

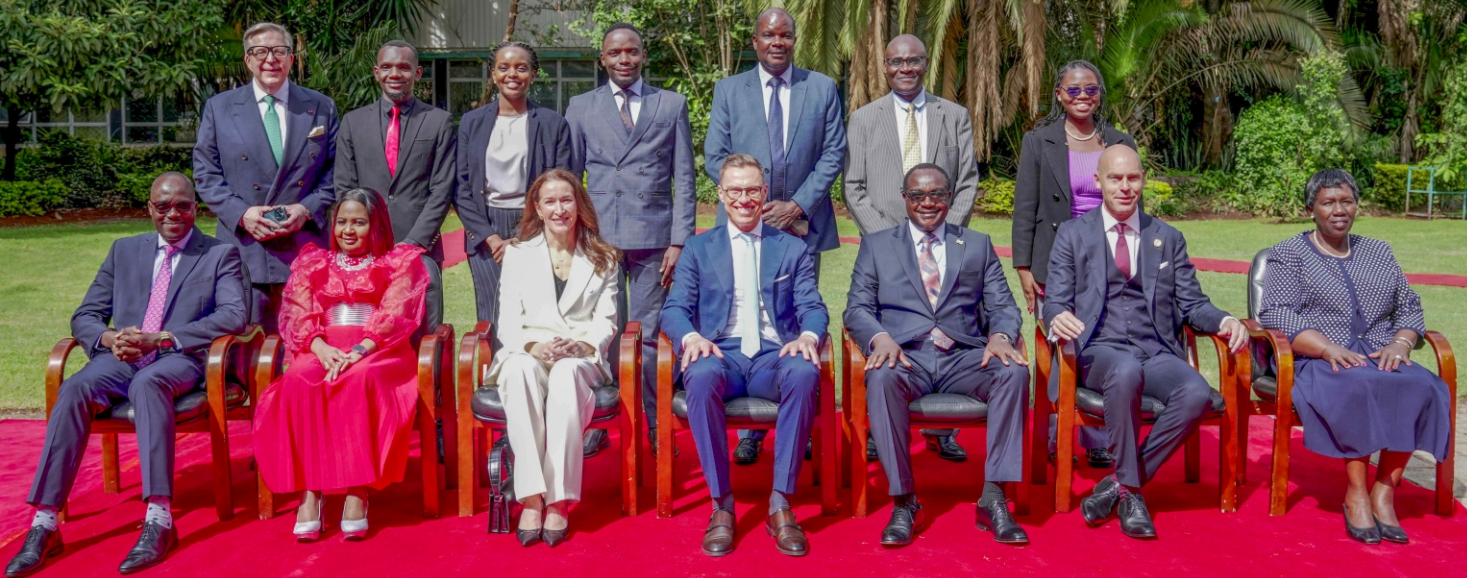


UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

SEPTEMBER 2025

# VarsityFocus

A magazine of the University of Nairobi



**Fostering International  
Collaborations  
for Global Impact**





UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

## Our Vision

A globally competitive university transforming society.

## Our Mission

To provide quality university education that embodies the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the global community through teaching, research, innovation, and community service.

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## Our Core Values

- Integrity, accountability, and good governance
- Care
- Freedom of thought and expression
- Inclusivity
- Innovativeness
- Professionalism
- Sustainability

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**UoN UNSA elections 2025**

## Cover Photo:

President President Alexander Stubb, Finland President poses for a group photo with Government of Kenya officials, UoN Management and Student leaders during his visit to the University of Nairobi.

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## Editor's MESSAGE

Our Esteemed Reader,

***The grand challenges facing the world... are too big for individual universities; they need integrated international teams.*** — Alice Gast, former President of Imperial College London

Greetings!

I am delighted to introduce the September 2025 issue of the Varsity Focus magazine. The magazine features highlights of the activities and achievements of students and staff of the university. This issue places emphasis on the university's internationalisation agenda as a crucial strategic issue aimed at spurring growth, relevance and competitiveness in the higher education sector in the twenty-first century.

