at the steering wheel of life. Everybody appreciates the role of language in life whether they know it or not,” says Okoth, whose office has immense shelves with books/novels on any number of subjects, but language takes up easily over 500 Volumes. According to Okoth, when he is not teaching, he finds himself catching p with the social sciences, “after all the context of language is what people are doing and the issues they face.”

Okoth has some lessons he has for stereotyping, that attitude that people sometimes get. He believes that stereotypes are not preventable but you can disturb people who stereotype others from time to time by doing what they do not expect, that is, give them cognitive dissonance. Within language discourse, stereotypes can best be addressed through a higher level of cultural literacy or cross cultural literacy. Here we must understand the basics of cultural elements in cultures outside your own. We would all benefit from some knowledge, no matter how little, of other people and their languages

Some of Okoth’s most exciting moments include his address to the 11th world conference of the congress of the deaf in Tokyo, 1990. It is then that he understood how much the deaf appreciated him even when he was a hearing person. His achievement of a

first class honours degree in linguistics and the best student in the faculty of Arts at undergraduate level were high moments “it was kind of nice I must say”

There have been other exciting moments that include the last two months this year when he had the chance to address the Senate and MPs. Again when the team drafting the constitution agreed to make Kenya sign language one of the three languages of parliament and the subsequent close captioning on television during coverage of national issues is a real memorable experience for him.

Okoth is married and all his children have a first degree. “If you succeed academically and your children refuse to go that way, it is a loss” While not following the line of linguistics, two of his children are in engineering and actuarial science so he sees them as gaining from his mathematics background.

“If I were to write an autobiography, it would be guided by the philosophy of doing small things in a great way .In my life I have not grown up making clear choices, but I love where I ended up. I love the whole idea of being a professor, a professor of linguistics, I love what I do. People ask me what I am still doing teaching, but I laugh, what else would I be? If I had a second life, would I be a teacher, yes.”

“Although I wish that Sossion had succeeded because in a world where teachers are really appreciated, I would not think of any other job except teaching. I love my students and they trust me as their friend. I often want to come back to share with my students when I attend events. It is as if when I am going to class, it’s a date, I look forward to it. I don’t say No oh, not another class”.



## PSRI receives vehicle from UNFPA

**T**HE UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA) HAS DONATED A VEHICLE TO THE POPULATION STUDIES AND RESEARCH INSTITUTE (PSRI) that will provide the requisite logistical support during the Institute's field research activities.

PSRI has had a long history of collaboration and partnership with the UNFPA Kenya that dates back to the 70s. The two have over the years shared and exchanged ideas that have been instrumental in dealing with the population situation in Kenya. As manifestation of this collaboration and partnership, UNFPA recently donated eight computers to the PSRI computer lab. In addition, UNFPA has provided scholarships for students to undertake post-graduate studies in population studies at PSRI. UNFPA has also played an integral role

***"...it is important that everyone knows his or her HIV status so that those who test negative work towards protecting themselves".***

in the realization of the Rusinga Demographic Surveillance System which is a key project at PSRI.

While receiving the vehicles on behalf of the University, Prof. Henry Mutoro, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, applauded UNFPA for supporting PSRI activities. Prof. Mutoro said that the University of Nairobi (UoN) attaches great importance to the assistance that will go a long way in enhancing the capacity of the

Institutes to effectively deliver on its mandates. He called on other development partners to assist in such endeavours so as to re-position research institutions to participate effectively in research activities whose results inform relevant policies and programmes.

During the handing over, Dr. Benjamin Alli, Officer In-Charge, Kenya Country Office said that the partnership with UoN has contributed immensely to UNFPA activities. As part of its activities PSRI has been instrumental in building capacity in Results Based Management for UNFPA implementing partners in Kenya.

Prof. Enos Njeru, Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Lawrence Ikamari, PSRI Director and members of staff from the two organizations witnessed the handing over ceremony.

# Students challenged to be part of change in education

**T**HE GROWING INTERNATIONALIZATION OF EDUCATION IN AFRICA HAS RESULTED IN A HIGH RATE OF BRAIN DRAIN said Prof. David Wood, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Curtin University during a lecture on the 'Changing Face of Education' at the University of Nairobi. As part of dealing with brain drain, Africa needs to look at ways of retaining its students and attracting more international students to study in Africa.

During the lecture, delivered at Kikuyu Campus, Prof. Wood alluded to nation building and prestige in academic institutions' rankings as the key drivers of education. According to Wood, countries invest a lot of their resources in research and innovation which ultimately reflects on their Gross Domestic Product. He noted that all over the world, academic institutions seek to remain at the top as being ranked best

comes with many opportunities that lead to high research turnover as well as student enrollment.

An interesting aspect of the lecture was on Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), experiments with which the University of Nairobi has great experience in delivery of its academic programmes. Indeed, online courses and e-learning modes have reduced the number of people physically studying in the campuses.

The flip side of the development is that students are not motivated to stay in campus and yet there is a need for them to experience a campus lifestyle. To address this, campuses are becoming vital in urban development. Universities are now building campuses to fit in the existing cities thus becoming campus cities.



**Prof. David Wood, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Curtin University.**

Present during the lecture was Prof. Henry Mutoro, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs who was representing the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Prof. I. Jumba, Acting Principal, College of Education and External Studies, representatives from the Teachers Service Commission, District Education Office, Australian Embassy and University of Nairobi students and staff.

