

Students challenged on Leadership by H. E. Ambassador to UN. Martin Kimani.

University of Nairobi students have been challenged to be selfless leaders, to be leaders with integrity, to stand up and be counted. Further, students and Kenyans in general should double their productivity to help Kenya industrialize just like Singapore and China.

Speaking during the launch of YALDA (Youth Alliance for Leadership and Development in Africa) at 8-4-4 Building in Main Campus, Ambassador H. E. Martin 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.

The Ambassador not only urged students to be the leading light in a continent with poor leadership, he had some advice as far as getting jobs is concerned. “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, H. E. 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,” he said. For Kenya to industrialize, the productivity of every person needs to be doubled, he quipped.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Henry Mutoro , who was speaking on behalf of the Vice-chancellor, Prof. Peter M. F. Mbithi 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.

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 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.

The launch was also attended by the representative of the Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Wahome, who is the Dean, Faculty of Arts, Dr. Mary Mwiandi , Chair, Department of History.

