

University of Nairobi Mark International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The University of Nairobi community has today marked the International Day against alcohol and drug abuse and illicit trafficking, (IDADA) at the Chancellors Court, Main Campus.

Dr. Catherine Mutisya, from the Ministry of Health, who was the Chief Guest during the event, warned the youth on negative internet usage. She congratulated the University for being at the fore front in dealing with substance abuse. University has also adopted mentorship program where professors and senior lecturers are assigned students to mentor.

Going by this year's theme : *Listen First*, Dr. Mutisya encouraged the parents to listen more to their children as they reward good behavior and punish bad behavior even as they encourage open door policy for communication.

She observed that students engage in substance abuse due to several factors key among them are: peer pressure, depression, ease of access of the drugs and weak societal norms.

Speaking during the event, the University of Nairobi Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi warned students against the dangers of engaging in alcohol and drug abuse. "Drugs negatively affect the health of our students and stops us from achieving our mandate of teaching, learning and research. Illicit trafficking affects academic performance, family and community", said Prof. Mbithi. He as well outlined the various activities being carried out by the University of Nairobi Health Services (UHS) to deal with the menace. Among the measures put in place by the University include: mentorship and nurturing of good habits, counselling services to those affected by alcohol and drug abuse, rehabilitation programs to those affected, sensitization programs, staff and employees assisted programs and creation of awareness of the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse.

Prof. Mbithi challenged the scholars to conduct more research on the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse and on ways of dealing with the drug menace. The Vice-Chancellor thanked the partners like Coca Cola, Techno Mobile, Ministry of Health and Liverpool VCT among others for partnering with the University in making the day a success.

On his part, Dr. M. R. B. Otieno, the Chief Medical Officer, observed that the University of Nairobi has been in the forefront in implementing alcohol and drugs policy to help sensitize students on the dangers of drugs. He observed that the University Health Services however need improvement of infrastructure to remain effective in delivery of the services.

During celebrations to mark the day, University staff and students participated in various activities like football, netball, basketball and handball and the various winners in each category were awarded trophies.