*According to Wood, countries invest a lot of their resources in research and innovation which ultimately reflects on their Gross Domestic Product.*

# UoN considered for UNIDO project

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UON) HAS BEEN CONSIDERED FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE UNITED NATIONS INDUSTRIALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (UNIDO) PROJECT. The Project is on the Kenya National System of innovation with the aim of improving the implementation of science and technology, and innovation as part of industrial development in Kenya. This was revealed in a meeting between the University and representatives from UNIDO.

Through its activities, outputs and outcomes, the UNIDO project will address the lack of coherent evidence-based measures for guiding policy prescriptions in the elaboration and implementation of science, technology and innovation within the industrial development of Kenya.

Participation in the project is ideal for the UoN as research, innovation and technology is key to higher learning institutions. UoN has been involved in various research projects and successful initiatives have been realized including the establishment of the Science and Technology Park.

While welcoming the initiative on



**Mr. Ritin Koria, Associate Expert- innovation, UNIDO and Dr. Kamau Gachigi, Coordinator, Science Park.**

behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Henry Mutoro, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC), Academic Affairs, said that the project findings would

not only benefit the University but the country as well.

In addition, Prof. Lucy Irungu, DVC, Research, Production and Extension, highlighted that through various collaborations, the University has been able to tap into different resources that have given UoN's research output a major boost. However, research facilities have been a challenge that the University has been trying to address. UoN plans to increase her research output and grow its portfolio which currently stands at KES. 3 Billion.

Mr. Ritin Koria, Associate Expert-innovation, UNIDO, said that efficiency and effectiveness of the innovation and industrial policy and the articulation within economic policy will be addressed by the UNIDO project through the establishment of a database for the longitudinal monitoring Kenya's science, technology and innovation system. He said that the project would involve a survey.

Present during the meeting was Prof. Bernard Njoroge, Principal, College of Architecture and Engineering, Dr. Kamau Gachigi, Coordinator Science and Technology Park and Prof. S. Mitema, Director, Centre for International Programmes and Linkages.

**According to Wood, countries invest a lot of their resources in research and innovation which ultimately reflects on their Gross Domestic Product**



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1. **Secretary for Education, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi signs the visitors book when he visited UoN stands at the KICC.**
2. **Dr. Rodger Nord, Deputy Director, African Department, IMF, interacted with staff and students of the School of Economics.**
3. **Prof. George Magoha, Vice-Chancellor, with visiting delegation from Somali University.**
4. **Prof. Henry Mutoro receives a car donation from Dr. Benjamin Alli of UNFPA for use by the Population Studies Research Institute.**



**5. Former University Librarian, Mrs. Salome Munavu (Front Centre) with colleagues during her farewell.**

**6. UoN Exhibitors at the CHE exhibition in June 2008.**

**7. Representatives during the media round table hosted by the School of Journalism and Mass Communication.**

**8. Mrs. Grace Hinga with colleagues during her farewell get together.**

**9. Sports and bonding session for Finance Department.**

# UoN and Binary enter talks on collaboration

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UoN) AND BINARY UNIVERSITY, MALAYSIA WILL ENTER INTO A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT THAT WILL FOCUS ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, MANAGEMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP.

This was revealed during a meeting between the University of Nairobi (UoN) led by Prof. Henry Mutoro, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs and Binary University's Executive Chairman, Prof. Joseph Adaikalam.

As part of the cooperation, staff development programmes which will include setting up a joint scholarship fund to encourage teaching members of staff pursue PhD studies will be developed. Another key area of the partnership is entrepreneurship.

The two universities will identify initiatives that will contribute to the youth development agenda that includes institutions producing entrepreneurs and not job seekers. To provide a holistic experience for the students, after their studies. The two parties will identify and

organize industrial experience that is meant to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills needed in the job market.

While welcoming the move, Prof. Mutoro said that the two universities have a lot to gain from a strategic alliance which will not only build and strengthen their respective capacities but also enhance the institutions' reputations as leading universities.

Prof. Adaikalam noted that both parties have the potential of providing well rounded programmes that are in line with the two countries' development needs.

Also present during the meeting was Prof. Enos Njeru, Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences and Prof. Isaac Jumba, Acting Principal, College of Education and External Studies.

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***two parties will identify and organize an industrial experience that is meant to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills needed***

## THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UoN) AND HANKUK UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN

STUDIES (HUFS) are keen on strengthening the existing collaboration between the two institutions. Since the signing of the memorandum of understanding in May 2011, the two universities have been running joint international programmes. In addition, two Korean students from HUFS have joined UoN and are pursuing their undergraduate studies in Sociology. The partnership has also benefitted several lecturers from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) to visit HUFS and vice versa.

Prof. Park Chal, President, HUFS, thanked UoN for the support accorded towards the cooperation when he paid a courtesy call on the Vice-Chancellor. He said that the partnership has led to an increase in the number of students from HUFS willing to study at UoN.

Speaking on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Henry Mutoro, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, said that the meeting was timely as there is need to discuss ways of further strengthening the ties between the two universities. During the meeting, it was noted that UoN students have been unable to meet the costs of studying at HUFS. It was agreed that the team would make a request to the management to look at ways the University can sponsor its students to benefit from the exchange programmes. HUFS donated a television screen for use in the Korean

# UoN and HUFS to strengthen their partnership



Studies Centre.

