

## **University community celebrates International Day against Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**

Keep off drugs! This was the message to students when the University community celebrated the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (IDADA) at the Chancellor's Court, Main Campus, on June 19, 2018. This year's theme was 'listen first'.

The guest of honour, the Chief Executive Officer, National Agency for the Campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA), Lt. Col. (Rtd) Victor Okioma, said that drug abuse is a big problem as 12 percent of Kenyans are affected by the drugs menace.

"The young people are most affected. The situation is not good. Alcohol consumption is on the rise. Schools and universities have a worrying drug problem," he said. "Going forward, NACADA will work in partnership with universities and schools and train the youth on the dangers of drug abuse."

He blamed the drug menace among students on lack of role models who can steer the youth in the right direction. Other factors contributing to the problem include: bad friends, peer pressure, bars and local brews, over the counter shops selling drugs, among others.

Parents were challenged to 'Listen First' to their children. By being responsible parents and by building confidence and good moral values in their children. By listening to their children, parents are able to take preventative actions before things get out of hand. "You get to know their views, issues, their take of drug abuse and what can be done", said Mr. Okioma. In his concluding remarks, he observed that the youth think that drug abuse is 'trendy and there is no harm. They take the drugs due to peer pressure', he said.

The University of Nairobi Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi, noted that drug abuse pose challenges to social economic development to the society. He cautioned students against indulging in drugs and instead to focus their energies on their studies, research, innovation and extra curriculum activities like sports. He was represented by the Prof. Julius Ogeng'o, Ag. Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic Affairs.

Prof. Bernard Aduda, the Principal, College of Biological and Physical Sciences, urged those students who are affected to seek counselling services as the University of Nairobi offers counselling and psycho-social support to both students and staff who are affected.

"The main aim for marking this year's International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is to bring partners in the fight against alcohol and drug abuse together to a common platform to highlight various approaches different players are using against this scourge," said Dr. Doreen Asimba, the ag. Chief Medical Officer.

With focus on entertainment, various student groups tapped into their creative side and performed different art genres. Musician, Eko Dydda made an appearance and moved the crowd with a stunning performance. The event was supported by among others: NACADA, Liverpool VCT, Plan International, Ministry of Health, JhPiego, I Choose Life, Ebenezer Fantasy Functions, among others.