

# In this Issue



World Bank, Vice President for Africa Region, Ms. Obiageli Ezekwesili interacted with students and staff in a lively session on issues of youth unemployment and their role in development during her official visit in the country last month.

## VarsityFocus

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The University of Nairobi in conjunction with the Starkey Hearing Foundation and other Kenyan Hearing professionals distributed free hearing aids to 4,000 children with hearing impairment.

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Female students body launches a newsletter to articulate issues concerning their welfare.

# Recent milestones

## Editorial


It is the end of the year and again this issue of the *Varsity Focus* takes stock of the milestones in the later part of 2009 and also updates you on some of the recent activities in the University. The month of December is normally associated with the graduation ceremony for the Colleges of Humanities and Social Sciences and Health Sciences. On fourth December 2009, this lot will constitute the 42nd congregation ceremony and conferment of degrees and award of diplomas to more than 3,500 students at all levels. The congregation will be in addition to the 3976 graduands awarded during the 41st ceremony held in September this year. This graduation will increase our alumni base close to 115,000 since we became a full fledged University in 1970.

In the last quarter of this academic year, over 9000 new students joined various academic programmes. The students from all levels, have since been oriented with the University life and are progressing well with their academic activities.

Elsewhere, the Department of Surgery, School of Medicine partnered with the Starkey Foundation to distribute over 4000 pairs of hearing aids to affected people in Nairobi and Kisumu. Also, the School of Dental Sciences received a micotome while the Department of Ophthalmology received a retcan from Daisy's Eye Cancer Fund.

In its public outreach activities, the University participated in this year's Nairobi International Trade Fair and the Public Service Week. In both activities, the University was represented by all colleges and central administration. This is on top of earlier efforts that included participation in the national and regional exhibitions and the annual open day that was held in May this year.

Our collaboration with international institutions also moved a notch higher. In November we hosted the World Bank Vice President for Africa Region, Ms. Obiageli Ezekwesili who was on official tour of the country and shared with students and staff in a lively interactive session on issues of youth unemployment and their role in development. Our association with Chinese institutions led to the UoN successfully hosting a four- day International Confucius Institutes Conference in October – the first such conference to be held in Africa. The prospects of strengthening ties were further boosted by the Chinese Ambassador H.E. Deng Hong who promised to enhance collaboration between UoN and leading Chinese Universities.

Well, all these 2009 activities will be crowned by the 2009 sports extravaganza featuring local universities between December 17 and 22, 2009. The event, showcasing most indoor and outdoor games, will staged at UoN and will be open to the public. What a sporty way to say bye to 2009 and usher in the end year holidays. Merry Christmas and Happy 2010. 

Charles E. Sikulu



**A**s 2009 draws to a close, the University of Nairobi can look back to the events of the past year with great satisfaction. We have not only continued to discharge our core mandate effectively but also made considerable strides towards internationalizing our brand as a premier institution of higher learning in the region.

The University of Nairobi boasts of a well developed modern infrastructure which is continuously being improved. Our ultra modern central Examination Centre at Chiromo and the Mwai Kibaki Library at the School of Business, Lower Kabete Campus are examples of such modern infrastructure. The two were officially opened by the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui when he toured the University in February 2009.


Our international profile has continued to grow. In 2008, the University was honoured to host the former United Nations Secretary General H.E. Kofi Annan during our 39th Graduation Ceremony. This year, the University has had the privilege of hosting many other distinguished international personalities including Dr. Anna Tibajuka, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director, UN-HABITAT, Hillary Rodham Clinton, US Secretary of State and Ms Obiageli Ezekwezi, World Bank Vice-President for Africa Region. The University of Nairobi has been able to attract such high level visitors because of our reputation as a leading centre of academic excellence.

In September, we held our 41st Graduation during which graduands from our four colleges – College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, College of Architecture and Engineering, College of Biological and Physical Sciences and College of Education and External Studies received their degrees and diplomas.

The 42nd Graduation Ceremony scheduled to take place on December 4, 2009 involves mainly graduands from the Colleges of Health Sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences.

We have been able to discharge our mandate effectively because of the support we continue to receive from our stakeholders. The Government has given us the resources we require to run the University. Our partners, both local and international, have collaborated with us and given us financial and other support. The students have ensured the success of our academic programmes by remaining disciplined and focusing on their studies. The staff on their part have performed their duties with dedication and great professionalism.

Let me take this opportunity to congratulate all the graduands of the 42nd congregation on their success and thank all the students, staff, friends and well wishers for standing with us. We would not have been able to achieve the success that we are celebrating without your support. I wish to assure all our stakeholders that the University remains committed to maintaining the high academic standards for which we are reknowned.

On behalf of the University of Nairobi community I would like to wish everyone of you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. 

# Dis- charging our mandate



Prof. George Magoha, Vice-Chancellor

# UON partners 4000 children

The University of Nairobi in conjunction with the Starkey Hearing Foundation and other Kenyan Hearing professionals distributed free hearing aids to Kenyan children with hearing impairment. The mission was carried out in Nairobi and Kisumu in October 2009, and targeted over 4000 children. According to Prof. Isaac Muthure Macharia of the Department of Surgery, University of Nairobi, this is the largest such mission to target hearing impaired children in Kenya. The launch of the initiative kicked off at the University of Nairobi and benefited 1500 children from Nairobi and its environs.

The exercise which took over 10 days, targeted different levels of hearing impairment, according to Prof. Macharia, the distribution of the hearing Aids is expected to support our children to experience a change in their lives, "improved hearing and sound perception is taken for granted by many people and we must not fall into that trap denying our children the ability to hear properly " In this connection, Prof Macharia singled out the Kenyatta National Hospital, the Kenya Society for the Deaf as some of the partners who had made it possible for the mission to succeed.

Hearing impairment may not be fatal but the implications at the individual, family and community levels and the disruption that it causes to the people involved is considerable. It has far reaching implications on development of communication skills and a child's scholastic achievement .This in turn affects the ability to realize their full potential leading in many instances to socioeconomic marginalization, poverty, dependency, social isolation and poor quality of life.

The fact that hearing impairment cannot be "seen" means that it has been given a very low profile. It is therefore gratifying to note that the commitment of the Starkey Hearing



**ENT specialists from Starkey Foundation and the Department of Surgery, UoN, fit**

Foundation to alleviating disability from hearing impairment has resulted in distribution of more than 300,000 hearing aids to children all over the world since the year 2000.

The World Health Organization estimates that there are 278 million persons with disabling hearing loss in the world. At least two thirds of the burden of hearing loss is found in



# Partners with Starkey to assist children with hearing aids




... hearing aids on beneficiaries.

developing countries. In Kenya, it is estimated that between four and six percent of children have hearing impairment which is severe enough to affect their learning ability. The effects of hearing impairment can be mitigated by prevention, early detection, treatment and rehabilitation.

With industrialization and increased life expectancy, hearing impairment from noise exposure and aging are likely to increase in developing countries with consequences on health care provision. It is estimated that 50 per cent of all hearing loss is preventable

through interventions that are not only currently available but could be implemented at the level of primary healthcare. Implementation of hearing prevention and preservation programmes in developing countries has been hampered by shortage of appropriately trained healthcare professionals. To alleviate this shortage of ENT and Audiological personnel, the University of Nairobi has developed training programmes through which Hearing health professionals for Kenya and the neighbouring countries have been trained. Indeed we are proud to offer the only Diploma programme in clinical Audiology and Public Health Otology in Africa while our masters' programme in ENT surgery has been recognized as one of the leading training programmes in Africa and attract students from various African countries.

Our involvement in this mission is consistent with the University of Nairobi's ENT section which has been involved in various activities, among them training audiologists for the region, convention of stakeholders forum, running surgical outreach programmes in various parts of the country, training ENT surgeons for the region, carrying out research and treatment of chronic discharging ears among others for Kenya and the neighbouring countries through the Diploma in Clinical Audiology and Public Health Otology. Two UoN graduates played a key role in the success of the Starkey Foundation Hearing mission in Mozambique last year. 





## Alumni hit 110,000 as 41<sup>st</sup> graduation is marked


The University held its 41st Graduation Ceremony on Friday, September 18, 2009. The highlight of the ceremony was the conferment of degrees and awards to 3,926 graduands broken down as 928 diplomas, 2618 bachelor's degrees, 36 postgraduate diploma awards, 381 master's degrees and 13 Doctor of Philosophy degrees. A total of 1,566 female and 2,410 male graduands were feted during the ceremony, which brought in graduands from the Colleges of :Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences; Education and External Studies; Architecture and Engineering; and Biological and Physical Sciences. The remaining two colleges – Health Sciences and Humanities and Social Sciences – will hold their ceremony in December 2009. The current number of Alumni now stands at 109,090.

In his remarks, the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph B. Wanjui stated that University has the necessary intellectual capacity to assist the government in addressing the many challenges that affect the development of our country. "The country looks upon the University as one of the key sources of practical solutions." There is thus a challenge for the University to give an account of itself by continuing to be relevant and sensitive to the development need of the people of Kenya.