Prof. Enos Njeru, Principal, CHSS, Prof. Simeon. Mitema, Director, Centre for International Programmes and Linkages, Prof. Peter Wasamba, Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts and Prof. D.H. Kiiru, Department of Literature were present during the courtesy call.



**Prof. Simeon Mitema with delegates from HUFS. Above Prof. Park Chal, President, HUFS with Prof. Enos Njeru and Prof. Henry Mutoro.**



**Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha with a delegation from the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, led by Mr. Zhao Shunguo.**

## UoN students to benefit from China Library

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UON) IS SET TO HOST A CHINESE LIBRARY. THE FACILITY, WHICH WILL BE LOCATED AT THE JOMO KENYATTA MEMORIAL LIBRARY, WILL BE RICH IN INFORMATION CAPTURING KENYA-CHINA RELATIONS, history and other activities between the two nations. The Chinese government will donate reading materials and electronic equipment allowing students to learn and research on the two countries’ cooperation. The setting up of the Library as part of the activities marking the Kenya and China 50 years of cooperation.

Welcoming the development, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, said that the University of Nairobi is honoured to be hosting the unique library in Kenya. He pointed out that the Institution is collaborating with 15 Chinese universities in research, staff and student exchange.

Speaking on behalf of the delegation from the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China, Mr. Zhao Shunguo thanked the University for agreeing to host the Chinese Library. He said that the Embassy is keen on working with UoN management and students

in making the celebrations a success. The delegation had paid a courtesy call on the Vice-Chancellor.

Present during the meeting was Prof. Isaac Mbeche, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) Student Affairs, Prof. Henry Mutoro, Acting DVC, Academic Affairs, Prof. Patricia Kameri-Mbote, Acting Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mrs. Jacinta Were, University Librarian and Prof. Sa Dequan, Director, Confucius Institutes.

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*The Chinese government will donate reading materials and electronic equipment allowing students to learn and research on the two countries’ cooperation*

# UoN and KWTRP evaluate existing collaboration



**Dr. Jane Kengeya-Kayondo, KWTRP with Prof. Lucy Irungu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Production and Extension.**

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UoN) AND THE KEMRI-WELLCOME TRUST RESEARCH PROGRAMME (KWTRP) held a meeting to evaluate the development and progress of initiatives that are a result of the partnership between the two institutions.

While receiving the team from KWTRP, on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Lucy Irungu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research Production and Extension noted that the UoN and KWTRP had fully supported the partnership and worked towards implementation of the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that was

signed in 2011.

Some of the collaborative activities include the collaboration between UoN College of Health Sciences (CHS) and KWTRP that led to the establishment of the Health Services and Implementation Research and Clinical Excellence Consortium (SIRCLE) in 2011. SIRCLE's main aim is to build capacity for research and synthesis of evidence in developing standards

to guide health care practice throughout the Kenyan health system and to conduct operational research on the delivery and performance of health services in order to improve service delivery.

The collaboration between KWTRP and the College of Biological and Physical Sciences (CBPS), led to the allocation of laboratory space at the Centre for Biotechnology and Bioinformatics (CEBIB) to rehabilitate and equip a malaria molecular biology laboratory.

In addition, the School of Economics and KWTRP have jointly developed a Health Economics and Policy course which is offered in the School. This collaboration was driven

by the need to address the dire lack of qualified health economists in Kenya and the region.

Dr. Jane Kengeya-Kayondo, KWTRP, said that the Trust was keen in monitoring and evaluating the initiatives they are involved in. She said there has been commendable progress in implementing the terms of the MOU.

UoN and KWTRP share a common interest in the area of scientific research, capacity and institutional building and have therefore over time built strong collaborative linkages to complement and synergize each other's efforts. During the visit, KWTRP toured the JKML Library, UoN Press, CBPS and CHS.

Prof. Isaac Kibwage, Principal, CHS, Prof. Bernard Aduda, Principal, CBPS and Prof. E. Mutitu, Director, Board of Postgraduate Studies were present during the meeting.

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*The collaboration between KWTRP and the College of Biological and Physical Sciences, led to the allocation of laboratory space at the Centre for Biotechnology and Bioinformatics.*

# University of Nairobi takes part in national expo



*The Exhibition was organized by the Commission for Universities Education (CUE) formerly Commission for Higher Education (CHE)*

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI TOOK PART IN THE RECENTLY CONCLUDED EXHIBITION BY KENYAN UNIVERSITIES HELD AT THE KICC.

The Exhibition was organized by the Commission for Universities Education (CUE) formerly Commission for Higher Education (CHE) in which all public and private institutions of higher learning took part.

The University of Nairobi was represented by all the Colleges and Central Administration. The units put up an elaborate display of academic

programmes and other services offered at the University.

The 11th Exhibition by Kenyan Universities which also attracted other sector players such as the Higher Education Loans Board, the National Science and Technology Council among others.

The Exhibition was formally opened by the Secretary for Education Science and Technology, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi and closed by the Nairobi County Governor, Dr. Evans Kidero. Both VIPs are alumni of the University of Nairobi with the former being the immediate former,

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs.