Our coverage includes the public lecture delivered at the iconic Taifa Hall on 12th March 2025 by the President of Finland, H.E. Alexander Stubb. This discourse affirmed the university's belief in and commitment to working with others if there is to be meaningful impact from the work that we do. Indeed, at the Una Europa Virtual Exchanges for Sustainability mid-term review meeting held in June, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Jesang Hutchinson affirmed that international academic collaborations were a vital channel through which universities could address societal challenges and also exploit the opportunities of higher education. This has been a busy season during which the university's students and staff have taken the opportunity to experience life with their counterparts in France, Germany, China, and Spain among other destinations. The University of Nairobi has also been able to grow its annual research revenue from 4.6 billion to a record 5.3 billion through international partnerships. This is impressive, but we are determined to do better!

The university continues to host students and staff from partner institutions under our vibrant mobility programme domiciled in the Directorate of Corporate Affairs. Members of the university community are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities whenever they are announced so that we can all make meaningful contribution to our university and country as we also enhance personal experiences and growth.

This magazine features the launch of the 80 million Kantaria Agricultural Technology and Innovation Centre, a partnership between the university of Nairobi and Elgon Kenya to promote industry-academia linkages. We also present research highlights by the faculty as well as students' achievements in diverse fields of academia, leadership, and extracurricular activities. The magazine further highlights the celebration of twenty years of existence of the University of Nairobi Alumni Association (UONAA), among other items.

I hope you will find this issue of the magazine useful and engaging.

Sincerely,

**John Anthony Onyango Orindi, MCIPR**  
Editor/ Director of Corporate Affairs.



**JOHN A.O. ORINDI, mCIPR**  
Director Corporate Affairs



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

*A globally competitive University transforming society.*





## Vice-Chancellor's NOTE

To all stakeholders of the University of Nairobi,

I begin on a happy note by acknowledging the recently inaugurated Council of the University of Nairobi on 25 August 2025 under the leadership of Prof. Chacha Nyaigotti-Chacha. On behalf of the University community, I wish to assure the new Council of our commitment to a harmonious working relationship that will elevate our esteemed institution to the next level.

Let me also use this opportunity to welcome all the new students who joined the university in August for the 2025/26 academic year. As you embark on your studies and a new campus experience, I wish you a fruitful stay at the University. On yet another happy note, the 73rd graduation of the University of Nairobi will be celebrated on 19 September 2025. I would like to congratulate the graduating students for the great achievement of making it to the finishing line.

The university's focus on deepening its international outlook is anchored in the vision of becoming globally competitive. To this end, the University of Nairobi's current strategic plan contains a comprehensive roadmap to guide the institution's internationalisation initiatives. The programmes are aimed at enhancing the enrolment of international students, promoting student exchange and staff mobility activities, strengthening international research and other partnerships, and ensuring curriculum relevance among others. Ultimately, the university aspires to gain a competitive edge over its peers when it comes to cross-disciplinary teaching and learning, producing a globally ready workforce, and conducting cutting edge research that is relevant for tackling global challenges and addressing the Sustainable Development Goals to attain global prosperity.

One of the highlights of the university's commitment to its agenda for internationalization is the public lecture in March this year by H.E. Alexander Stubb, President of the Republic of Finland. President Stubb delivered an engaging lecture where he emphasized the place of multilateralism and the Global South in the New World Order. The University has also hosted numerous international delegations and signed memoranda of agreement with new partners this year covering issues of strategic importance in



**PROF. JESANG HUTCHINSON (PhD)**  
*Vice-Chancellor (Ag.) &  
Professor of Horticulture*

academia, research, and innovation. I wish to welcome more partners on board to explore other opportunities for our mutual benefit especially under the university's Big 5 Initiative spearheaded by Chancellor Patrick Verkooijen. I further wish to commend our staff and students for undertaking successful activities including summer schools, student mobility, staff training, joint research, technological advancement programmes, and cultural exchanges among others.

At this point, I would like to invite you to the forthcoming international Research and Innovation Week on 21-24 October 2025 under the theme, *"Advancing research and innovation from discovery to impact in a dynamic global landscape"*. The University will also host the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) Congress on 26-28 November 2025 under the theme *"Connected and resilient: Commonwealth universities charting global change"*.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to all staff and students and university management whose concerted effort has continued to ensure the smooth running of university programmes.

God bless you all.

**Prof. Jesang Hutchinson (PhD)**  
**Vice-Chancellor (Ag.) & Professor of Horticulture**

## President Stubb predicts a **Global Disorder unless Multilateral Institutions are reformed**



**T**hrough a brief, powerful, and engaging Lecture, the author of *New World Order* and scholar, took the audience through a brief history of how the world has evolved through its systems of order, balance and dynamics.