In his brief remarks, the assistant minister for higher education, Dr Kilemi Mwiria reiterated the government's commitment to implement the recently negotiated terms of service with unions representing staff in public universities. Hon Mwiria was clear that the staff is an important source that should neither be wasted nor neglected.

In his remarks, Prof. Magoha , the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nairobi, commended the Principals of the College of Education and External Studies(CEES) and the College of Biological and Physical Sciences (CBPS) for their outstanding performance in the just concluded 2008/2009 contractual year. He also commended the entire staff of the University noting that it was due to their efforts and hard work that the University remained focused, stable and able to fulfill its mandate of excellence.

The Chairman, University of Nairobi Council, Mr. John Simba appealed to members of staff to remain patient noting that Council was committed to implementing the CBA signed with the Unions.

The ceremony was attended by thousands among them; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Prof. Crispus Kiamba, Profs. Florida Karani and Bethwel Ogot – Chancellors of Maseno and Moi Universities, respectively, the graduating students, parents, and the general public who braved the scorching sun in order to witness the proceedings. 

# Breast Cancer Free Clinic

**N**ever doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has" -Margaret Mead.

This quotation is an apt introduction to the activities of a small group of students of the University of Nairobi, who decided to participate in their own small way in the Breast Cancer Awareness Month held in October, 2009. The group, which is a chapter of the Kenya Model United Nations UoN- set up a free Breast Cancer clinic in conjunction with the Aga Khan University Hospital at the UoN Main Campus on October 31.

It was certainly good to see students being involved in social responsibility and community oriented outreach, in an event which was open to students and staff. Not to be ignored or outdone was the general public, which to give them their due not only turned up, but were patient in the long queues that formed at the various registration desks set up for the one-day clinic at the Exhibition Hall of the JKML. As far as *Varsity Focus* estimates, over 500 people including men and women were tested, what was even more fascinating is that the event attracted a mix of people. Even before the clinic was opened at 8am, people had already queued, awaiting registration which unfortunately had to close at 1.30pm because the number of people registered by then were going to be tested well past the 5pm, planned time.

Dr. David Makumi, the Manager, Oncology Services at the Aga Khan proposed that the Hospital, in partnership with KMUN make the screening an annual event and expand it to a two-day clinic, given the large turn-out indicative of a real need. "We are very honoured to be here to deliver this service free of the usual charges, it is a service that many would benefit from"

The sentiments were echoed by Dr. Paul



**Students pick sensitization materials during the breast cancer clinic.**

Mbatia, the Patron of KMUN. In lauding the efforts and the initiative of the group he noted that "To organize a successful event requires meticulous planning, for the members of KMUN to have achieved this is no mean feat," Mbatia also alluded to the need for more preventive health initiatives, and welcomed other stakeholders to partner with the University of Nairobi in such initiatives.

According to Sonia Muasa, the Under Secretary General of KMUN-UoN Main Campus Chapter, KMUN is a United Nations youth Club, which is concerned about the welfare of humanity. The involvement of KMUN therefore in the free breast screening, is part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 3 which calls for

the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.

One of the issues of concern as raised by those who attended the clinic was cervical cancer, as well as other cancers, indeed there was opportunity for open talks, video shows and other presentations. The breast cancer free clinic, was sponsored by among others, the University of Nairobi, The Aga Khan University, Pelican Signs, H2O Beverages and Homeboyz Radio 91.5 FM. 

**Matilda Nzioki is a 4th year Bachelor of Arts student and outgoing Under Secretary General, KMUN**



# Sustainable water conference

The Pan Africa Chemistry Network (PACN) Kenya Hub, an initiative of the Royal Society of Chemistry and the University of Nairobi recently held a successful International Conference on Sustainable Water at the College of Biological and Physical Sciences. The Conference which ran between 25th – 28th August, 2009, was attended by over 200 participants drawn from East and Southern Africa, including the Horn, as well as the United Kingdom.

The Conference reviewed critical issues in water resource management at both theoretical and applied water knowledge. The participants who extended the “water wisdom” concept submitted their work on the following areas: sustainable water management and training, technological development that enhances water quality and quantity, water policy, legal and institutional and financing of water resources and the effects of climate change on water quality and availability.

It was noted that African countries face several water challenges that require solutions at national, regional and global levels, not least because the quality of water world wide is generally in a state of decline. The sanitation standards are unacceptably low due to lack of technology for water re-use, recycling and treatment. Water quality is therefore inadequate and below the World Health Organization standards.

Above all, the rural and peri-urban water supply quality is not considered as an essential part of most water treatment systems. It is critical that most of the rivers and water courses in the world are non-gauged, and therefore water pollution statistics are limited, old technologies are being applied and water laboratories are scarce. Hence there is a need for robust and low cost technologies to measure key water quality parameters.

In addition, the water demand for agricultural use is increasing rapidly due to food security issues. The rainfall pattern is varying due to climate change, deforestation, a high evaporation index and over exploitation of water resources. The development of most of the hydropower projects has resulted

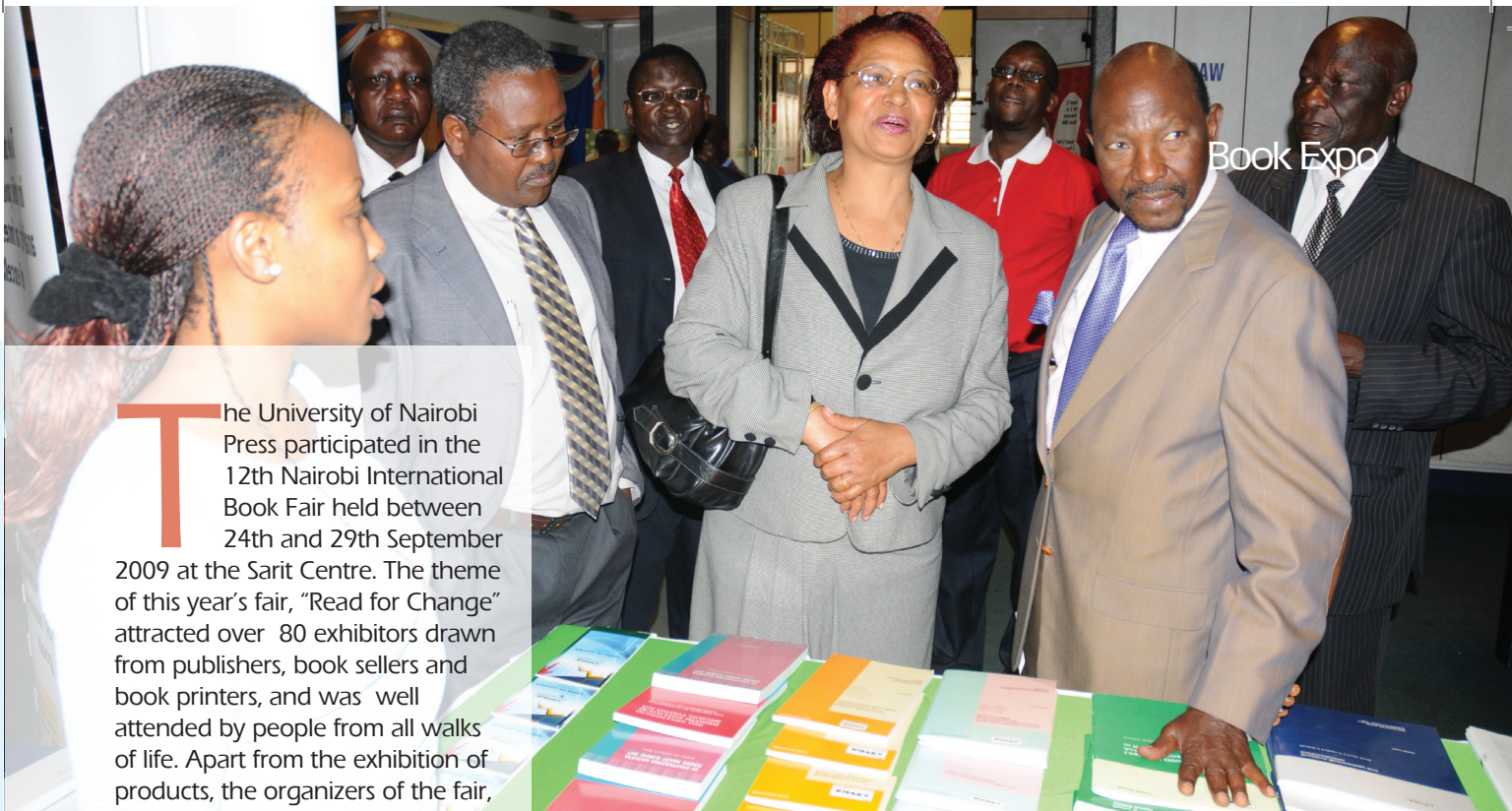
in the damming of rivers, with subsequent reduction of water flows and volumes. Due to these shortcomings there is a knowledge gap with respect to water data.

