

University of Nairobi Celebrates World Refugees Day.

Date and time: Thu, 2018-06-21 18:54

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The University of Nairobi community joined the world in marking World Refugees Day at the Chancellors Court on June 20, 2018 with a message: 'Include All, Empower All'.

The key message during the day was that a refugee is a big asset to any economy and should be embraced. The Principal Secretary State Department of Immigration and Citizen Services, Maj. Gen (Rtd) Dr. Gordon Kihalangwa, CBS, encouraged Kenyans to embrace refugees. He thanked the Kenyan government for opening its doors to host refugees from Somalia, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan. The Kakuma and Dadaab Camp is home to over 400,000 Refugees. He called on the development agencies to rise up and take advantage of the business opportunities within the refugee camps as government support and foreign aid continue to dwindle. He observed that Kenya is on the receiving end of forced immigrants. He urged refugees to take advantage of the ongoing voluntary repatriation program to go back to their countries and reconstruct their lives. He opined that refugees need education and skills training to help them rebuild their lives upon return to their home countries.

Several success stories and testimonies were given at the event by refugees who were integrated by the host countries and have risen up to positions of leadership in the society. Some have risen up to become successful business people with their companies and have now employed citizens from host countries.

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Prof. Peter Mbithi, the Vice Chancellor, University of Nairobi observed that the World Refugees Day aims at drawing the public attention to the issues affecting the refugees and how to improve their living conditions. He pointed out that the Institute of Development Studies, IDIS, carries out research on refugee's socio political development. The Vice-Chancellor was represented by Prof. Julius Ogen'go, the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs.

Ambassador, Prof. Maria Nzomo, the Director, IDIS, stated that the day is reserved to honour men, women and children who have been forced to flee from their homes by conflicts. She reiterated that the University of Nairobi has bestowed on IDIS the opportunity to work with UNHCR, Department of Refugees and International Agencies on refugee matters.

The event was attended by ambassadors from various countries across the region and entertainment was provided by UNHCR High Profile Supporter and gospel musician Mercy Masika.

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