'There are three spheres of power: the Global East, the Global West, and the Global South. There are tensions between the Global East and West, and now the Global South will determine the New World Order. The Global South no longer needs to choose but now has the power to engage all parties on a multilateral platform. President Stubb advocated for a multi-lateral order that empowers and gives everyone a voice and agency.

'The paradox of the New World Order is that the

world needs corporations. Yet, we see countries pulling out of corporations to channel their solutions to global challenges such as the Climate Crisis.'

He advocated for the reform of multilateral institutions, including the UN Security Council, WTO, the UN, and the Bretton Woods to forestall the global system evolving into disorder.

The event was attended by the First Lady of the Republic of Finland, Madame Suzanne Innes-Stubb, Education Cabinet Secretary, Hon. Julius Migos, the Chancellor UoN, Prof Patrick Verkooijen, Vice Chancellor, Prof Margaret Hutchinson, academics, diplomats, and government officials, underscored Finland's growing ties with Kenya and Africa at large.

While reading the President's citation, the CS of Education, Mr. Julius Ogamba appreciated the 60 years of partnership between Kenya and Finland and appreciated Finland's contribution to the advancement of Education in Kenya through scholarships.

'This historic visit marks 60 years of diplomatic relations between Finland and Kenya. It celebrates our shared commitment to democracy, peace building, multilateralism, and sustainable development.

Born in Helsinki in 1968, President Stubb's academic credentials are both exemplary and global. He holds a PhD in International Relations from the London School of Economics, where he defended his thesis on Flexible Integration in the European Union in 1999. Prior to that, he studied Political Science at Furman University in the United States, the Sorbonne University in Paris, and the College of Europe in Bruges—where he earned his Master of Arts and later returned as a visiting professor.



## University of Nairobi Hosts Stakeholders for UNAVEX Mid-Term Review

The University of Nairobi hosted the midterm meeting of the Una Europa – Virtual Exchanges for Sustainability (UnaVEx) from 17-18 June 2025. This is a milestone event that reinforced the project's mission to advance sustainability education between Africa and Europe. The gathering served as both a review of the progress made since the inaugural cohort in February 2024 and a platform to chart the way forward for upcoming cohorts.

In her opening address, UoN's Acting Vice Chancellor, Prof. Margaret J. Hutchinson, welcomed representatives from partner universities in Helsinki, Leuven, Kinshasa, Bologna and Johannesburg. She underscored the institution's dedication to international academic partnerships and highlighted the transformative potential of collaboration. "UnaVEx is more than a project; it is a bold and collaborative response to the challenges and opportunities of internationalizing higher education in the 21st century," she said.

Project Coordinator Dr. Hanna Lappalainen from the University of Helsinki commended the project's early successes, pointing out that more than 1,000 students had engaged in activities during the first week alone. She also emphasized the significance of the climate action exercises and the feedback gathered from both students and moderators, which offered valuable insights into the program's effectiveness.

The meeting focused on strategic and operational priorities, including project reporting, moderator training and addressing challenges such as absentee moderators and technical difficulties. Participants reflected on lessons learned while committing to refine registration

processes, enhance student engagement and strengthen moderator preparation.

Held under the theme "Together Building Innovation and Equity," the event celebrated the spirit of cross-continental collaboration. Partners received tokens of appreciation, with special recognition extended to the Vice Chancellor for UoN's leadership in the initiative.

Since its inception in February 2024, UnaVEx has made remarkable strides in developing an innovative and accredited virtual exchange framework. The program equips both students and moderators with the tools and knowledge to engage meaningfully across borders. A highlight of the initiative was the successful delivery of the first exchange week, conducted from February 24 to March 28, 2025, which brought together 200 students. The sessions blended plenary presentations, group collaborations and individual climate action projects, generating valuable data now being analyzed for peer-reviewed research.

The UnaVEx project continues to stand as a model of how virtual collaboration can drive impactful learning and sustainability. With momentum building, it is poised to leave a lasting mark on global higher education and future generations.



## Expanding Horizon: Eight Students Depart for Studies in France

On Monday, 25th August, the University of Nairobi held a farewell meeting for eight students who have been admitted to pursue studies in partner institutions across France. The meeting brought together faculty representatives — including Prof. Siphila Wanjiku Mumenya the Dean of Faculty of Engineering, Prof. George Abong - Director Advancement, Mr. John Orindi- Director Corporate Affairs, Marc Zolver- Industry Academia Linkage Coordinator, Directorate of University Advancement, Eng. Mutugi Kiruki, representing the Chair, Electrical, Mr. Daniel Odhiambo- Registrar Faculty of Registrar representing Dean Faculty of Science and Technology alongside the departing students to express appreciation for the exchange program and to wish them well in their academic journey alongside the departing students to express

appreciation for the exchange program and to wish them well in their academic journey.