It was also noted that, at present, a segmented approach to African water issues is not yielding positive results. The following UN Organizations have some activities related to water: African Ministerial Committee for Water of UNEP, the World Bank, the UN Economic Commission for Africa, Africa Development Bank, UN Children’s Fund, WHO, UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and World Meteorological Organization. However, there is great need for a central coordinating body to handle water in the continent. 



PACN delegates register for the conference at Chiromo Campus.





Chancellor (second right) with some top managers at the Sarit Book Fair.

The University of Nairobi Press participated in the 12th Nairobi International Book Fair held between 24th and 29th September 2009 at the Sarit Centre. The theme of this year's fair, "Read for Change" attracted over 80 exhibitors drawn from publishers, book sellers and book printers, and was well attended by people from all walks of life. Apart from the exhibition of products, the organizers of the fair, the Kenya Publishers Association organized workshops and seminars, book launches and activities for children.

According to the managing Editor, of the Press, Mr. J. K. Kirimania, the major premise for the Press to attend the fair is to sell our products, to showcase our best products and to raise funds. As a result of participating in the trade fair we made some good sales and we were able to link up with new trade partners from as far as Uganda and Canada.

Kirimania emphasized that the Press enhanced its image as well as that of the University, "You see, our own Chancellor, Dr. J. Wanjui doubled up as an author such that the publishers handpicked him to join the entourage of the Minister, this enhanced our reputation for quality and distinction.


Further, the Chancellor was on hand to autograph his book 'My Native Roots'. This session proved to be a crowd puller, indeed, other

# UONP at the book fair

publishers such as Longhorn took up the example and called upon the authors of their series on famous Kenyans to quickly come in and be available to autograph books.

Another centre of attraction was the presence of Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye, a literary scholar and writer. Her two books, "Creative Writing in Prose", and

the "Composition of Poetry", were purchased by students and schools. While the editorial staff at the Press also dealt with numerous budding writers who wanted advice on how to publish their works, Marjorie, 80, was a veritable source of practical advice to would be authors on how to commence writing. It was a heady mix that worked well. Marjorie was also on hand to autograph the copies purchased.

It was evident that visitors to the exhibition were interested in our book display and our listings; they were also keen in picking the information guide and the Varsity Focus. A number of visitors also wanted to find out about academic programs and credit transfers, we were happy to direct them to the JAB offices at the University of Nairobi. 



## Public outreach

The University of Nairobi scooped several trophies and prizes during the 2009 Nairobi International Trade Fair held at the end of September. The theme of the trade fair was “agribusiness in attaining food sufficiency in vision 2030.”

This year, over 21 departments/units took part in the trade fair. Popular exhibits included cactus flower syrup extraction; the Osama weevil and control methods; the dream drip irrigation tool kit; and education through distance and e-learning. A major attraction was the services offered where dental

checkups, blood pressure readings; ; blood sugar and weight calculation took centre stage.


The College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS) departments scooped 31 prizes in the farm and dairy competitions, the wins which ranged between 1st and 3rd prizes were as follows:

Field station -18 entries including local vegetables- 10 entries won 1st prize, five entries won second prize, three entries won third prize. In Plant Sciences, 23 entries including spices, herbs, flowers were entered; three entries won 1st prize, four

entries won second prize, six entries won 3rd prize. In the Cheese category all the five entries scooped position one. Others were the rabbits' category where UoN won first prize for male rabbits and 3rd prize for weaners, while in the category of eggs, position one was also secured.

By participating, the University was able to: enhance its visibility in the market; transact business; establish and strengthen business relations; provide information. Overall the University was judged second in the category of institutions of higher learning.

If the number of visitors who came to the stands is anything to go by, then we can safely say that the efforts to market the University and by extension enhance public relations and publicity have paid off handsomely

Varsity Focus lauds the show committee for its success. 

# Nairobi international trade Fair



High school students at the University of Nairobi stand.

**T**he University of Nairobi was one of the three public universities invited to participate in this year's public service week held from October, 13-16, 2009 at the Kenyatta Conference Centre. The theme of the week was "Modernizing Public Service Towards Realization of Kenya Vision 2030.

The University was represented by the central administration departments and the colleges. The main purpose of participating in the exhibition was to publicize and market our goods and services; to demonstrate our service delivery and relevance; to enhance our customer service through reaching out to the public and facilitating the public to express their feelings and expectations of the University.

The three-day annual event which is organized by the Office of the Prime Minister is anchored on four themes: service delivery; service charter; relevance to the community; and industrial linkages. The Prime Minister the Right Hon. Raila Odinga who officially opened the extravaganza, praised the University for finding local solutions to fight problems affecting the agricultural sector.

Government ministries and parastatals took part in this exhibition which mainly targets the general public. Our stand was particularly popular, it was sited at a vantage point, and prospective students, parents and educators enquired about our products at different levels, past students wanted to enroll in new programs while others wanted to purchase

goods and services such as books from the bookshop and press and other commodities from Kabete.


This fervor for books was keenly felt by the University of Nairobi Press particularly when one of its books on malaria and poverty in Africa was "borrowed", at least the person who borrowed it will share its knowledge with others, after all the University is in the business of knowledge

## Public service week



**Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga with Chairman, Exhibitions Committee, Dr. Fred Otieno at the University stand.**

transmission.

The University's participation at this year's public service week was particularly poignant because our Alumni dominate in top government ministries and parastatals. We have nurtured, honed and mentored professionals who are now leading this nation and thus we can give an account of ourselves to the general public. 



# Alumni Centre to be constructed

**T**he University of Nairobi Alumni Association (UONAA) has set aside kshs 10 Million as seed money towards a project for putting up an Alumni centre. This plan was revealed during the 41st graduation ceremony of the University of Nairobi held in September 2009 by Association Chairperson Dr. Betty Gikonyo. According to Gikonyo, world over, universities establish centres where their alumni conduct their business while at the same time playing the role of a focal point for linking between them and their *alma mater*. The Alumni of the University of Nairobi should not be the exception.

“Currently, the alumni of the University of Nairobi do not have a place where they can meet, relax or even conduct their affairs together. The over 110,000 alumni is a



**Ms Jacinthe Marciel of International Development Research Centre (IDRC) with the Mr. Ben Waweru, Secretary, UONAA, and Academic Registrar in the alumni office where they discussed alumni and fundraising issues.**

potential source of income to make this project a reality and a ready user of its activities”.

The Alumni centre is an interesting project that alumni can easily identify themselves with and act as means of pooling their resources towards development activities at their *alma mater*.

The centre is envisaged to house association offices, library, a gymnasium, restaurant, conference facilities, a business center, banking hall, guest rooms, offices ... the list is endless. A Steering Committee

to fully conceptualize the idea has been formed, and Mr. John Kenduiwo, Deputy Managing Director, UNES is the Convener. Other members are Professor R. A. Obudho, Vice-Chairman, Alumni Association, Mr. James Njuguna-Deputy Marketing Manager, Kenya Power & Lighting Company and Mr. Benard Njuguna, Administrator, Alumni Association.

**Alumni are encouraged to give their input on the Alumni Centre through [alumni@uonbi.ac.ke](mailto:alumni@uonbi.ac.ke) or 020 2218148. ☎**

# 9,535 first years admitted

**T**his academic year 2009/2010, the University of Nairobi admitted a total of 9,532 new students, 4,218 Module I students and 5314 Module II. The registration of students was carried out in the respective colleges and campuses countrywide.

As per tradition, an orientation programme was in place to introduce the new students to campus life. The climax of the orientation programme was the Vice-Chancellor's address in Taifa Hall.

The Vice-Chancellor called on the freshers to use the academic freedom that exists at the University responsibly and avoid risky sexual behavior which could result in some of them contracting dangerous diseases such as HIV/AIDs.

Prof. Magoha advised the freshers to familiarize themselves with the University rules in order to lead a smooth life on campus. He pointed out that the tranquility that the University has enjoyed over the last five years has enabled the institution to complete its programmes on schedule and to improve the corporate image of the University. He also assured them that the University encourages the participation of students in the management of its affairs through the various students' organizations such as SONU. Prof Magoha congratulated the students for




First year students follow the orientation address. Inset: The Vice-Chancellor Prof. George Magoha.

their excellent performance in their exams which had enabled them to gain admission to the university.

