

The University of Nairobi has successfully hosted the 2015 International Mother Language day.

The two-day event organized by the department of Linguistics and Languages in collaboration with UNESCO and the Bible Translation and Literacy (BTL) kicked off on 18th Feb and is expected to end later today. Speaking during the opening of the event, Mr. Isaac Nyaribo representing the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi challenged scholars and the entire education sector to educate people on the benefits of using mother language. He also said that the use of mother language enhances cultural diversity and promotes peace, solidarity and dialogue. Mr. Nyaribo reiterated that effective communication in the society could only be enhanced if people spoke the language they understood best.

On his part, College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS) Principal, Prof. Enos Njeru encouraged the participants to use mother language instead of competing to speak in foreign languages. Prof. Njeru also said that he was proud of the department of linguistics for having organized the event. While passing across the Vice Chancellor's message, Prof. Njeru said that the University of Nairobi was committed to research, advocacy and promotion of mother language in order to meet the social economic needs of our country.

Department of Linguistics and Languages Chairman, Prof. Kithaka wa Mberia observed that the increasing amount of scholarly works in regard to mother languages in Kenya was encouraging. However, renowned Linguist Prof. Okoth Okombo noted Kenya is among many African countries where native dialects are facing extinction. Prof. Okombo said that many children lacked exposure to native languages and that our school curriculum emphasized on the use of foreign languages to gauge a learner's intellectual capacity. Apart from a series of papers presented by scholars during the event, the celebrations were marked by powerful and exciting multi-cultural performances designed to promote social cohesion, raise cultural awareness and tolerance.