

Students challenged on leadership as YALDA is officially kicks off

Students have been challenged to be selfless leaders of integrity and to stand up and be counted. This was said Amb. Dr. Martin Kimani, Permanent Representative and head of mission to the United Nations Office in Nairobi, UNEP and UN Habitat during the launch of Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa (YALDA) at the University.

Dr. Kimani noted that leadership is not just about titles and calling oneself a leader , but rather leadership is some kind of genius. Leadership is mysterious. Leadership involves moving people from the known to the unknown. Leadership is helping people overcome their fears. Leadership is mysterious.

In his speech, the Ambassador not only urged students to be the leading light in a continent with poor leadership but had some career advancement tips.

“When you meet an influential person, don’t be quick to ask for favours like jobs, be quick to ask what you can do for them. Satisfy their needs and interests. Be ready to work for free and make that person be dependent on you. Soon and very soon, they will find that they can’t do without you and hence, you shall have found an opening in that particular company”, he said.

Basing his arguments on a story of how Napoleon lost close to 660,000 men in battle and was defeated by the Russians, Dr. Kimani noted that leadership is not about ordering people around, but leading them to places they fear going to. Leadership is practised on conditions of uncertainty. A leader needs to be able to absorb enormous amount of data and understand what to do with it. A leader creates networks. Leaders focuses on the details, because, it is the small stuff that matter. For Kenya to industrialize, the productivity of every person needs to doubled.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs, Prof. Henry Mutoro noted that youth leadership is gaining popularity in Africa and soon, the youth will be chatting the transformative leadership agenda for the whole of African continent. Prof. Mutoro, who was speaking on behalf of the Vice-chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi, said that UoN is playing a critical role in developing young leaders by producing quality and holistic graduates in diverse fields of study to provide solutions to the challenges affecting our society, developing visionary, innovative and creative leadership opportunities, setting up a graduate skills enhancement programme and improving students’ experience in campus.

Founded in June, 2014, YALDA was formed with an objective of raising young transformative leaders who will bring sustainable development to African countries. They aim at helping youth develop projects that will impact on African continent. Among the activities YALDA is involved in include youth mentorship, environmental conservation and leadership development.

University of Nairobi Alumni Association Executive Director, Mr. Johnson Kinyua noted that the Alumni will gladly support YALDA activities to help nurture leadership among students. He summarised leadership in 3Ds and 3Cs. Discovery of the leadership quality, development of the leadership skills and demonstration of the leadership. Upon attainment of the same, a leader needs to be competent, have character and show commitment.