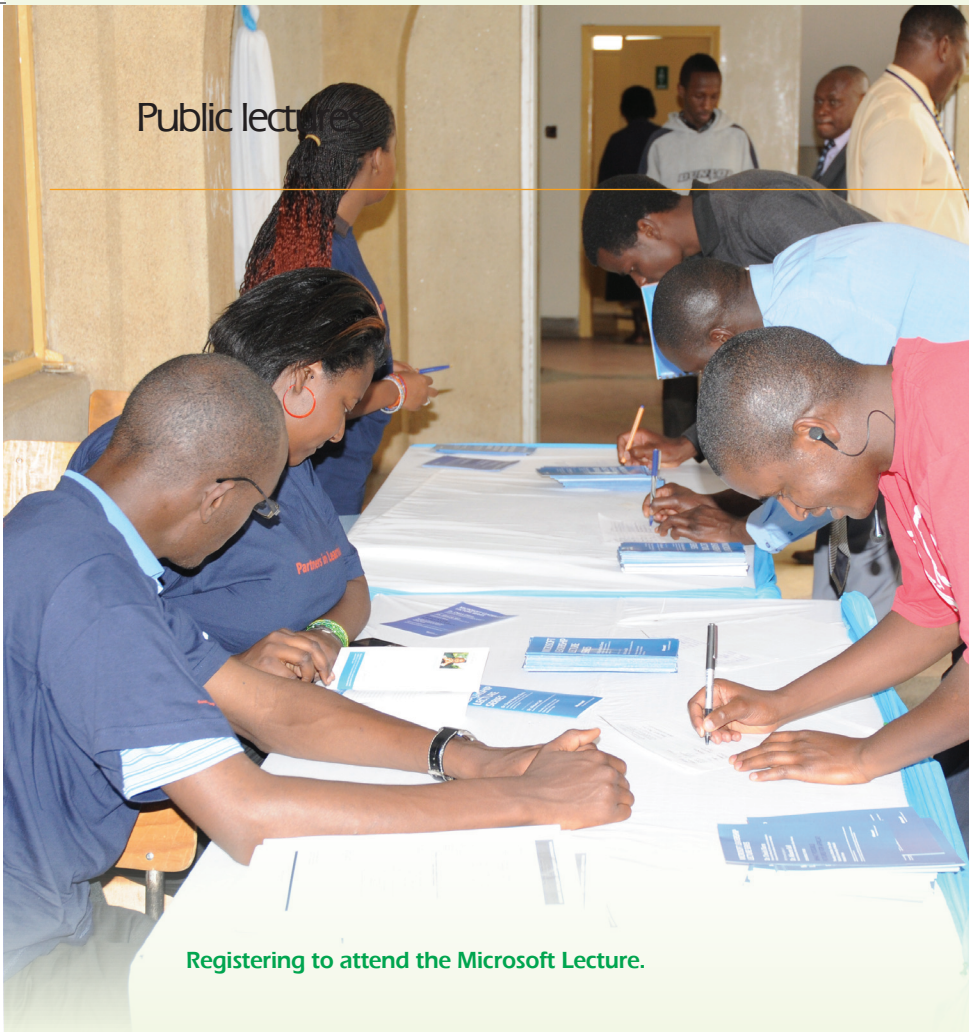
In his address, Prof. Jacob T. Kaimenyi, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) called on students to co-exist peacefully with others. He also informed them that the University Management had taken steps to provide them with an environment that would enhance physical, mental, spiritual and intellectual development with a view to produce a holistic graduate capable of fitting in the world of work. He also encouraged them to make use of the available facilities

in order to make their life more comfortable.

Prof. Peter Mbithi, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration & Finance) thanked the students for choosing the University of Nairobi, and assured them that the University would actualize their career dreams. Among those present during the Vice-Chancellor's official address were senior University officials including college principals, registrars, deans and directors, university librarian, chief medical officer, heads of departments and other members of staff. 



Public lecture



Registering to attend the Microsoft Lecture.

## Microsoft leadership lecture at UoN


The University of Nairobi posted another first when it hosted the Inaugural Microsoft Leadership Lecture Series in the East African region on October 1, 2009. The lecture series has been designed to target the young people in Africa, addressing different themes and challenges facing the people and continent of Africa.

This year, the lecture was delivered by Dr. Alioune Sall, the Executive Director of the Institute for African Futures. His lecture was based on a book that he authored titled "Africa 2025: What possible future for Africa?" Dr. Sall challenged the young people to take advantage of the expanding field of information technology to address the problems affecting the African continent. The Institute for African

Futures is an African platform for prospective thinking to facilitate the formulation by African countries of endogenous development models and approaches to achieve social justice, safeguard the dignity of their people and win the battle of the 21st century.

During the occasion, the chairman of Microsoft Africa Dr. Cheik Modibo Diarra revealed that the corporation was translating its software into African languages in order to reach more people and break the literacy barrier in accessing IT. Dr. Diarra challenged African universities to take advantage of the corporation's free translating software to translate computer programs into more African languages. He revealed that Microsoft has translated some of their software programs in the Zulu language, and was willing to sponsor outstanding computer science students within the various institutes.

On his part, the Vice-Chancellor in remarks read by Professor Enos Njeru, Dean, Faculty of Arts, thanked Microsoft for mandating the University to host the Lecture Series. He revealed that the University has a clear policy on the use of IT in carrying out its mission. The team later paid a courtesy call on the Vice-Chancellor where they were met by Prof. Henry Mutoro, Principal, College of Education and External Studies on his behalf.

As part of demonstrating their support of IT development within the University of Nairobi, Microsoft donated several essential information technology textbooks. 



# Kenya poly celebrates historic graduation

In October, 2009, the Kenya Polytechnic University College (KPUC) celebrated its first historic graduation as a University College. One could feel the mood—the excitement, anxiety and the heady air of expectation, as the programme which had been meticulously planned unfolded. Not even the chilly weather dampened the spirits, but seemed to be a

welcome symbol of blessings.

The day was Friday 16th October 2009 will go down in the annals of the University as a great day, the facial expressions on the guests, the staff, and the students and all those present and the congratulatory messages that kept flowing were enough testimony that the function was an overwhelming success.

The ceremony was presided over by the Chancellor, Dr. Joseph Wanjui, present also was the Chairman of the University of Nairobi Council Mr. John Simba, the Chairman, KPUC Council, Prof. Francis Gichaga, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, the two Deputy Vice-Chancellors, Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi and Prof. Peter Mbithi, Prof. Francis Aduol, the first Principal of the University College among other senior members of the University management.


In his brief remarks, the Chancellor

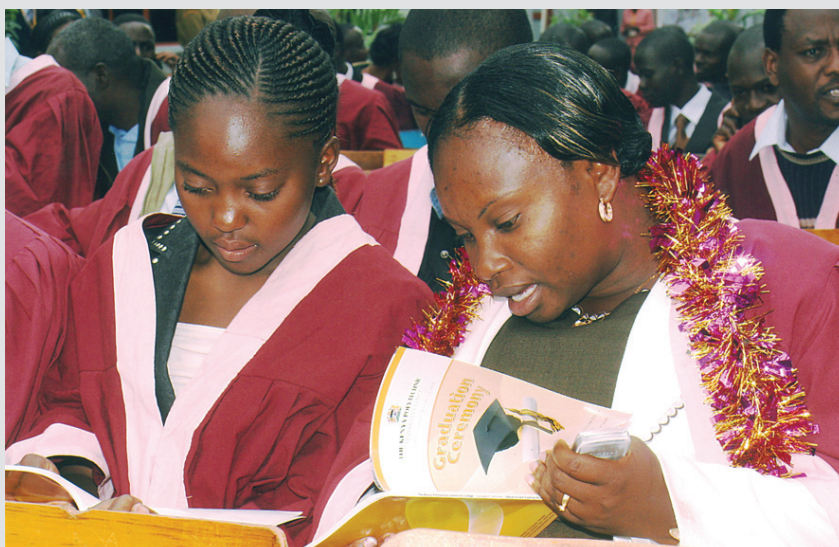
noted that the University of Nairobi system must rise to the challenge of addressing many of the development needs of this country; he particularly challenged the Kenya Poly to continue to lead from the front by upholding its mandate of technology for solving practical problems.

In his remarks, Prof. Magoha commended the Kenya Poly for raising the numbers of graduands, emphasizing that there are many more Kenyans who required training such as that offered at the Poly., whom they should make all efforts to reach and interact with.

Prof. Gichaga appealed to members of staff to remain committed to teaching, research and publishing, noting that all the councils were committed to enhancing staff welfare and representation.

This year, KPUC graduated 2,344 candidates, 550 of whom were awarded higher national diplomas, 1,659 got diplomas, and 134 were awarded certificates. It is expected that the Kenya Polytechnic University College will transform into a full-fledged University within the next few years.

The ceremony was attended by thousands among them; graduating students, parents, and the general public who braved the scorching sun to witness the proceedings. The Varsity Focus team would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Kenya Polytechnic University College for a successful graduation ceremony and to wish them well in their vision to be a top rated university of technology. 



Graduands at the Kenya Polytechnic University College ceremony.



