

Human rights and peace education takes root in the University

Friday, 25th October 2008 stands out as one of the milestones in the history of the University of Nairobi, it is on this day that human rights and peace education was established in the University of Nairobi following the official launch of the Kenya Chapter of HAKI Afrika.

HAKI Afrika is an association of university teachers of human rights and peace education; the association has in the past three years made considerable effort to mainstream the teaching of human rights and peace education at the University. One of the outcomes of the launch of the Chapter is the establishment of a Center for Human Rights and

tion between human rights institutions and the academia.

Dr Chweya lauded the formation of the Chapter and emphasized the need for the University to take academic leadership in the development of human rights teaching, training and research so as to contribute to a knowledge base in human rights and well-trained personnel in the same.

He challenged the proposed Center to develop and offer short courses targeting the public sector offices, this he noted would go a long way in mainstreaming human rights and a culture of peace in Kenya.

The Vice-Chancellor, in a speech delivered by Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, affirmed the support and commitment of the University in enhancing the capacity of the Center. He emphasized that the Center had the potential capacity to provide a rich curriculum and advice to institutions and agencies in Kenya. He singled out units such as : Schools of Law, Economics , Journalism and Mass Communication; Departments of : History, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Literature, Linguistics, Political Science; and the Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies fro the academic cooperation and inter disciplinary approach taken in the planned human rights and peace program.

The Vice-Chancellor urged the Centre and HAKI to move beyond rhetoric and to translate their mission and vision into tangibles “the challenges not withstanding, we as an institution will oversee and develop training strategies for action, a responsibility that we are able to facilitate.”

The HAKI initiative has yielded an MA program on human rights and peace., this has been approved at college level, further, in collaboration with IDIS, a BA program on peace studies is in the pipeline.

In a separate development, HAKI Kenya, and the Centre have been developing a curricula and teaching modules for human rights with a focus on development, conflict management and peace. The Danish Institute for Human Rights, The Raul Wallenberg Institute for Human Rights of the University of Lund, Sweden, and the Kenya Institute for Human Rights support this activity by the Centre. The Centre has brought different stakeholders top explore the linkage between Human rights and peace and to discuss the development of effective teaching curricula in human rights and peace education.



Dr. Ludeki Chweya (centre) PS, Office of the Vice President during the launch of Haki Africa. With him is Dean, Faculty of Arts Prof. E.H.N. Njeru & Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs Prof. J.T. Kaimenyi

Peace education, with the goal of contributing to the understanding, appreciation, internalization, practice and realization of human rights and peace in Kenya and in the region at large through multidisciplinary academic research, teaching, publication, documentation, outreach and training.

The launch, which was held at the Arziki Conference Center, Chiromo Campus, brought together representatives from the University, development partners and various stakeholders. In his official remarks, the Chief Guest, Dr. Ludeki Chweya, Permanent Secretary in the office of the Vice President and Ministry of Home Affairs emphasized the need for a multidisciplinary effort in the human rights discourse. Indeed, Dr. Chweya alluded to the need for empirical research and rigor in the area of human rights pointing out that although there has been a vibrant human rights movement in Kenya, the movement has been limited because it lacked a mechanism to create synergies and cross fertiliza-