

Kenyans urged to embrace Non Violence in resolving conflicts

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Kenyans have been urged to embrace non-violence as a way of resolving conflicts. On a day that marked the celebration of the 12th International Day of Non-violence at the University of Nairobi, students, staff, partners and the University community gathered to remember the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. The celebrations were held at the Chandaria Auditorium, Main Campus on October, 2, 2018.

The keynote address was delivered by Prof. Gilbert Edwin Meshack Ogotu, who proposed the establishment of a center of excellence on non-violence. Prof. Ogotu opined that establishing such a center will go a long way in entrenching the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi. He observed that the leadership traits of Mahatma Gandhi has been cherished by many world leaders including; apartheid icon Nelson Mandela, Marthin Luther King, Julius Nyerere, Patrice Lumumba and Nobel Laureate Wangari Maathai among others.

Gandhi was described as a nationalist, an environmentalist, a man of action who was devoted to a course: the end of colonial rule and the independence of India. He galvanized billions of Indians to reject the British imperial rule and eventually in 1947, India was declared independent republic. Gandhi was a great philosopher. "Philosophers never die. Men of wisdom never die", declared Prof. Ogotu. He opined that the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi will be cherished for thousands of years to come.

Using civil disobedience, faith in God, simplicity, Gandhi taught his followers to accept suffering as a

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way of life and pray to God. Gandhi embraced everybody and the poor in the society.

Director General United Nations Office in Nairobi, UNON, Ms. Hanna S. Tetteh, noted that a world free of violence is at the core of the United Nations' work. "His philosophy remains an inspiration. A world free of violence is at the core of our work. We recall his commitment to social justice. His commitment to human dignity lights our paths", she said.

The ideals of Mahatma Gandhi has been adopted by the United Nations in resolving conflicts around the world. The United Nations have been keen on using arbitration, negotiations as a way of achieving peace. "Gandhi proved non-violence works", she said.

University of Nairobi Vice Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi noted that the International Day of Non Violence is a day of reflection and tolerance. He observed that the University have strong ties with the Indian Community, who have been very generous since inception in 1956 as Royal Technical College. They contributed resources that helped in the construction of Gandhi Wing and the Administration block. Prof. Mbithi stressed the importance of embracing peace as it is the best environment for growth and development. "We can leave out violence and pursue peace. Education is the best change agent in the pursuit of peace. I believe Gandhi philosophy will continue to be relevant in our lives", he said.

The celebrations were attended by among others; the High Commissioner of India, Ms. Suchitra Durai and Makueni Governor, Prof. Kivutha Kibwana.

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