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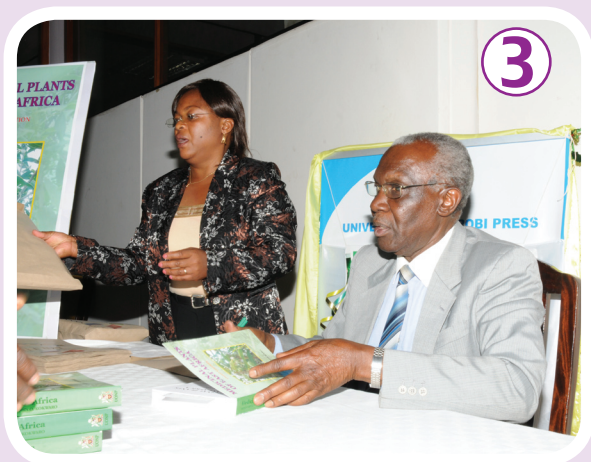
1. World Bank Vice President for Africa Region, Ms. Obiageli Ezekwesili with students and staff in a lively interactive session on youth unemployment and their role in development. She was on an official visit in the country.

# Picture



2

2. Vice-Chancellor Prof. George Magoha (second left) receives equipment from Mrs. Vijoo Rattansi at the School of Dental Sciences. With them is staff from UoN and Daisy Eye Cancer Fund.



3

3. Prof. John Kokwaro (Left) with Pamela Asule, Editor, University Press, during the launch of his book 'Medicinal Plants in East Africa'.



4

4. Prof. Isaac Kibwage with visiting Chinese Scholars.



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6



# e speak

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- 5. Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, SONU Chairman, Mr. David Osiany, and the Director-General, Hanban and CEO Confucius Institute, Dr. XU Lin with the University Choir.
- 6. Prof. Mabel Imbuga Vice-Chancellor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, with a delegate during the PACN conference.
- 7. Leading local businessman Chris Kirubi, with students during the launch of the WOSWA newsletter.
- 8. Delegates who attended the water sustainable conference in August 2009 organized by the Panafrican Chemistry Network (PACN).



## Staff feature

Meet Mwalimu Rayya Timammy, from a distance Rayya simply strikes you as an ordinary, buibui covered Muslim woman. But come closer now and her ever covered face catches your attention, wait a minute you think, you now have the new impression that there is more to this woman, her grey eyes are focused, her face exudes deep contemplation, captive, penetrating, leaving you to guess about the missing details of her intellectual and social background.

Rayya is a combination of intellect and social affluence, this is essentially what I see as we interact more, I realize that I have known her, but I have known her not.. Let me tell you about her...



# Determination, intellect

Rayya Timammy is a senior lecturer and associate dean of the faculty of arts; she is based at Kikuyu campus. Rayya is one of the few muslim intellectuals on campus, often standing out at meetings of the Senate, College Management Board and at times in the Deans Committee where she has often succeeded in riling up male obstinence. This last bit excites the feminist in many of us. Rayya has a tongue that can cut to shreds, but she tempers it with logic, public relations and charm

Rayya was born and brought up at the coast. Her father, a civil

servant, was always on transfer and thus Rayya started school in Lamu, one year later her father moved to Mombasa, then back to Lamu, Kilifi and back to Mombasa. Rayya thus has moved schools in different district, the saving grace being that government primary schools do not deter anybody wishing to learn even when their parents are on transit.

After sitting her Certificate of Primary Education exams, Rayya joined the Aga Khan High School in Mombasa for form 1-4 and then Coast girls for form 5-6. Between 1985 and 1988, Rayya pursued

a Bachelor of Education course at Kenyatta University. In 1989-`90, Rayya was admitted to the University of Nairobi to pursue the Master of Arts program in the department of linguistics.

I guess that Rayya is the quintessential student, she married and started her family before she joined Kenyatta University, her three children thus are university bred in the sense that they have read and done their homework as their mother was reading her notes and preparing her thesis. "I have faced the challenges of academia all my life because I have studied



while still raising my babies and children” Rayya’s mother has been one of her greatest supporters in that when Rayya joined her undergraduate class, her mother needed no persuasion, she simply took in Rayya’s eldest child and raised him for three years. This young child, a son, graduated from the University of Nairobi in 2008, no doubt motivated by his mother.

Rayya’s first job was as an untrained teacher, in 1989; this was just three months before she commenced her master’s course. “I was picked to pursue a master’s course at both Kenyatta and the University of Nairobi. I choose Nairobi because I had already studied at Kenyatta and I wanted new experiences in the world of academia and especially new exposure. However, what spurred my interest in academia was Prof Mohammed Bakari.” Prof Bakari was then a lecturer in the department of religious studies at the University of Nairobi, and during her undergraduate days, he would visit her family, he provided Rayya with a lot of material and he would encourage her to read and to pursue knowledge, “I am a hard worker but he was the one who pushed me to apply my talent through masters and even up to PhD level”

Rayya believes that the PhD requirement in academia is critical” if you see people with a title you also want to have the same title applied to you; it

makes you to aspire for the same.” Rayya registered for her PhD studies in 1994, and was awarded her PhD in 2002, her seminal work was titled “Mombasa Swahili Women’s Wedding Songs: A Stylistic Analysis” At this point in the interview I pause, I know what is coming up next and I am not disappointed, tell me she asks, have you registered for your PhD studies? Why ever not? Tell me what the problem is, and let us see how to tackle it. I laugh sheepishly.

Mwalimu Rayya teaches units in Kiswahili poetry, oral literature, stylistics, and literature to students at both main campus and at the two schools at Kikuyu campus. Apart from teaching Mwalimu has supervised at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels and to her credit has supervised over 20 candidates. Dr Timammy has five publications to her credit while at least 10 papers are due for publication in referred journals and publishing houses. Dr Timammy serves as mentor to girls in high school in her home district of Lamu and Mombasa, she also mentors on career choices and study during school holidays.

Mwalimu Rayya is a devout Muslim and has gone the pilgrim way twice; she has served on SUPKEM as well as with the Muslim sisterhood. I have always been struck by the way that Rayya keeps the faith, wearing the Hijab is not a chore or duty but rather is her belief. But she quickly as always tells me that decency in dress and manner is the mark of a gentle lady, muslim or non muslim” you, she is addressing me now, have also kept

## t and courage



**Dr. Rayya Timmammy (second left) with Muslim students during a break.**



## Staff feature

to decency in dress and manner, don't you see its relationship to intellect and personal style"

In her own right, Dr Rayya is a writer; she has several poems, short stories to her credit. She is also an advisor on peace, sexuality, religion and women. Her research /consultancy interests are varied, they include medicine and health; education and sexuality; family planning and ideology; gender disparity and development. The bit on sexuality has caught my attention, no doubt because my philistine nature perceives that muslim women is cannot be sexual beings, but I am wrong because as Dr Rayya explains to me , she has studied this area with great diligence applying the rules of scientific discourse and she has some interesting results to share.

Dr Rayyas career has not been all that smooth; there have been those who have attempted to derail her, based on their perception of Islam. After she finished her undergraduate course, she was offered a position at the post office. At the time, there was a policy of offering jobs in parastatals to minorities based on race, religion, gender and ethnic groupings. At the time, she had been offered the masters scholarship. A friend of the family implored her husband not to allow her to pursue her studies, perhaps on the mistaken notion that educated women look down on their husbands. However, her husband would not be drawn in by the pressure. He told me that I should complete my studies; he is a great supporter of all my efforts.

Dr Rayya continues to share her experiences based on the fact that she knows her rights in the religion. There are those who think that Islam hinders women, but she herself believes in knowing her rights. The Koran has several Hadiths which stress that all must seek knowledge. The knowledge is not defined nor is the seeker gender specified. Thus Dr Rayya has been confident and strong that she is following her dream and talent in the strength offered by the Koran

Rayya believes that the PhD requirement in academia is critical


which says "seek for knowledge" from the cradle to the grave".

Thus Dr.Rayya emphasizes that the search for knowledge is incumbent upon both men and women.

Dr Rayya first joined the University in 1991 as a temporary lecturer and was later appointed assistant lecturer. Her base of operation was the department of Kiswahili at kikuyu campus. Rayya

has risen up the ranks and has many experiences to relate. During the merger of the faculty of social sciences and the faculty of arts, the administration were satisfied that she was capable of handling the departments shared by the school of education, the school of business and the faculty of arts. These eight departments needed a coordinator and hence her appointments as associate dean. Dr Rayya has worked hard taking up the challenge of managements such that she is serving a second term as associate dean. But she has taken time to write papers and to publish because she is convinced that her next appointments should be that of associate professor. "In the corridors of the university, there are so many people who called me doctor even before I got my PhD, now that I have a PhD they call me professor, I believe that this is a challenge to me to get the title and soon."

In her parting shot, Dr Timammy states that anybody can aspire, anybody can achieve so long as they apply the best to their jobs, to their studies, applying the best of their ability will take them far" we Muslims believe that whatever you have been given, you are answerable to God"

Dr., Mwalimu Rayya Timammy is a combination of intellect and social breeding, pillared by her deep faith in God and in the tenets of Islam. The sky is the limit; heaven is the goal for this quintessential scholar, mentor, teacher and friend. 