The Exhibition is an annual fete that gives Universities an opportunity to show case their programmes and interact with stakeholders and the public in general.

## Strengthening ties with Umutara Poly

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UON) AND RWANDA'S UMUTARA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY (UP) HAVE REVITALIZED A COLLABORATION LINK FOLLOWING INITIAL DISCUSSIONS IN 2011.

In a meeting presided over by Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Prof. Henry Muroro on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor met with the team from UP led by the Rector, Dr. James Gashumba, it was agreed that the collaboration will develop, conduct and facilitate academic collaboration and exchanges between the two parties, specifically research in higher education, consultancy, agriculture and veterinary sciences.

As part of the collaboration, there will be sharing of knowledge and skills, staff and student exchange and capacity building.

In his remarks, Prof. Muroro noted that there is a need to develop collaborative research and educational programmes for the benefit of students and staff and committed the University to ensuring that it will take an active role in actualizing the

goals of the collaboration.

Dr. Gashumba stated that UP was keen to benefit from the good practices in knowledge and research uptake that the University of Nairobi is renowned for.

Prof. Charles Mulej, Dean, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Dr. John Mande, Head of Department, Clinical Studies were among those present during the meeting.

## Departments to be rewarded for good performance

**I**N A MOVE CALCULATED TO STIR PERFORMANCE OF COLLEGES, UNITS AND MEMBERS OF STAFF, THE UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT HAS ANNOUNCED that it will reward well performing departments/ units with effect from 2013/2014 year. Speaking during the signing of performance contracts, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha indicated that the University was up scaling the monitoring of performance reporting to ensure that it is managed with the necessary level of seriousness translating into real gains for the University. As a consequence, units and departments underperforming can only expect sanctions.

The University of Nairobi has been on performance contracts for the last eight years working towards growth in revenues and enhanced visibility. This has been part of its efforts to improve its competitiveness in the face of local and international competition.

During the current contract period, emphasis will be laid on the critical areas of student discipline, service delivery, maintaining a clean and near orderly environment and meeting Commission for University Education (CUE) assessment and audit requirements. Heads of departments are expected to draw work plans for the contract year and to match real evidence of the reported performance on the ground.

*The University of Nairobi has been on performance contracts for the last eight years working towards growth in revenues and enhanced visibility*

# Edith Nkatha Mwirigi

## Avoid loud and aggressive persons they are vexations to the spirit

**M**EET EDITH NKATHA MWIRIGI, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF SONU AND A STUDENT OF CIVIL ENGINEERING. I INTRODUCE THE LADY TO YOU because she is the first woman to hold the position of Secretary General of SONU. SONU traditionally has slots for women e.g. Treasurer, Gender Affairs Secretary and Vice-chair Academic Affairs, but Secretary-General has always been a preserve for male students.

“In high school, I loved being a leader, seeing that things were right, I do not like to see people being discriminated, I adore justice and I believe that each person has a role to play. These words, might sound as if they are pitch of a senator elect, but coming from Edith, they do not surprise me. The words serve to reveal a thread of steel in the otherwise soft-spoken secretary general.

Edith Mwirigi broke the usual political gender ranks when she vied and won the seat, but she has always been in student politics ever since she joined the University of Nairobi. Mwirigi served as a member

### Meet Edith Nkatha Mwirigi, Secretary-General of SONU and a student of civil engineering

of the SONU parliament in her first year year, where the executive voted her as the Hansard Editor. In her second year, she vied for and won the seat of vice-chair academic affairs. It is here that away from the usual propaganda of us versus the administration, that she was able to gain a new appreciation of the leadership. “I oversaw the allocation of SONU bursaries, and through her efforts the supplementary rule at School of Engineering was revoked”. At the end of her tenure, Mwirigi organised the academic forum a platform for students to discuss exam cheating, and other challenges such as issues of adequate facilities in the halls of residence, and lecture theatres.

Mwirigi loved history and government at high school and was fascinated by the cold war and imperial powers balkanisation of the world. It was not new for her to be active in leadership because she begun serving as a prefect while in Form one, she served as a compound prefect, in form 3 she was the school comptroller and in form 4 was a dormitory prefect. Mwirigi also enjoyed playing basketball, being a presenter during the science congress and being active in YCS throughout high school.

When Mwirigi was admitted to the University in 2010, she was thrown to her 4th choice, BA and through faculty transfer was taken to civil engineering and she finds pleasure in the course because she does not like white collar jobs, enjoys meeting people and finds engineering interesting because it does not have the monotony.

Mwirigi’s ambition to be Secretary General, stems from a realisation she had even while serving as vice chair, that the secretary general is the face of the union and his /her image can either build or destroy the union. “I

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felt that if there was any change to be made in SONU, then any change in perception by the public would always begin with the secretary general". The office of the secretary general has in the past been viewed from the perception of street scenes, but Mwirigi vowed that this was a thing of the past and if elected would steer the position differently. Again given that the secretary general had been the bastion of men, it had to be challenged and given women's knack for detail and organising, it would be the new domain of women.

