



Kenyatta University

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Kenyatta University Hosts Joint International Conference on Building a Generation of Agricultural Scientists

Nairobi 1st December 2014... Kenyatta University officially opened a joint international conference on **'Building a New Generation of Agricultural Scientists'** themed; ***'Bridging the Gap between Society, Science and Industry'***. The 3-day international conference kicked off today at Kenyatta University, Business and Student Services Centre (BSSC), Main Campus at 8.30 a.m.

The Chief Guest was Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Mr. Felix Koskei who was represented by the Director, Ms. Anne Onyango.

The international conference is a joint initiative between Kenyatta University, AGRA, University of Nairobi, and Horticultural Association of Kenya (HAK) through DAAD. The officially opened conference runs from Monday 1st December, 2014 to Wednesday 3rd December 2014 and a subsequent field excursion for participants on Thursday 4th December, 2014.

In a brief read on his behalf during the opening session, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock & Fisheries, Mr. Felix Koskei thanked Kenyatta University and all other stakeholders for holding the conference. He noted that deliberations and submissions during the conference will be a reliable discourse in furthering agricultural capacity development in the country and continent at large. With agriculture being part of the economic pillar of our national vision 2030 blueprint, the Chief Guest observed the need for concerted efforts to address challenges facing agribusiness development in the country. In his remarks various policy interventions by the government were outlined that have been aimed at keeping the Kenyan agricultural sector responsive to global trends such as bio-safety. He urged conference participants to increase their research and dissemination of knowledge in agribusiness and soil science to address challenges hindering exploitation of existing potential.

In her address during the opening ceremony, AGRA president, Dr. Agnes Kalibata emphasized need for concerted efforts to build knowledge in agriculture and agribusiness. Besides outlining key interventions by AGRA in Africa, she reiterated the need for continuous knowledge development and dissemination in agribusiness as well as youth and students' involvement as part of partnerships for the next generation of agribusiness entrepreneurs. In addition to bridging the research gaps in agriculture, she outlined AGRA's commitment to supporting government efforts as well as initiatives from other stakeholder groups in building the next generation of agricultural scientists.

In an address read on her behalf during the opening of the international conference, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Olive Mugenda observed that the conference comes at a time when Kenya and Africa at large is going through a phase of rapid development

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and optimism for growth despite various challenges associated with population growth, food crisis, climate change, soaring energy & food prices, poverty, brain drain, among others. She expressed her confidence that with the new generation of researchers and agri-entrepreneurs, Kenya and Africa will be well prepared to address the challenges holistically and in a sustainable manner. She further highlighted the University's commitment and role in addressing the challenges through initiatives such as Student Work Induction Programme, Students Training on Entrepreneurial Promotion and Chandaria Business Innovation and Incubation Centre to tap into the youth potential. These equip the young people with skills and experiences to utilize their productive potential as innovators and job creators.

The conference brings together participants from three continents to deliberate on bridging the gap between society, science and industry in building a new generation of agricultural scientists.

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About Kenyatta University

Kenyatta University is the one of the largest universities in Eastern Africa whose vision is to be a dynamic, an inclusive and a competitive centre for excellence in teaching learning and research and service to humanity.

Founded in 1965, K.U has taken significant steps towards becoming a world-class university over the years.

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