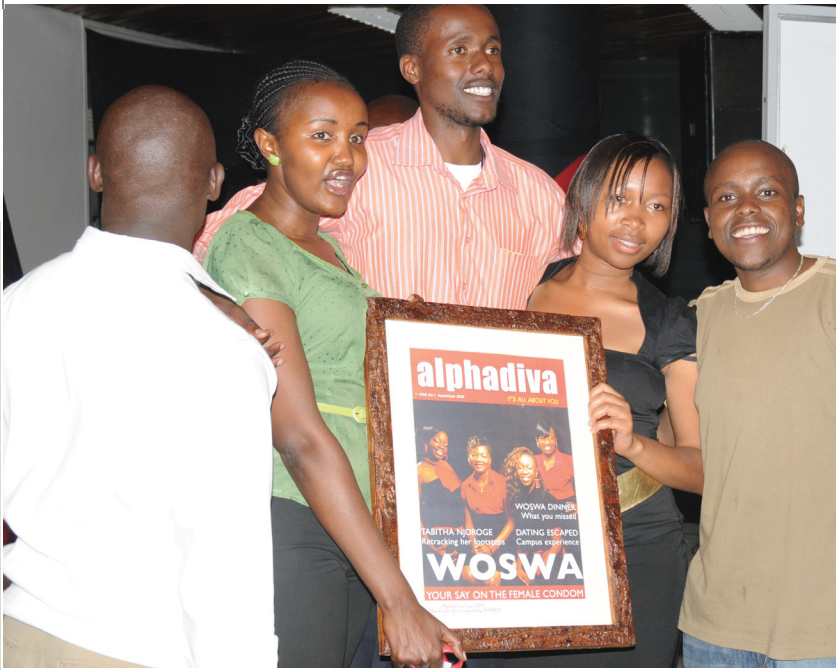


Launch

# WOSWA

## newsletter

### unveilled



The Women Students' Welfare Association (WOSWA), has been very busy this year. On Thursday 24th September 2009, WOSWA launched its maiden newsletter, "Alphadiva" during a cocktail held in the exhibition hall of the Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library.


The colourful ceremony was attended by Ms Milly Odhiambo (Nominated MP), Ambassador Michael Ranneberger, Professor Henry Mutoro (Principal CEES), Chris Kirubi (HACO Industries), Terry Mungai (Ashleys), Tabitha Njoroje (CEO WILD AF), and the student fraternity.

In his welcome remarks, Professor Mutoro, who was standing in for the Vice-chancellor, Prof. George Magoha assured guests of the commitment of the University to support student activities "We believe that students are the leaders of tomorrow and we must support them to sharpen their skills and realize their potential."

In his remarks, Ranneberger pointed out the important role that the youth has to play in Kenya if the country is to progress forward. "You students have power vested

in you but you have not been quick enough to realize it. You must be aware of your potential and begin to explore your space and contribution for driving this country to prosperity."

In her remarks, Hon Milly Odhiambo, nominated MP, stated that she was proud of this initiative taken by WOSWA. This is part of

encouraging women to excel. She however, quickly urged the female students to safeguard their gains and avoid giving the impression that they were weak, seeking special treatment. "You must work twice as hard as the men". This is what the current women holding high positions have done so as to achieve their goals. 



Nominated MP, Milly Odhiambo toasts with student leaders during the launch of the Newsletter

# Mitsubishi Corporation donates scholarships



**General Manager, Mitsubishi Corporation , Nairobi, Mr. Ritsu Kaneko and Prof. Bernard Njoroge sign the MoU. Below: Japanese Ambassador, Mitsubishi and UoN staff with student beneficiaries**

The Mitsubishi Corporation (MC) recently donated Kshs 864,000 to support nine students from the department of Geography and Environmental Studies. The donation was presented in a ceremony jointly organized by the University of Nairobi and the Corporation in the Council Chamber, University of Nairobi, on October 2nd 2009. Apart from the donation, The corporation also signed a memorandum of understanding with the University, for more linkages and support.

The Japanese Ambassador to Kenya, H.E. Shigeo Iwatani, who was the chief guest, said that the scholarships will strengthen the relations between Kenyan learning institutions and Japanese companies. He challenged students to utilize the opportunity and further studies in environmental education.

In his remarks, the General Manager, of Mitsubishi Corporation , Nairobi Branch, Mr. Ritsu Kaneko said that “the basic concept of this programme was to foster promising young leaders who will contribute to the future of their county or even globally.” The programme which started in 2000 has since disbursed US dollars 1.2 million to about

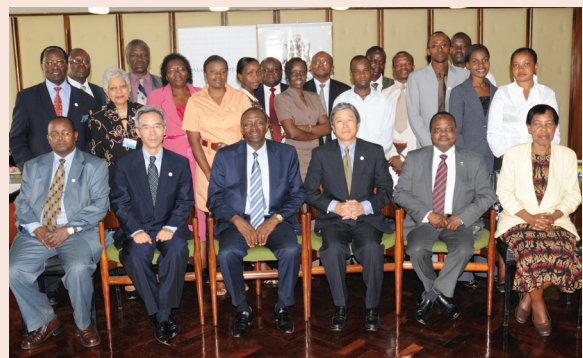
3,000 beneficiaries in 50 universities in 36 different countries.

The Vice-Chancellor represented by Prof. Bernard Njoroge, Principal, College of Architecture and Engineering, thanked Mitsubishi for the donation saying that it would go a long way in cementing the relationships between the two organizations. He requested the management of MC to widen the scope of the scholarship to other areas.

Mr Kaneko stated that the corporate social responsibility programmes of Mitsubishi are not limited to scholarships but extend to the area of on-hand activities for environmental protection as well. For instance in 2006 while working in partnership with the Green Belt Movement they planted 10,000 trees in Karura Forest.

The Chairman, Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Prof. Elias Ayiemba thanked Mitsubishi for donating scholarships to his department, and stated that the support would enable gifted undergraduate students from poor backgrounds to complete their studies.

Others present during the function were the , Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Isaac Mbeche, Dean, Faculty of Arts, Prof. Enos Njeru, staff and scholarship recipients.





# Training of research and devt of medicinal plants



**Prof. GAO Xiumei (Ms.), Vice-President, TUTCM and Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, UoN exchange gifts.**

**T**he University of Nairobi hosted the 7th Advanced Training Program of Research and Development of Medicinal Plants for African Countries.

The training which was jointly organized by the University of Nairobi and Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TUTCM), Tianjin, China ran from 2nd to 16th November 2009.

The programme attracted 22 participants drawn from different institutions in Ethiopia, Kenya,

Rwanda, Sudan and Tanzania. The training program is for researchers in the field of traditional medicine. There have been annual training programs since 2004. The history of the training programs dates back to 2001 when the 1st advanced training program of research and development of medicinal plants for developing countries, sponsored by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and undertaken by Tianjin University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TUTCM) was held.

Over 120 practitioners drawn from 23 developing countries with

11 coming from Kenya have been trained so far.

The advanced training program aims at equipping practitioners with the basic theories, knowledge and skills of natural botanic chemistry, instrumental analysis, and pharmaceutical formulations of medicines from nature among others. In order to assist the participants in the field of the research and development of new botanical medicine, they are given theoretical and practical aspects in different areas

The University of Nairobi became the first institution outside China to host this training program. This is a great honor to the University, and marks what can be considered as the beginning of a long and lasting collaboration between the University and TUTCM in the area of medicines from nature.

The training was officially opened by Prof. J.T. Kaimenyi (Deputy Vice Chancellor –Academic Affairs) on 2nd November 2009. Also present at the ceremony which was held in the School of Medicine Board Room were the Principals of various Colleges, Director- Centre for International Programs and Links, Deans and Directors of College of Health Sciences, officials from the Chinese Embassy, senior TUTCM administrators led by Prof. GAO Xiumei (Ms.), Vice-President, Prof. HU Limin, Dean of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Institute, Prof. XU Li, Deputy Dean of International Education College, Prof. CHU Lirong (Ms.), Deputy Dean of International Education College, lecturers from TUTCM and the practitioners. 

The University of Nairobi recently played host to the first Confucius Institutes Conference in Africa bringing together delegates from Confucius Institutes in the world. The local host, the Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi organized the four-day conference between September 22-25, 2009, during which, delegates exchanged experiences on establishing and managing Confucius Institutes.

Confucius Institutes are named after a great Chinese personality Confucius or Kong Fu Zi who was a thinker, political figure, educator and a founder of the Ru school of Chinese thought. In a speech read by the Assistant Minister for Higher Education Science and Technology, Hon Dr. Kilemi Mwiria, on behalf of the minister Dr Sally Kosgei, lauded the Kenya-Sino relationship and congratulated the University of Nairobi for living up to its vision of being a world class university. The minister noted that the conference would enhance collaboration between




Dr. XU Lin Director General, Hanban and CEO, Confucius Institutes after paying a courtesy call to the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha. Below: A lion dance staged for the visiting delegates in Taifa Hall.