Mwirigi notes that one of the major challenges she faces is that one cannot be a lone ranger. The student leadership must walk with you and embrace a sober approach. The perception by students that you must use force is alien to me" those who use force need to be disciplined. "as a woman, the challenge of working



with men, who sometimes can be goonish is disconcerting. These men really know how to dress someone down. In terms of inspiration and motivation, Mwirigi, without hesitation, states that her mother has been her motivation. "My mother has been there for us, raising us up, sharing whatever she had and seeing us through love. I also love my brother, who I lost on the eve of the SONU election that elevated me to secretary general. He was my biggest mentor from childhood and I have vowed to continue to lead to do him

proud. The humble environment that Mwirigi was brought up in has made her realize the importance of a nation sharing its resources fairly, balancing the disadvantaged and the advantaged. Mwirigi shares the truth of the Desiderata on speaking your truth quietly and clearly and about surviving and thriving.

Beneath what one might like to call a thread of steel, is a softer side of Mwirigi that acknowledges she is a human being, is in a relationship

and she loves it " we are not the same tribe but that has not stopped us from sharing something wonderful. To back her up in life, Mwirigi relies on her Christian walk; she is active at St. Paul's Chaplaincy where she is a member of the choir. This really has helped her to hold firm, to be restricted and protected from the vicissitudes of life.

"As far as possible, without surrender be on good terms with all persons"

## UoN students visit children's home

**T**HE STUDENTS ORGANISATION, SONU HAS COMMENCED A PROGRAM OF FOSTERING AND AUGMENTING GOOD NEIGHBOR RELATIONS WITH THE SURROUNDING UNIVERSITY COMMUNITIES.

This was revealed, when a group of students from the University of Nairobi (UoN) visited the Christ Chapel Children's Home in Nairobi's Huruma area. The initiative, organized by the SONU Legal Affairs Secretary, Isaack Muuo, and the Rotaract Club, UoN

Chapter saw the students interact with the children and organize a cleanup of the home.

The highlight of the mission was the student's sharing and listening to the children's moving stories and their hopes for the future. The event also saw the latter students and children interact in various sporting activities with the students making a generous donation of food items, clothing and shoes that will go a long way in running the facility.

Established in 2002, Christ Chapel Children's Home, houses

62 orphans and vulnerable children between the age of two and fifteen years. The home aims at ensuring holistic growth of the children away from the poverty and other dangers palpable in the surrounding Huruma Slums.

Madam Gloria, Director of the home, expressed her gratitude to the student body and the University of Nairobi fraternity for their kind gesture. She encouraged students to build their volunteer aspects since not everyone is equally endowed in the society.

# Scholar applauds African women's resilience

**IT IS CLEAR THAT MILITARISM HAS VAST EFFECTS ON PEOPLE-CENTERED DEVELOPMENT, DEMOCRATIZATION AND GENDER EQUALITY SAID PROF. AMINA MAMA DURING A PUBLIC** lecture at the University of Nairobi. In the lecture, the tension between global investments in militarism and commitments to gender equitable development were explored in detail. Prof. Mama who is the Director of Women and Gender Studies Programme, University of California, made a presentation on the role of women during war, and how women have survived times of unrest and what their direct involvement is. Specifically, Prof. Mama looked at the global militarism and the resilience of women in Africa.

Prof. Mama noted that for Africa, "the real security need is not military security but social security against poverty and violence. African women define security beyond the absence of war. The real security is about development. Unfortunately, militarism has underdeveloped the continent. There are no longer local cultures and value systems. These have been replaced with a culture of violence that relies on gendered and ethnicized violence against the dehumanized 'others.' Interestingly, through pre-conflict, conflict and

*"the real security need is not military security but social security against poverty and violence. African women define security beyond the absence of war"*

post-conflict, women have positioned themselves to exist despite the gender lines."

She observed that in the 20th Century alone, more people have died in declared wars than any other misfortune. The challenge for the 21st century is how to make a difference in this century by reducing militarism and global military

expenditure. African women's military involvement in post-colonial conflicts has dramatically increased between mid-20th and early 21st century.

The public lecture was organized by the University of Nairobi's Institute for Development Studies (IDS) and the African Leadership Centre (ALC), in collaboration with the African Peace building Network of the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) of New York. Prof. Mama is a widely published scholar-activist and the founding Editor of *Feminist Africa*, published by the African Gender Institute in Cape Town.



## HONOURS

# Farewell to retiring secretary after 42 years of service

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI RECENTLY SAID GOODBYE TO ONE OF ITS LONGEST SERVING EMPLOYEES MRS. GRACE WANGU HINGA. MRS. HINGA HAS WORKED IN THE UNIVERSITY SINCE 1971.

Her first work station was in the faculty of education but she also had a stint in the institute of adult studies and the faculty of veterinary sciences before being identified to work in the deputy vice-chancellor's office in 1984. She has since her posting, performed tirelessly in that office, during which period she has served six Deputy Vice-Chancellors. In the process she moved up the ranks from the position of Assistant Secretary to the position of Executive Secretary.

In a farewell party held in her honour, various speakers including the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration and Finance, Prof. Peter Mbithi, acknowledged Mrs. Hinga's dedication and work ethic and encouraged other UoN members of staff to work diligently.

In his remarks, Prof. Mbithi said that Mrs. Hinga's experience and knowledge of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration and



***Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration and Finance, Prof. Peter Mbithi and Mrs. Elizabeth Gesare Ongwae, immediate former Registrar Administration present a gift to Mrs. Grace Wangu Hinga who retired after 42 years of service.***

Finance office was an invaluable asset that greatly assisted him in settling down quickly and adjusting to the life in the office seamlessly.

