

There was pomp and colour as the first Nairobi Innovation Week officially kicked off today, August 5, 2015.

The 3-day event at the Chancellor's Court is characterized by, among other activities, plenary sessions, paper and case study presentations, roundtable discussions as well as exhibitions of innovations and inventions by various players in the Kenyan economy.

The first ever in the history of the University of Nairobi, the Innovation Week will be an annual event characterized by, among other activities, plenary sessions, paper and case study presentations, roundtable discussions as well as exhibitions of innovations and inventions by various players in the Kenyan economy. The Innovation Week has brought together stakeholders from government, the private sector and individual innovators.

Presiding over the opening ceremony as the chief guest, Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Fred Matiang'i, said that the government is the biggest consumer of innovation products. He noted that management of innovation has not been streamlined to allow commercialization of research and innovation. In his remarks, Matiang'i commended the University of Nairobi for organizing the Innovation Week stating that the University of Nairobi is rightfully taking its place as the leading academic giant in Kenya.

Chancellor, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi gave a moving anecdote on the process of incubating start-ups and innovations in a hub. Dr. Rattansi commended the team behind the initiative saying that they are part of the development of the nation. She called on all to join in the journey towards becoming an innovation hub for the region.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi, said that Nairobi Innovation Week portends a potential paradigm shift in higher education. "We hope to spawn more innovations within the higher education realm, a way of not only rendering solutions but innovative solutions that will change the way we conceive multifaceted problems and potential solutions. The advent of knowledge based economies requires that centers of knowledge be at the forefront in creating and nurturing a swiftly responsive culture of creativity and innovation," said Prof. Mbithi.

Jeremy Awori, Managing Director, Barclays Bank revealed that the bank has set up incubation hubs in different parts of the world and that the Bank is keen on supporting start-ups, growing them into viable businesses. Barclays Bank is the Nairobi Innovation Week title sponsor.

Other sponsors include Equity Bank, Craft Silicon, Safaricom, Microsoft, Intel, Thompson Reuters, Konza Technopolis, University of Nairobi Alumni Association, Israeli Embassy, NACOSTI, Serena Hotels and Jambo pay.