# University hosts First Confucius Institutes Conference in Africa

China and Africa noting that there was a lot to learn from each other.

Addressing the delegates, the director-general, Hanban and CEO Confucius Institutes, Dr. XU Lin pledged further financial support towards the Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi and disclosed that she will be announcing scholarship opportunities for University of Nairobi students and staff to study in China.

On his part, the Vice-Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Professor George Magoha thanked the People's Republic of China for honouring the institution by starting the Confucius institute at the University of Nairobi. He thanked Hanban for the renovation of the Education Building where the institute is based. 







## China to Increase ties with UoN


The Chinese government will increase educational ties with University of Nairobi (UoN). This was revealed by the Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, H.E. Deng Hongbo, when he paid a courtesy call on the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha.

The Ambassador said that the embassy attaches great importance in promoting educational exchanges between the two countries and strengthening existing relations. Ambassador Hongbo underscored the importance of UoN networking with leading Chinese institutions of higher learning emphasizing that his office will play the necessary facilitative role.

While welcoming the new ambassador to the University, Prof. Magoha observed that

there are visible signs that ties between China and Kenya have been strengthened in the recent past. He cited the Confucius Institute at UoN as a leading educational outfit in Africa offering Chinese language. He added that UoN is keen to extend ties in science, information technology, medicine, agriculture, and engineering among others with leading top Chinese universities. UoN has a Memorandum of Understanding with Tianjin Normal University that crystallized into the Confucius Centre in 2005.

Prof. Magoha represents Africa on the International Council of Confucius Institutes board. In October, 2009, UoN hosted the International Confucius Conference which brought together all Confucius Institutes in Africa.

Those present during the courtesy call were Prof. Henry Mutoro, Prof. Lucy Irungu and Prof. Agnes Mwang'ombe – Principals of Colleges Education, Biological and Physical Sciences, and Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences respectively. Also present was the Director, Centre for International Programmes and Linkages, Prof. Simon Mitema. 

# SONU Chairman nominated envoy ambassador



SONU Chairman, David Osiany

The Chairman of the Students' Organization of the University of Nairobi (SONU), Mr. David Osiany has been nominated the East Africa region Bayer Young Environmental Envoy (BYEE) to the United Nations.

Mr. Osiany and two other nominees, Beth Wambui Mbote and Jack Omamo - Homeboyz and the media nominee, are scheduled to attend a meeting in Germany later this month, as part of information and data gathering. Speaking to *Varsity Focus*, Osiany who is a passionate environmentalist said that, the future of our nations is bleak, "if we do not take care of the environment now, we are threatened with a meaningless existence".

While abroad, Osiany is also expected to attend the COP15 'Seal the Deal' campaign in Copenhagen, Denmark scheduled for December 2009. The COP15 is a forum where world leaders are expected to sign a declaration on how to curb climate change.

Osiany, clinched the nomination in a tightly competitive race involving students from various universities in the East Africa region. The BYEE programme is run by Bayer International in collaboration with the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). Under this programme, Bayer, which is the major sponsor of UNEP's youth activities, annually nominates 50 envoys worldwide to be their ambassadors. The envoys meet at Bayer headquarters in Leverkusen, Germany, to share their experiences and project knowledge. 



# Students participate in international campaign

- By Sonia Muasa

In August 2009, eight students from the University of Nairobi participated in the inaugural Global Model United Nations at the Palais des Nations in Geneva. Participants were drawn from the Kenya Model United Nations which is a wholly student run non-profit organization comprising of 16 chapters in 11 universities. The chapters comprise the following universities: - Moi, Kenyatta, Nairobi, Catholic, African Nazarene, Daystar, Maseno, Egerton, Kabarak, USIU, Strathmore, Methodist and DALC.




Delegates Global Model United Nations at the Palais des Nations in Geneva.

The Kenya Model United Nations program aims at imparting knowledge among students about the UN system, to promote diplomacy and equip them with skills that will enable them to become better leaders, diplomats and citizens of the world. Like most model UNs, KMUN simulates organs such as the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the International Court of Justice for students who have been active participants of Model UNs from as early as their high school years.

The 2009 Global MUN which was highly anticipated was organized by the United Nations Department for

Public Information (UNDPI) and run from August 5-7, 2009, simulating the General Assembly's main committees of:

Disarmament and international security with special interest in the illegal use of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and its impact on achieving the MDGs.; the economic and financial crisis impact on achieving the MDGs, climate change and post Kyoto arrangements; the social, cultural and humanitarian agenda including children of conflict and the achievement of the MDGs and human rights and the environment; and special political and decolonization

The theme of the conference "The Millennium Development Goals: Lifting the bottom billion of Poverty", provided an unforgettable experience for the students who enjoyed the communication facilities, the learning and interaction with students from different countries and even the deliberations which though lengthy sharpened their negotiation skills. The high point of the conference was the international party organized by the Geneva International Model UN in conjunction with the Swiss government. 

*Sonia Muasa is a fourth year Bachelor of Arts Student and Undersecretary, KMUN.*

# UON-DAAD Links celebrated

**O**n October 22nd 2009, the University of Nairobi hosted the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in a celebration of constitution making. The celebrations brought in distinguished scholars from East Africa, Germany, Kenyan DAAD alumni and the general public. The celebration dubbed 60 Years of German Constitution was held in the 8.4.4. Lecture hall of the University of Nairobi's Main Campus.

In brief remarks, the Vice-Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Prof. George Magoha stated that the University remains committed to its policy of fostering an intellectual culture that bridges theory with practice. Prof Magoha lauded the presence of the new Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Kenya Ms. Margit Hellwig-Boette, among the more than 100 former and current DAAD fellows. He congratulated Germany on the 60th anniversary of her constitution and expressed his hope that the talks and debates at the conference will contribute to processes that most Kenyans hope will soon lead to a new constitution in their own country.

On her part, Ambassador Hellwig-




The new German Ambassador to Kenya, H.E. Margit Hellwig-Boette.

Boette, highlighted the long standing history of collaboration that Kenya and Germany share, emphasizing that at present and in future, there are a lot of interests that the two countries should pursue in the spirit of partnership and for the mutual benefit of the citizens of both nations.

Gabriele von Fircks, the DAAD director for Subsahara Africa, introduced Prof. Gilbert Gornig from the University of Marburg (Germany) who delivered the key note speech on the Grundgesetz (the so called "basic law"). According to Gornig, it is the debates and traditions that eventually culminated in the German constitution six decades ago. "There is need therefore for the people of Kenya to debate extensively and to interrogate the constitution making process without fear or favor"

During the forum, there was a panel of discussants on the relevance of the German case for present legislative developments in Kenya , moderated by Louis Otieno, and including Ambassador Hellwig-Boette, Prof. Gornig, Dr. Bernard Sihanya , Dean School of Law, University of Nairobi, Dr Sebastian Seedorf, Ministry of Interior, Berlin/ Germany, Prof. P.J. Kabudi , Dean School of Law, the University of Dar es Salaam, and Mr. Wilfred Nderitu, Vice-Chairperson-Kenya Section of the International Commission of Jurists).

Participants also extended their discussion to the areas of constitutional issues that evolve around the key concepts of federalism, electoral law, parliamentary – presidential constitution and pluralism in law. 

Dr. Tilo Weber is a lecturer the sub department of German Studies.



# Memories are **made of this...**

**M**y editor has been challenging me to write what he calls an interesting piece for *Varsity Focus*. I have willingly been saying yes I will try, and I sit down on my computer but nothing can I process. It is the fault of somebody up there who has kept me occupied on academic writing such that I can't laugh any more. And then there is my inability to read or watch serious pieces, I have been addicted to the various Woods as the piece below attests.



**WOSWA officials during the launch of their newsletter at the Exhibitions Hall.**

Yesterday I received a reprieve, a learned man who I am interacting with reminded me of my student years by his reference to the words they used to use for girls and boys in the dating scene. It brought to mind my high school days and a flash forward to Bollywood.

There was a time, when I was still young, when we referred to our boy friends as dudes, this may have been

a silent reflection that while they often looked good, they were a bit fake or useless. Depending on which side of the social life you belonged to the boys went by different names, my friends from Eastland's called their girlfriends mandista or madame. In the southern part of town, boys were known as blokes and charlies, I guess many behaved like Andy Capp, with behavior typical of Riverwood.

At some point, depending on where you went to school a dude referred to his girl friend as my main squeeze, my babe, my chick, I don't know why guys are not called jogoo, or cock, maybe those words were too sexual, and the boys were not that great....AKA Bongowood.

In the last few years the words chilles, jamas, mpango wa kando, piriton, shipep and ciirunda have gained currency. Some of these are gender specific, with at least references to what relationship to expect for instance if your girls is piriton, she makes you very sleepy after some activity. Just last week, my young friends with a straight face told me that women now refer to their boyfriends as hubby, while women are known as Ma'am. They made me laugh as they informed me that it was now not polite to refer to each other with names such as ATM, tour guide, cnnlive and anti-J-cheeky buggers!!

