

UoN Hosts Borlaug Leap Alumni Association Event

The University of Nairobi (UoN) through the Centre for Sustainable Dryland Ecosystems and Societies (CSDES) recently hosted the Borlaug Leap Alumni association conference on 4th March 2014. The event, held at the Central Catering Unit, UoN brought together more than 100 participants with a majority being beneficiaries of the Borlaug (LEAP) fellowships. Other stakeholders who attended the conference were; scientists, policymakers, former Borlaug LEAP fellows, mentors, press and USAID representatives.

Prof. Henry Mutoro, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs at UoN represented the Vice-Chancellor. In his address, the DVC expressed optimism that the Borlaug LEAP program will contribute in transforming the agricultural sector through enhanced leadership. He extolled Borlaug LEAP's efforts in strengthening the capacity of institutions of higher education to produce leaders to address food security concerns in the 21st century. The Don called for more concerted efforts in addressing issues of food security, climate change and development in Africa.

Speaking on behalf of the Principal Secretary, State Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Dr. G.A. Ombakho, Director of Research Management and Development lauded the Borlaug LEAP program for creating an opportunity for up-coming leaders in agricultural research to develop fruitful networks, collaborations and partnerships for synergistic benefit. This he said will greatly enhance the Regional capacity to address the numerous challenges that bedevil the agriculture sector.

Addressing participants at the function, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Kenya Mission Director Karen Freeman said attaining food security represents one of the most important shared goals of the Governments of the United States and of Kenya.

“That goal is to help transform the lives of millions of Kenyans by ensuring they live in food secure households, eat nutritious food, have opportunities for sustainable economic prosperity and are productively engaged in their communities across all ages or gender,” she said.

Borlaug Institute for International Agriculture Associate Director, Ms. Julie Borlaug called for the change of message on the quest for food security and look at the empowerment of women.

The Norman E. Borlaug Leadership Enhancement in Agriculture (LEAP) is a program of the US Government's Feed the Future Borlaug 21st Century Leadership Initiative funded by the US Agency for International Development. The program offers fellowships to enhance the quality of thesis research of graduate students from developing countries who show strong promise as leaders in the field of agriculture and related disciplines.