The students will get the opportunity for industrial attachment in French multinational companies that collaborate with our partners like ParisTech, AgroParisTech, Ecole du Ponds and Paris-Saclay. These institutions are highly ranked in STEM subjects. Among the eight students, two — Eddy Adwar and Victor Onyango — are from the Faculty of Science and Technology, while the remaining six are from the Faculty of Engineering: Hilda Wanjiru, Brian Miruka, Gloria Jepkoech, Agnes Kago, and Mary Ann Wanjiru.

The Dean of Faculty of Engineering Prof. Mumenya, who has herself visited France several times, shared advice with the students: “I would advise them to take this as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity — one that will set them apart from the







thousands of students graduating with similar or even better grades. International mobility will make a real difference in their careers." Reflecting on her own experience in Paris, she added: "The city seemed quiet on the surface but very busy underground. Their architecture is remarkably preserved; whatever we studied in history, they have maintained with strict protection against modern replacements, especially in old buildings. Another striking feature is their highly organized transport system"

When we asked the students about their motivations for applying, they agreed that the exchange program is valuable both academically and personally. Samuel Ochor, who applied to undertake his research project, said, "I find it particularly useful that through this program we can benefit from the Washington Accord, which allows engineers to work from anywhere in the world. Hilda Wanjiru, admitted to Centrale Supélec, explained: "My motivation for this program was to go to a country that is highly developed in technology, so I can expand my knowledge." Her colleague Agnes Kago, also heading to Centrale Supélec, recalled: "It all started with the Company Series program application, which was mainly aimed at gaining industry skills. That was my main motivation factor. From there, we learned about the exchange program; when I applied and got selected, I was so

excited," she added with a big smile. We also asked the students what they expect to gain from this experience. Gloria Jepkoech shared: "As I saw how the exchange program changed my friends who went last year, I would also like to gain that knowledge and experience a different atmosphere in terms of culture and organization. I want to see how companies there work and hopefully bring good practices back home."

Brian Miruka's answer was clear: "From this experience I am expecting to learn skills, gain exposure, and make new friends."

Mary Ann Wanjiru, who will be joining École Nationale des Ponts et Chaussées in Paris for the Sustainable and Green Finance Program, explained: "I am expecting to broaden my view on sustainability. At the same time, I want to broaden myself culturally — to learn how to engage with people I am not used to. I would also love to improve my French."

Our final question to the students was: "What are you most excited to see or do in France?" Victor Onyango, a chemistry student heading to Chimie ParisTech, said: "First of all, Paris has a great reputation, so I am excited about Paris itself. The university I will join is well-known in the science sphere, so being there will be a great opportunity to interact with advanced equipment that we don't have in my department."

His colleague, Eddy Adwar, added: "French people are known for their academic excellence, so I would like to experience that level of intellectual competition. Also, since I am a football fan, I am very excited to go and see a football match."

As the students prepare to begin this new chapter in France, their hopes, motivations, and enthusiasm reflect the true spirit of international exchange. With the support of their faculties and the University of Nairobi, they are set to gain not only academic knowledge but also cultural insights and personal growth.

## University of Nairobi Showcases Internationalization Project at DIES Workshop in Germany



It was a great honour for the University of Nairobi to be represented at the Dialogue on Innovative Higher Education Strategies (DIES) Training of Trainers Workshop and Closing Workshop of the 2023–2025 Cohort, held at the Berlin Hotel and the University of Potsdam in Germany from 20–24 July 2025.

The workshop aimed at strengthening DIES alumni in their roles as multipliers in higher education management and promoting the sustainability of DIES training courses. It brought together distinguished speakers and higher education experts to exchange ideas on innovation, internationalization, and best practices in higher education.

During the workshop, the University of Nairobi presented a two-year project titled: “Internationalization at Home: Embedding Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) and Virtual Exchanges in Higher Education Institutions in Kenya.” The project, funded by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German Rectors' Conference (HRK), and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) under the coordination of the University of Potsdam, focused on training Deans, Directors of Institutes, and International Office

Heads from Kenyan universities to promote internationalization at home through COIL.

