

## **The University Marks International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**

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The University joined the rest of the world in marking the International Day against Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (IDADA) on Friday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017.

It was a day characterized by sports, aerobics, yoga, and dancing. UoN members of staff and students engaged in volleyball, football, netball and basketball and various teams were awarded trophies.

The international theme for this year's celebrations 'Listen First!' is a clarion call to all to understand the effects and dangers of alcohol and drug abuse and also illicit trafficking.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi noted that the commemorative event was an appropriate recognition of the extraordinary progress made and an important reminder that the most profound challenge that still remains is to end the devastating vice in the society.

"To strengthen the set preventive activities, the University has developed a Student Assistance

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Program (SAP) and an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) whose specific activities include sensitization campaigns to create awareness, health education sessions, training (peer counselors/educators), guidance and counseling, orientation of students, appropriate referrals when specialized service is necessary and active participation in ADA prevention activities organized by the ADA sub-units and ADA clubs," he said. The University of Nairobi has a policy on the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse.

The key note speaker, Ms. Catherine Mutisya from the Ministry of Health, commended the University for her Commitment to fight the vice in the institution.

"It is important for the institution to continue sensitizing the students, staff and other stakeholders on the effects of alcohol and drug abuse," she said. "It is unfortunate that drug abuse and addiction starts as early as the age of 12 years. Research has shown that 50% of the addicts are youth. We need to encourage our children and colleagues to engage in healthy behaviour and lifestyles by engaging in activities such as sports."

The Chief Medical Officer, University Health Services, Dr. M.R.B. Otieno, pointed out the efforts towards fighting ADA; peer counselors and Trainers of trainers (ToT) on call and sensitization programs available.

During the celebrations, there was a processional march from Taifa Hall to the Chancellor's Court flagged off by Prof. Mbithi accompanied by the Kenya Police Band. Local gospel artist, Mercy Masika and various student dance crews entertained the crowd. Participants were sensitized on drug and alcohol abuse and HIV/AIDS. UoN also offered testing services on HIV/AIDS, blood sugar checks, blood pressure and body mass index (BMI).

Some of the sponsors for the event include National Authority for Campaign against Alcohol and Drug Abuse (NACADA), TECNO Mobile, Coca Cola and Liverpool VCT.

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