During the party, Mrs. Hinga was not only surrounded by friends and colleagues but her family as well. As she proceeds on her retirement, she leaves behind a professional legacy that should be emulated by her peers.

The University wishes her a happy life in retirement.

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***As she proceeds on her retirement, she leaves behind a professional legacy that should be emulated by her peers.***

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# Honouring retiring senior managers

**I**N A CEREMONY OFFICIATED BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PROF. GEORGE MAGOHA, THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UON) GAVE A BEFITTING FAREWELL TO SENIOR RETIRING MANAGERS:

Mrs. Salome Ndinda Munavu and Mrs. Elizabeth Gesare Ongwae, who served as the University Librarian and as the Administration Registrar, respectively. Mrs. Munavu has served the University for 37 years while Mrs. Ongwae for 27 years.

The two officers have successfully over-seen a number of University reforms which today form the basis of the University's operations. Mrs. Munavu oversaw the digitalization of the library, open access and repository systems. Before that she had served in various capacities within the library system since 1976.

On her part, Mrs. Ongwae successfully oversaw the rightsizing and staff rationalization in the University in 2001. As a Registrar, she was an able leader for the public sector reforms among them ISO, Performance Contracting, strategic planning among others. Earlier, she had served in different capacities in the University since 1986.

In his remarks, Prof. Magoha said that the University was bidding farewell to two selfless, committed and hardworking officers who have

been a good example to many of the University's staff. He called on UoN employees to emulate the example set by the two retiring officers.

During the ceremony, in the company of their families feted by friends and colleagues.

The University wishes Mrs. Munavu and Mrs. Ongwae a happy life in retirement.



**Mrs. Salome Ndinda Munavu. Below: Mrs. Elizabeth Gesare Ongwae receives a gift from the Vice-Chancellor, Prof George Magoha and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (AI&F) Prof Peter Mbitii.**





**Cabinet Secretary for Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources, Prof. Judy Wakhungu (second left) with Prof. Agnes Mwang'ombe and Prof. Gitahi Kiama during the launch of the STAKE project.**

# WMI launches STAKE project

**I**N A COLOURFUL CEREMONY HELD ON JULY 2, 2013, AT THE COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE AND VETERINARY SCIENCES (CAVS), the Wangari Maathai Institute (WMI) launched the stake project. the stake

project (stabilizing Kenya through resolving forest related conflicts) was officially launched by the cabinet secretary for ministry of environment, water and natural resources, prof. judy wakhungu.

to mark the auspicious occasion, nine ceremonial tree species were planted by the project stakeholders at wmi site to celebrate the walk and work of the late prof. wangari maathai who was the chair of the stake project steering committee.

the stake project is an exciting new partnership between wmi, green belt movement (gbm), kenya forest research institute kefri) and the university of copenhagen, denmark. it is expected to contribute to stability in kenya by understanding and targeting the underlying factors that lead to conflicts over forest related resources. the three-year project funded by the danish development agency (danida) will also contribute to kenya's long-term development by mentoring and training the next generation of talented, young academics through provision of scholarships for Masters and PhD training.

Cabinet Secretary Prof. Wakhungu congratulated WMI and its partners on the historic milestone. She commended the initiative terming it as a solution to some of the problems Kenya is facing in dealing with environmental issues. Prof. Wakhungu noted that in search of stability and prosperity, the government of Kenya in 2005 enacted a Forest Act aimed at improving natural resources management by decentralizing responsibilities and rights of forest management to civil society bodies called Community Forestry

Associations (CFA).

While welcoming the guests to the University, Prof. Agnes Mwang'ombe, Principal, CAVS, said that the STAKE project was well in line with the University of Nairobi's strategic plan that calls for partnerships with other institutions. According to Prof. Mwang'ombe, the STAKE Project seeks to keep Nobel Laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai's flame alive by celebrating her life, her walks and works. She said that there was need to sensitize the younger generation on environmental issues. She noted that various outreach initiatives in the communities living near the MAU complex have been carried out.

To date, through the STAKE Project, scholarships have been awarded to four PhD students registered at WMI and seven research scholarships to Masters of Science (MSc) students registered in various departments in the University. WMI has also received support in the development of PhD syllabus on Environmental Governance and Management as well as the development of MSc syllabus on Environmental Governance. In addition, five Professors from the University of Copenhagen have been appointed visiting Professors of the University of Nairobi. The Project has also seen the purchase of equipment to support teaching and research work.

Others who spoke during the event were Prof. Kiama Gitahi, Director, WMI, Dr. B.N. Chikamai, Director, KEFRI, Pauline Kamau, Director, GBM and Prof. Vibeke Vindelov, University of Copenhagen.

# Conference addresses global education crisis

**T**HERE IS NEED TO RESTRUCTURE THE EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND STRATEGIZE ON HOW TECHNOLOGY CAN BE APPLIED IN EDUCATION. This was said by Prof. Bob Moon, Emeritus Professor of Education, Research Group on International Development in Teacher Education, Open University, United Kingdom, during the official opening ceremony of the 5th Distance Education and Teacher Education in Africa (DETA) Conference.

