

Varsities can offer solutions to Africa's problems

Universities have been challenged to address the problems facing Africa such as food security, climate change and creation of jobs for the youth.

This was said by Dr. Richard Munang, the UNEP Climate Change Coordinator for Africa, when he delivered a public lecture at the University. The lecture is part of the [Institute of Development Studies](#) (IDS) 50th anniversary celebrations activities.

Dr. Munang, highlighted the need for academia to revolutionise the education sector, where more emphasis is on technical training. He said that the way forward is the implementation of a plan that will incorporate the ideas of the youth and implement policy papers seek to tap into these opportunities and incorporate the views of the civil society, academia, students and the private sector.

Dr. Munang noted that Africa has a huge potential, but that potential alone will not create jobs for young women and men. Africa is blessed with huge mineral deposits, young and energetic population, huge market for goods and services, all of which is untapped. "Africa is not the same as it was 20 or 30 years ago. The dance has changed and so has the techniques to combat the challenges," said Munang. "The challenges facing Africa and contributing to climate change include soil erosion, deforestation, rising sea levels, among other factors."

Unlike the popular belief that revamping tourism could be the solution to Kenya's economic rise, Dr. Munang noted that revamping agriculture could lead to quick economic recovery.

"Agriculture has the potential to reduce poverty, not tourism," he said.

The approaches to create employment that Dr. Munang shared with the audience include agro-forestry, economic incentives to farmers especially women who contribute to 80% to the food basket, optimization of agricultural value chain, proper food storage, creating easy access to the markets for the agricultural produce by improving the infrastructure and taking advantage of the huge energy potential like solar, geothermal, wind and renewable energy.

Youth, being the potential of the African continent, Dr. Munang noted that the young people are an asset to Africa. He said that the private sector, which is the main job creator, needs to be empowered to absorb the young population.