

International Day of Non-Violence celebration held in Nairobi

Date and time: Thu, 2017-10-05 18:36

Location / Venue:
Chandaria Auditorium

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The United Nations International Day of Non-Violence celebrations were held at the University of Nairobi (UoN). The day which coincides with the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of non-violence is celebrated every 3rd October.

The keynote address 'Celebrating Ahimsa: Advances in Non-violence' was delivered by Ms. Rajni Bakshi, an eminent Gandhi scholar and member of Executive Committee of the Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti (GSDS) of India. Ms. Bakshi called upon Kenyans and the world to uphold non-violence saying that one does not have to be a great soul in order to cultivate non-violence.

"Mahatma Gandhi once said that 'non-violence is as old as the hills.' This simply means that in history, non-violence existed," she said. "Every day, the media reports news of violence in different parts of the world. One thing we need to understand is that violence will never get you power. This is a truth that cannot be overemphasized. To Gandhi, non-violence is simply a science...knowing what works and what does not work."

Ms. Bakshi cited historical events and great quotes by Mahatma Gandhi that the world could embrace.

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"A world with no violence can exist," she said. "It is up to you to embrace each other and co-exist. We do not need guns to pass a point across. Let us emulate the life of Mahatma Gandhi because his life is his message."

Amb. Tom Amolo, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said that everyone can be involved in creating a culture of peace. "We should start preaching peace to the youngest of minds," he said. "We need to embrace non-violence in resolving conflict and embrace co-existence." He was speaking on behalf of the Cabinet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Amina Mohamed.

The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi in his remarks said that Mahatma Gandhi was an intensely active personality who unendingly inspires many people around the world.

"As a university, I urge you to uphold the universal purpose of non violence by promoting culture of peace, tolerance, understanding and integrity to our institution of learning," he said. "It is therefore incumbent upon us to resist the pressure to think and conduct ourselves in a formatted manner. We must resist the temptation to give in to popular beliefs and choices without questioning and objectively investigating their real value to society."

The Indian High Commissioner to Kenya, Madam Sanduchitra Durai, urged all to embrace the wise teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. "His life history is his message to us," she said. "We have so much to learn from him and that is why the UN marked this day as an international celebrations day."

The Director-General, UNON, Ms Sahle-Work Zewde, said that the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi are relevant to Kenya given the current political situation. "Let us uphold Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence even as we approach October 26, 2017 for the repeat presidential polls," she said. "As Kenyans it is important for each one of us to embrace a culture tolerance."

The event was organized by UoN, the United Nations Office in Nairobi, the Indian High Commission in Kenya and Kenya-India Friends Association (KIFA).

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