Besides the busy workshop sessions, the organizers were also keen to create informal opportunities for networking. Participants enjoyed a guided bus and boat tour of the beautiful city of Berlin, which provided a relaxed setting for conversations and connections. “Effective collaborations are normally built in informal environments,” as Prof. Chirag Sheth (CEU Cardenal Herrera University) and Mr. Goitom Tegegn (Thomas More University of Applied Sciences) aptly noted — a sentiment that was clearly embodied in this experience.

Special appreciation goes to Ms. Xia Qin and the entire University of Potsdam team for their excellent organization of the event, as well as to the University of Nairobi management, particularly Mr. John Orindi, Head of the International Office, for his support in advancing the university's internationalization agenda and in the implementation of this project.

The workshop in Potsdam not only marked the conclusion of a successful cohort but also reinforced the University of Nairobi's role in championing innovation, collaboration, and internationalization in higher education.



## UoN increases its participation in the Erasmus International Mobility Program

**K**ick-starting the year 2025, the University of Nairobi International office hosted Elena Morales Rivas from the University of Granada (Universidad de Granada), Raquel Calatayud Lopez from the University of Murcia (Universidad Catolica San Antonio de Murcia) under the student and staff mobility programs sponsored by Erasmus. Each of the guests visited for 5 days. These visits marked an important milestone in enhancing the involvement of the University of Nairobi in the Erasmus International Mobility Program that facilitates academic exchange between universities worldwide.

The Erasmus Program, funded by the European Union, promotes staff and students exchanges with improved educational and cultural opportunities. As this program expands at the University of Nairobi, more faculty and students will be in a position to work in collaboration with top European universities through collaborative research work and gain international experiences.

During the visit, Ms Elena, who is responsible for student mobility at the university of Granada (Universidad de Granada), encouraged the UoN community to apply for the calls for PhD students and staff, 'We have got exchange grants for students from the University of Nairobi, Phd students for now, going for three months, fully granted, going to the university of Granada to study'

When asked about the value of the program, Lopez, who manages staff mobility at the University of Murcia (Universidad Catolica San Antonio de Murcia), emphasized, 'As a result of this project, the University of Nairobi has been awarded a total of four scholarships to send students to visit us, our university. The scholarships can be distributed to four students and staff. They can gain study opportunities and also training opportunities as well.'

In this regard, collaboration with the

universities increases the international network for the University of Nairobi. The Erasmus Plus opportunity offers staff and students good academic exposure and is in line with the university's mission to enhance internationalization and the delivery of world-class educational experiences.

The Erasmus program offers UoN students the opportunity to apply to study at either the University of Granada or the university of Murcia for one semester. This gives the students a special chance to delve into the Spanish culture, indulge in a diverse look into academia and broaden their career possibilities on an international stage.

For the staff, the program also offers mobility opportunities, allowing them to visit Spain for a 5-day academic exchange. This will allow staff members to collaborate with Spanish staff while sharing expertise and joint research strengthening the ties between the institutions.

For students and staff interested in the Erasmus exchange program, application will be done through UoN's international office. Successful candidates will be guided on the logistics of travelling, accommodation, and studying abroad. The University of Nairobi looks forward to future collaborations and continued success within the Erasmus program.



## UoN 's PhD Student visits Grenada Spain



**D**eborah Mongina is a PhD student who applied and won a grant for a three-month student mobility that she spent at the University of Granada in Spain. She noted her experience in Granada below.

**Granada and Its Academic Appeal:** Nestled at the foothills of the Sierra Nevada, Granada is a city steeped in history and academic excellence. With its fusion of Moorish and Christian architecture, it offered more than just a research destination; it was a cultural immersion. During my Erasmus+ PhD mobility stay, I had the chance to experience not only the academic richness of the University of Granada but also the city's world-renowned heritage. Visits to the Alhambra Palace, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the winding streets of the Albaicín district provided cultural depth and scenic inspiration. I also explored the Granada Cathedral, the historic Cuarto Real de Santo Domingo, and the Science Museum, each offering a unique lens into Andalusia's layered past and present.

**Warm Welcome and Integration:** The academic and administrative support from my host supervisor, Dr. Ana Romero- Freire, and the International Welcome Center ensured a smooth

transition. From securing affordable accommodation to facilitating university orientation, their support made settling in efficient and welcoming. Although Spanish was the primary language of communication, colleagues and lab mates made efforts to assist in translation and integration. Shared experiences with fellow international researchers fostered a sense of community and belonging, particularly within Granada Norte, where I lived among other PhD students and visiting scholars.