According to Moon, the reason why there is a global crisis in the education sector is because teachers have to deal with poor training and working conditions, low salary and social status. The reality is that developing nations must begin to appreciate the importance of teachers, which is to play the social mission of moulding young minds into greater ones.

The three day conference was officially launched by Prof. Collette Suda, Principal Secretary, Science and Technology, who noted that the conference was an ideal forum for dialogue on the real issues facing the African education system. As part of the strategies to improve education in Kenya, Prof. Suda shared that the government through the education docket has launched various flagship projects that will see the country achieve its vision of providing well trained teachers.



**Participants during the 5th DETA Conference at Kenya Science Campus.**

***The reality is that developing nations must begin to appreciate the importance of teachers, which is to play the social mission of moulding young minds into greater ones.***

Speaking on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Research, Production and Extension, Prof. Lucy Irungu, said that expanding education and improving quality is

central to the development of Africa. She pointed out that if Africa is to realize the goal of quality education for all, faculties of education in the continent need to take the lead in finding African solutions to the existing educational challenges.

The conference which attracted renowned experts, researchers and practitioners in education aimed at looking at the real issues facing the African education system. Themed 'Teacher education and development in Africa: the need for access, equity, sustainability, quality and relevance within the context of globalization,' the Conference was a rich mix of keynote speakers and panelists from various parts of the world giving insights on topical issues, was hosted by the College of Education and External Studies (CEES).

# Launch of RRI on implementation of Constitution

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UON) BECAME THE FIRST INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING TO TAKE UP A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONSTITUTION OF KENYA 2010 WHEN IT LAUNCHED THE RAPID RESULTS INITIATIVE (RRI). Under the initiative the University will embark on a 100 days sensitization programme on the implementation of the Constitution.

While launching the initiative, the chief guest, Chairman of the Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution, Mr. Charles Nyachae, noted that the University of Nairobi had continued to take an active role in the progressive struggle that culminated in the realization of the Constitution today. He outlined several critical questions that will form a basis for the University to address in implementing the constitution. He challenged the University to look at the measures that it has put in place

to prepare students to be leaders with integrity as envisioned in chapter six, to promote constitutionalism amongst its students and especially integrating the national values and principles of governance and public service including: social justice; human rights; integrity; transparency; and, accountability, in its programmes and activities.

Vice-Chancellor, UoN, Prof. George Magoha said that the launch of the sensitization programme heralds the

*CIC chairman, Mr. Charles Nyachae, challenged the University to look at the measures that it has put in place to prepare students to be leaders with integrity as envisioned in chapter six, to promote constitutionalism*

beginning of activities that will be spread out to all Colleges and Central Administration Units targeting all members of the University community who will be expected to take an individual active role.

Dr. Joseph Wanjui, Chancellor, UoN, who was in attendance, commended the University management for taking on yet another leadership role among institutions of higher learning in the implementation of the Constitution underscoring the need for the University to brand its products as part of successful implementation of the tenets of the Constitution.

Representatives from the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution, the University Management Board, Senate, Colleges and Central Administration Units and students witnessed the historic event.



**Mr. Charles Nyachae, CIC chairman with University management team cut the cake during the launch of the Rapid Results Initiative(RRI) on constitutional implementation and integrity awareness on 12 August 2013 at Main Campus Great Court.**



**Senator Onesmus Murkomen addressing students and staff at the 8:4:4 lecture theatre.**

## Senator interacts with UoN community

**SENATOR ONESMUS SKIPCHUMBA MURKOMEN HAS CHALLENGED ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS TO TAKE A LEADING ROLE IN PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND BE PART OF THE DEVELOPMENT THAT IS TAKING PLACE IN THE COUNTRY.** Murkomen was

addressing a public forum on Devolution and Implementation of Article 43 on Social Economic Rights at the University of Nairobi, attended by students and staff and discussants drawn from various disciplines. He

noted that academics have greatly contributed towards achieving social economic rights and informing policy and legislation. Universities therefore need to sensitize citizens demand service from their elected leaders. However, he noted that there are pertinent issues that need to be scrutinized for ordinary Kenyans to benefit from devolution.

The session, organized by the African Women Studies Centre and the Department of Political Science and Public Administration is part of the activities scheduled under the Rapid

Results Initiative sensitization on the Constitution of Kenya 2010. The University has embarked on a 100-days sensitization programme on the implementation of the Constitution. The launch of the sensitization programme heralds the beginning of activities that will be spread out to all Colleges and Central Administration Units targeting all members of the University community who will be expected to take an individual active role in the exercise.

# CEES launch Vision 2030 flagship programmes

**T**HE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND EXTERNAL STUDIES (CEES)

**OFFICIALLY LAUNCHED THREE FLAGSHIP PROGRAMMES FOR THE KENYA VISION 2030 PROJECT.**

The Master of Education in Educational Administration and Planning and the Master of Education in Educational Foundations will be offered by open, distance in print and e-learning modes. The University also launched the Bachelor of Education ICT mounted as a new programme. The development of open, distance and e-learning materials for delivering these courses has been made possible by the capacity at the College and the well-developed e-Learning Portal and learner support at the Extra-Mural Centres and University Campuses distributed widely in the country.

