

Universities asked to diversify funding models.

Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors of private and public universities have been asked to diversify their funding models and avoid relying heavily on the exchequer.

Speaking during the two days Chancellors Convention at the Safari Park Hotel, the Chief Guest, Dr. Fred Matian'gi, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education Science and Technology, opened the two days convention and urged the Chancellors to address issues of university funding, expansion of university education access, development of human capacity and development of infrastructure. He noted that the ministry will start implementing differentiated unit cost, DUC.

Dr. Fred Matian'gi, urged Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors, Chairmen of Council from public and private universities to look at other ways of generating revenue. The ways suggested include: establishment of endowment funds, tapping from alumni, partnership with individuals and corporate organizations and establishment of business ventures.

He challenged them to benchmark with universities like Harvard and Stanford who have been able to amass huge amount of money by commercialization of their research products and by tapping on the strength of their alumni.

The aim of the two days convention was to build consensus on issues affecting university education in Kenya, share challenges and experiences and develop a framework on the way forward.

The conference observed that the number of private and public universities have increased tremendously over the last 10 years and they have been faced with various challenges as funding, quality research output, governance, human capacity development among others.

In her keynote speech, Prof. Olive Mugenda, former Vice-Chancellor, Kenyatta University lauded the efforts made by Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, JKUAT, for coming up with innovations like the 'Taifa' laptops. She noted that such efforts will go a long way in improving the university's income. She urged the Chancellors to borrow from other developed Universities. She noted that Stanford have 695 technology companies and they earn from Intellectual Property Rights. She urged the University Management to set up business ventures, hotels and have Public Private Partnerships. " There cannot be quality without infrastructure, " she said as she lauded University of Nairobi for the wonderful infrastructural project, the University of Nairobi Towers.

Former Presidents, Mwai Kibaki and Daniel arap Moi, who are themselves Chancellors of Masinde Muliro University and Karabak Universities respectively urged Universities to invest in research. President Kibaki also urged the scholars to embrace failure. He urged the political class to fight ethnicity, corruption and poverty and give their input to help Kenya industrialize.

Going forward, the Chancellors Convention will be held annually, to enable the University heads to share experiences and address the challenges facing institutions of higher education. The conference urged the government to allocate 2% of the GDP for research and establish an objective criteria for allocating it.