**Research Engagement and Academic Exchange:** The core focus of my stay was a research attachment blending environmental science and agricultural sustainability. Initially envisioned as a hybrid of field and lab research, logistical factors led to a more lab-intensive experience, an outcome that turned out to be technically rewarding. At both the Edaphology lab of the University of Granada and the EEZ-CSIC institute, I engaged in pesticide residue analysis using HPLC, tested for soil enzyme activity and respiration, and conducted ecotoxicological assays with lettuce and *Daphnia magna*. These experiments were directly relevant to my PhD work on agro-environmental health back in Kenya.



Working with scientists like Laura Delgado and Mario Paniagua, and fellow students including Basma, Maria, Antonio and Pepe deepened my understanding of experimental techniques and analytical interpretation. I also supported MSc practical sessions, enriching my teaching and communication skills across linguistic and disciplinary lines.

**Exposure to Broader Innovation and Cultural Discovery:** Beyond Granada, I travelled to Córdoba to attend the International Forum for the Exchange of Sustainable Practices, co-hosted by the University of Córdoba and Andalucía Agrotech DIH. This forum showcased innovations in digital agriculture, such as AI-based irrigation, drone crop monitoring, and GPS-tracked livestock systems, offering tangible insights into sustainable farming across Europe.

While in Córdoba, I visited the awe-inspiring Mezquita-Catedral, a powerful symbol of interwoven Islamic and Christian history. The architectural and spiritual resonance of the space provided both historical reflection and cultural appreciation.

Weekend trips to Málaga, Nerja, and Barcelona further expanded my perspective. From Nerja's quiet beaches and spontaneous cultural exchanges to Barcelona's urban vitality, each city complemented my academic journey with moments of personal reflection and joy.

**Challenges and Adaptability:** Language barriers were a primary challenge, particularly during workshops or field discussions conducted in Spanish. However, consistent peer support and translation tools enabled meaningful participation. Adjusting my original research plan also demanded adaptability and

creativity, which ultimately led to fruitful lab outcomes.

**Lessons Learned and Academic Gains:** This mobility experience greatly expanded my research horizons, both technically and conceptually. I gained practical lab skills, exposure to cutting-edge sustainability innovations, and greater confidence in interdisciplinary collaboration. The experience underscored the importance of flexibility, cross-cultural learning, and the potential of regenerative agricultural practices in addressing global environmental challenges.

I return to my PhD work with renewed focus and ideas, particularly for integrating digital tools and sustainable models into Kenyan organic and smallholder farming systems.

**Conclusion and Acknowledgments:** My time in Granada was a transformative phase of my academic journey—one marked by intellectual growth, cultural immersion, and international collaboration. I am deeply grateful to the University of Nairobi and the Erasmus+ team for supporting this life-shaping opportunity. My heartfelt thanks also go to my host team at the University of Granada, especially Dr. Ana, Paco and all colleagues who made this exchange both academically rich and personally memorable.



# Flags off 9 students to China

**T**he University of Nairobi is proud to flag off nine students who were awarded Chinese scholarships through the Confucius Institute to study Chinese language for six months at Tianjin Normal University. The students from different academic backgrounds were awarded scholarships to advance Chinese language education in Kenya. This initiative, which began in 2023, aims to integrate Chinese language instruction into Kenya's national education system, enhancing educational collaboration between the two countries.

Prof. Ayub Gitau, the Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs, presided over the event. He thanked Prof. Wang Shangxue, the Director of the Confucius Institute, and the students for their joint efforts in winning the scholarships. "You students are going to be the ambassadors of the University of Nairobi, please explore and experience the rich culture of China and share the culture of the University of Nairobi with them and learn about their "New Model of International Chinese Language Education in the Context of Digital and Intelligent Transformation." His address, "The Application and Practice of Digital Intelligence in Chinese Language Teaching at the University of Nairobi and the Confucius Institute," demonstrated how digital technologies are transforming language in teaching.

Last year, in September 2024, twelve students were awarded scholarships to study in China; the

purpose is to build a win-win ecosystem for Confucius.