The Master of Education in Educational Administration aims at providing training and opportunities in distance education, exposing learners to specializations in Educational Administration, Planning, Economics of Education, Education Emergencies, Curriculum Studies and Corporate Governance in Education. On the other hand, through the Master of Education in Educational Foundations, students will have an opportunity to specialize in Sociology of Education, Adult and Community Development, History of Education, Philosophy of Education and Comparative and Contemporary Issues in Education.



*The programmes have been developed through collaboration between the Open Centre and Distance Learning, Centre for e-Learning, School of Education and the School of Computing and Informatics.*

The launch event was graced by Prof. Henry Mutoro, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, who congratulated CEES on the great milestone. He highlighted the need to have such programmes which are

in line with the social pillar of Vision 2030 on access to education for all Kenyans. The University is committed to developing open, distance and e-Learning materials for diversifying, enhancing and enriching its delivery mode. He called on other Colleges in the University to take advantage of technology and adopt open and distance learning.

The event was attended by Prof. Isaac Jumba, Principal, College of Education and External Studies, Prof. Enos Njeru, Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. H. Ochanda, Deputy Principal, Kenya Science Campus, various deans and directors, University staff members and students and invited guests.

# UoN and University of Somalia enter into talks on collaboration



**Vice-Chancellor, University of Somalia, Prof. Mohammed Yusuf with UoN Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha.**

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UoN) AND THE UNIVERSITY OF SOMALIA WILL SOON REVIVE THE EXISTING COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE TWO INSTITUTIONS. This was revealed recently, when the Vice-Chancellor, University of Somalia, Prof. Mohammed Yusuf paid UoN Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha a courtesy call

During the meeting, areas of mutual interest were explored to develop a strong partnership that

***In addition, UoN will also partner with the Savannah Institute of Public Service and Professional Studies in training public officers in Somalia.***

will benefit both universities. According to Prof. Yusuf, the University of Somalia is keen on being part of the team that reconstructs the country by providing skilled human resources. This will be done through capacity building with UoN. The University would also like to bring changes in various national activities including the examination process. In addition, through the partnership, the University

will be able to tap into UoN's strengths and improve its postgraduate programmes and research.

In his remarks, Prof. Magoha acknowledged the importance of collaborations among African universities. He pledged UoN's commitment to contribute to the development of higher education in Somalia and play a role in the nation's growth.

In addition, UoN will also partner with the Savannah Institute of Public Service and Professional Studies in training public officers in Somalia.

Present during the meeting was Prof. Isaac Mbeche, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Affairs, Prof. Henry Mutoro, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs and Prof. William Ogara.

# UoN subscribes to Research Africa Funding Platform

**T**HE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI (UoN) RECENTLY ENTERED INTO AN AGREEMENT WITH RESEARCH AFRICA THAT ENABLE STUDENTS AND STAFF MEMBERS ACCESS RESEARCH AFRICA'S FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES DATABASE. ACCESS TO THIS PLATFORM WILL BE A VALUABLE TOOL TO GROW THE UNIVERSITY'S RESEARCH ACTIVITIES.

Interested UoN users will be able to access the sorted and sieved funding opportunities that are available and receive alerts based on individual disciplines and the type of grants that are of interest to each member via electronic mail. Research Professional Africa is an essential online resource for researchers, students, research and innovation managers, development officers and policymakers in Africa. It provides subscribers access to comprehensive, authoritative and appropriately highlighted information of over 40,000 research funding opportunities globally to enable sustained research for African development. In addition, an African staffed newsroom covers the African science, policy and research funding news relevant to Research Africa readers. The Research Africa

platform provides access to funding opportunities, news and analyses on topics chosen to give African researchers, students and policymakers an edge in the competition for research funding.

The types of funding opportunities include scholarships, fellowships (early career, mid-career and

senior), research grants, innovation grants, networking/collaboration opportunities, travel grants, hosting conference grants, publication grants, capacity building grants, research collaboration calls and development funding from local and global funders of research and development projects in Africa.

The Research Professional Africa platform allows students, staff and researchers to search for various grant opportunities specific to their

## *UoN admitted to BioMed Central Foundation Program*

The University of Nairobi (UoN) has been admitted to the BioMed Central Foundation Program, The Open Access Publisher. The admission is in recognition of the University's dedication to the Open Access Policy and outstanding contribution to the open access initiative.

The Foundation Membership entitles members of the University to a variety of benefits, which include a branded webpage on the BioMed Central Website, a BioMed open access tool kit and complimentary subscriptions to deal with BioMed Central's subscription products and services.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Administration and Finance, Prof. Peter Mbithi has urged all students and members of staff to take full advantage of these benefits. Further, all members of staff and students are encouraged to continue to contribute to the BioMed Central, The Open Access Publisher.

chosen discipline and research projects. Also included in the platform is the Research Africa funding analysis online news bulletin which covers "institutional profiles." Research Africa also highlights selected funding opportunities and innovative funding schemes in the news, as well as research related jobs and conferences/events that are relevant to African and global readers. The platform can be accessed through [www.research-africa.net](http://www.research-africa.net).



## QUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

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The University of Nairobi is committed to quality as the guiding principle in its decision making and leadership in the provision of university education and related services to its customers.

To realise this, the University management shall regularly monitor and review its performance for continual improvement and suitability by implementing an effective quality management system based on ISO 9001 standard.



Varsity**Focus**

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