At the University, as we pretended not to notice each other, we denigrated the opposite sex; the men were roaches or clip boards, while the women were boxers. Roaches we believed was appropriate as the men and our associations with them tended to come up out of the wood work the same way that cockroaches do, again as a large number were scholarly inclined they all tended to carry their clipboards

of notes around with them, maybe to impress us. The men decided that since the women think more or less the same, they are boxed in their thinking hence the name maboxer, they live in the box. Appropriate then that the cockroach must invade the box regularly.

A friend of mine remembers that in high school, there was interaction with both gender taking advantage of debating societies; economic clubs etc to meet each other. For all of us dancing was an important vehicle to enable us to get in close contact. The dancing exercise provided opportunities for developing relationships with the girls as potential future partners. Another friend, an older man insists that as young high school boys and university students, they looked forward to fruitful relationships with girls and it was important for

them to have their own style of communication—the equivalent of today's "sheng."

The older generation also had its words for girls, "We used to have discussions which people outside our circle could not comprehend. For example, we had nicknames for girls in our time, the names related to the anatomy and makeup of the girls, others to the predilection for some hank-panky, others related to our reactions to them. The list of names included: atom, molecule, night-cargo, generous, micro, mini, cricket, timken, bone-shaker, conjugate, and hydraulics. I guess and I must be right that this was a rotten society; the names are not complimentary of the morals of the women. Maybe those guys were just cockroaches. The names suggested a Hollywood lifestyle.

As we talk of boys and girls, there was always stiff competition for the few cultured men and women available. It was quite normal for young men to fight over a girl especially during occasions like evening parties and dancing. The fighting would take the form of boxing and wrestling, or could sometimes turn ugly with bottles and chairs flying in crowded dancing halls. The girls were less vocal and forward but there was, I must admit some ugly, quiet and malicious fights were clandestinely carried out, if you want to know the nature of the fights, watch the Nigerian Nollywood movies.📺

the men were  
roaches or clip  
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women were  
boxers



# Prof. H.W.O Okoth Ogendo: An Appreciation

Tribute by Prof. Makumi Mwagiru



The late Prof. H.W.O Okoth Ogendo.

In all of academic life, there are images, and people that we think always about, and who we always remember when we think about the trials, tribulations and challenges of life in the academy. There are those in the dawn, and in the setting of the sun whom we feel privileged to have been associated with. And there are those who in their evening have reminded us of how great the journey has been.

Prof Okoth Ogendo was a great teacher, and a humble scholar, so

humble that in his greatness, he wore his great scholarship lightly. He did not burden his students with the awesomeness of his scholarship; rather, he wanted to grow his students, and to nurture them into the soaring intellectual heights that he, had already reached. The Guru was awesome in his learning, and awesome in the reach of his mind. The suppleness of his mind was a matter of wonder, and a thing of great beauty.


The Guru as he came to be fondly known, taught most of the lawyers of Kenya, both great and small - the beauty of land law, and brought to that complex subject a humanity that told of the toils and joys and undying hunger of millions of citizens. He brought to land law the unceasing and undying dream of the hearts and minds of those who love the country and its soil.

But he had other loves too, one of which was the constitutional laws of Africa. He wrote and taught of constitutional orders that would enhance the dignity of people. He hated dictatorships, but stood toe to toe with those who had different opinions. He worked for and lived for a constitutional order that would make gentler the lives of the African people.

And oft forgotten was his mastery of the labour laws. He studied under Kahn Freund at Oxford,

and when he came back home, as he always would, he taught labour law, and instilled in it the passion of his teacher. Then, with brilliance, he demonstrated why that philosophy of labour law lacked the understanding and the appreciation of the culture and history of the people of Kenya. We learnt the labour law and philosophy of an old master, but appreciated the labour law and jurisprudence of a master for the future.

The Guru had a profound understanding of jurisprudence. Unlike others who pretended to know this subject, his was not knowledge of the jurisprudence of commentators, but a profound knowledge of the issues of the philosophy of law. He used this knowledge to enhance the understanding of the legal system of Kenya and our continent and to make great our understanding of other peoples and their systems of government.

But what marked his standing as a great teacher was his relationship with his students after they left his hands. And they went into the magistracy and judgeship, to the academy and to the diplomatic service; to politics and to business; to the arts and to sports; to the media and theatre, and to all the corners of the diverse life of Kenya and the continent. 

# University to host **National** Inter-Varsity Sports Championship

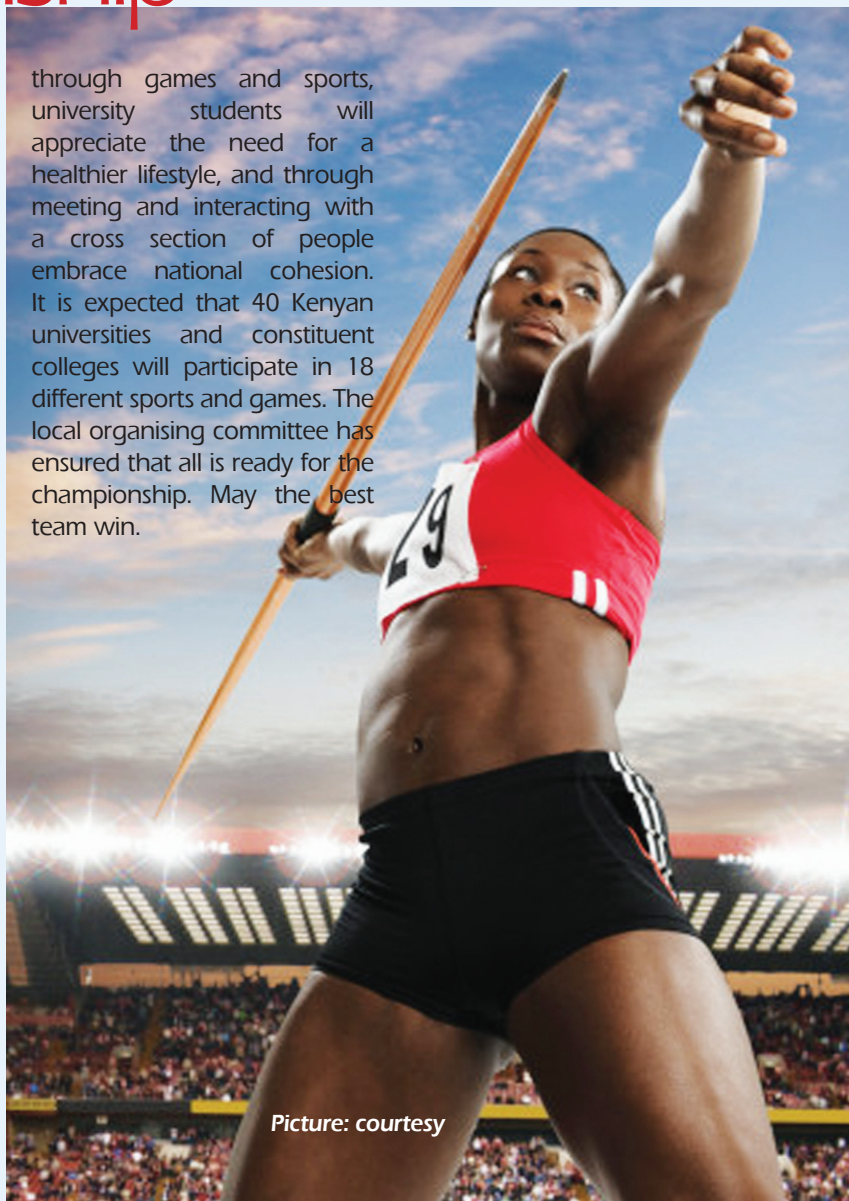
The University of Nairobi will host the 2009 edition of the Kenya Inter-University Sports Championship between December 17-22, 2009. The championship, which brings together all universities in the country, is part of the calendar of activities that are guided and regulated by the Kenya Universities Sports Association (KUSA). The Kenya Inter-university Sports Championship aims at creating an interactive forum for all the universities.

According to the chairman of the local organising committee, Prof Jacob Kaimenyi, the major objective of the Championship whose theme is "Sports for Health and Peace" is to identify and enhance sporting talent among students of Kenyan universities. It is believed that through sports and games, we can promote physical and mental health among Kenyan students including improving their self-confidence, self-esteem and self-control.

The Championships are expected to yield some outcomes that include strengthening peer relationships among Kenyan students, providing an outlet for stress and reduction of depression risks among the university students.

Ultimately, it is perceived that

through games and sports, university students will appreciate the need for a healthier lifestyle, and through meeting and interacting with a cross section of people embrace national cohesion. It is expected that 40 Kenyan universities and constituent colleges will participate in 18 different sports and games. The local organising committee has ensured that all is ready for the championship. May the best team win.



Picture: courtesy