Prof. Wang Shangxue, Chinese Director of the Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi (CIUN), is pleased to announce that they plan to award twenty-five scholarships in 2025 Kenyan students at the University of Nairobi. The program is called 2+2: two years in university and two years in China.

One of the beneficiary students, Joy M. Waswa shared her experience, that it has really been a good journey since she joined the Chinese language program and that she was able to attain a mean grade of A with 300 points to earn her full scholarship. Catherine N. Njuguna's case is different; she is just from a high school and tarmacked a bit, and she is delighted to have applied for the scholarship and gotten it.

The Director of Corporate Affairs and International Affairs, Mr. John Orindi, said that students need to align their goals with emerging global opportunities in the evolving global order, which favors China. He asked the students to project a good image of the university and share their experiences through stories in order to inspire others. Prof. Abby, representing the Dean faculty of Science and Technology, congratulated the students for their award and wished them good experience while in China.

The University of Nairobi's Confucius Institute plays a vital role in facilitating internationalization through scholarships.

The CIUN's roles include conducting research and organizing reciprocal visits by education students and staff to ensure alignment with Kenya's educational needs. The Chinese language marks a major step in deepening the educational and cultural ties between Kenya and China.





## Kenyan Media and University of Nairobi Representatives Join Global Seminar in China



They visited media and film museums, explored Fu Tea Town, and toured the Communication University of China — gaining a deeper understanding of how media and culture are intertwined. One of the highlights was the unforgettable experience of walking the Great Wall of China, a powerful symbol of history, resilience, and human achievement.

Another major highlight was attending the official opening of the 2nd Festival of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

**F**rom July 7–22, 2025, Kenyan media representatives and communication and journalism scholars from the University of Nairobi took part in a two-week seminar in Beijing, China, focused on Journalist Leaders and Gen Z Young Leaders from the Belt and Road countries. The seminar provided a dynamic platform for professional growth, cultural exchange, and dialogue on the evolving role of media in a globalized world.

The program combined academic sessions with practical exposure, bringing together media practitioners and academics from different countries. Discussions centered on Chinese media development, constructive journalism, international news reporting, and the power of culture in shaping narratives. These sessions not only introduced participants to new perspectives but also opened conversations on how African and Asian media can learn from each other in terms of innovation and collaboration.

Beyond the classroom, participants immersed themselves in China's rich heritage and traditions.

Countries in Xi'an City. The festival gathered media leaders from China and partner nations to engage in high-level discourse on content creation, ethical practices in journalism, and opportunities for partnership and networking. This international forum underscored the importance of cooperation in today's interconnected media landscape.

A recurring theme throughout the seminar was China's commitment to preserving and investing in its history, often communicated through storytelling. This approach demonstrated how cultural memory can serve as a foundation for innovation in communication and education.

For the Kenyan participants, the experience was both academically enriching and personally transformative. It broadened their professional knowledge, expanded their networks, and reinforced the importance of cross-cultural dialogue in shaping the future of global media. Most importantly, the seminar reminded them that journalism, when practiced across borders, has the power to build understanding and bridge communities.

## Unlocking Culture Through Language with Dr. Ana Cristina Pires Alfaiate



*Prof. Ana Cristina Pires Alfaiate and her students.*

**T**he Department of Linguistics at the University of Nairobi stands as one of the oldest and largest departments within the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Its curriculum offers a diverse selection of languages, including Arabic, German, Korean, Portuguese, and Chinese.

Professor Ana Cristina Pires Alfaiate, an international staff member, has been teaching Portuguese at the university since 2017. Her position is facilitated through a collaboration with the Camões Institute Lisbon, an organization that supports the international mobility of Portuguese language professors.

Professor Alfaiate teaches approximately 130 students annually across three classes. For students on distant campuses like Kisumu or Mombasa, she provides virtual classes to ensure accessibility. Her teaching methodology extends beyond the classroom, incorporating cultural events and historical context. "Learning a language is also about knowing the culture," she noted. She often organizes outings for her students to attend cultural events, film screenings, and embassy gatherings. Last year the class took part in a creative project and held a little art session, painting poems from Luís Vaz de Camões.

