

**Commitment to the implementation of ESDA-SUD programme  
(OCTOBER 2011)**



(L to R): Prof. George Magoha (VC, University of Nairobi), Prof. Olive Mugenda (VC, Kenyatta University), Prof. Konrad Osterwalder (Rector, UNU), Prof. Ernest Aryeetey (VC, University of Ghana) and Prof. Steven Simukanga (VC, University of Zambia)

On 13 October 2011, the United Nations University Institute for Sustainability and Peace (UNU-ISP) jointly with the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Science and Technology, the University of Tokyo, and with support from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, hosted an international symposium on *“The Role of Higher Education for Sustainable Development in Africa”*, at the United Nations University (UNU) in Tokyo, Japan. The 3-day symposium brought together Education for Sustainable Development in Africa (ESDA) project partners, stakeholders and Vice Chancellors from some of the universities where ESDA project is being implemented. Among the stakeholders were Kenya’s and South Africa’s ambassadors to Japan, Prof. Shaukat Abdulrazak (Secretary, National Council for Science and Technology, Kenya) and representatives from African Development Bank, NORAD, SIDA, UN-HABITAT and UNEP.

ESDA project is a collaborative initiative between UNU-ISP and leading African universities in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia. The project aims at implementing postgraduate programmes on integrated rural development (Ghana and Nigeria), sustainable urban development (Kenya) and management of mineral resources (South Africa and Zambia). The symposium was a platform for project partners to share their experiences of the first phase. The symposium witnessed the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between UNU and the partner African universities. By doing so, the Vice Chancellors showed their commitments in implementing ESDA project objectives and activities.

The delegation from University of Nairobi included Prof. George Magoha (Vice Chancellor), Dr. Samuel Owuor (Chairman, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies) and Prof. David Mungai. The Department of Geography and Environmental Studies is set to implement ESDA postgraduate programme in sustainable urban development in 2013. The programme has been jointly developed by the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University, with support from UNEP, UN-HABITAT, UNESCO (Nairobi), University of Tokyo, Yokohama National University, UNU-IAS (Japan), Karlstad University (Sweden) and Agder University (Norway).

During the symposium, Prof. Magoha delivered a well-received paper on *“Sustainable Development Challenge for African Universities: A Vice-Chancellor’s View”*. He called on African universities to embrace the existing and emerging sustainability issues in their curriculum and nurture sustainability literacy as a core competence among their graduates. While acknowledging that some universities, including the University of Nairobi, have made considerable efforts in addressing sustainable development challenges, they themselves face a number of challenges that need to be first addressed. Prof. Magoha was particularly concerned with brain drain and the high numbers of African scholars who opted to stay abroad after staff development programmes and trainings.