When asked to motivate prospective students, Professor Alfaiate emphasized the wide range of practical benefits that learning Portuguese offers. She highlighted that the language is not only

spoken in several African countries—including Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, and Mozambique—but also serves as a valuable European language. This dual advantage can significantly expand a student's professional network and open up more job opportunities. Furthermore, she noted that Portugal itself is a top destination for living, celebrated for its warm climate, beautiful landscapes, and welcoming culture. Whether students are drawn to the vibrant city life of Lisbon, the historical architecture of Coimbra, or the economic hub of Porto, learning the language provides a gateway to these diverse experiences.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Portuguese language is its deep historical connection to Arabic. Due to centuries of Arab presence on the Iberian Peninsula, where Portugal is located, there are significant similarities in ethnicity, language, and culture. This shared history has left a lasting legacy on the Portuguese language, with many words of Arabic origin still used today. We also can't forget to mention the connection between Swahili and Portuguese, primarily through loanwords and historical interaction along the East African coast. While the Swahili language is fundamentally a Bantu language with a significant Arabic influence, it also contains a number of words borrowed from Portuguese.



# My Journey to the University of Nairobi

**K**aterina Chybova, an undergraduate student of Political Science from the University of Hradec Králové in the Czech Republic, has journeyed from being a visitor, to an international student, and now an international intern at the University of Nairobi. She told us her story.

In September 2024, I arrived in Kenya for my exchange program at the University of Nairobi. However, this was not my first time here. I had visited UoN before and immediately felt close to the place. I liked it so much that I decided to cancel my upcoming exchange program in France and apply for UoN instead—a decision I have never regretted.

When I first came to Kenya, I was struck by the beauty of its nature, the warmth of its people, and the richness of its culture. I remain deeply grateful to my home university for granting me this opportunity and supporting me with a scholarship. My exchange experience gave me new skills, valuable connections, and unforgettable memories. I was exposed to a different teaching style that required greater independence, adaptability, and a willingness to step out of my comfort zone. Through this, I learned resilience and gained valuable insights from my professors. All of my professors were excellent teachers, but one in particular—Prof. Dr. C.A. Mumma-Martinon, with whom I took two classes—truly stood out to me. Her teaching was captivating, consistently offering more than just the subject matter; she shared perspectives and inspiration that extended beyond the classroom. I often reflect on her teaching and the inspiration it gave me. Because of my aspiration to pursue a master's degree in African Studies, courses such as Politics and Governance in Africa and Regional Cooperation and Conflict were especially valuable in deepening my knowledge of topics I am passionate about. Spending 6 months as an international student in Kenya gave me the



opportunity to meet so many great people and make long-lasting friendships.

Even though there were many things I was looking forward to back home, once I returned to the Czech Republic I quickly realized how much I missed Kenya. After spending five months there, I was fortunate to find another opportunity to come back. With the support of my coordinator, Eric Chesoni from the UoN International Office, and my Czech coordinator, Petra H Iková, who connected me to the opportunity, I was able to begin an internship at the Directorate of Corporate Affairs.

Since day one, I have taken part in diverse and inspiring activities — from partnership meetings with delegates from international universities to the Korean Forum 2025. Through this experience, I have learned new skills, improved my Swahili, and met incredible people. My internship has not only given me professional growth but has also enriched my personal life in many ways. I no longer feel like a stranger here, and for that, I will always remain deeply grateful. Thank you, UoN.

## International Students conclude Environmental Summer School at UoN

**T**he University of Nairobi concluded its 2025 Environmental Summer School, an intensive program that brought together Chinese students to investigate and propose solutions for the pressing environmental challenges in Kibera, Africa's largest informal settlement. The initiative, spearheaded by the University of Nairobi's Corporate Affairs Department, provided participants with an immersive experience in understanding the interconnected issues of solid waste and water pollution.

The program focused on direct observation and investigative learning within Kibera, aiming to engage young minds in critical environmental and social issues. Students explored key questions, including the prevalence and types of solid waste in Kibera, its impact on residents' quality of life, the link between solid waste and water pollution, and the relationship between waste and social inequalities. The University of Nairobi has consistently fostered strong academic ties with Chinese institutions, with its Confucius Institute actively promoting cultural and educational exchange, including facilitating student mobility for various programs.

Mr. John Orindi, Director of Corporate Affairs and International Relations at UoN, highlighted that the Summer School, known for its practical and hands-on approach, offered participants a unique

opportunity to engage with real-world environmental issues through field visits, interactive workshops, and discussions with leading experts.

Professor Paul Odundo emphasized that the Environmental Experiential Summer School format is designed to go beyond traditional classroom learning, incorporating field visits, practical exercises, and interactive sessions. This approach allows students to directly engage with environmental issues such as climate change adaptation, resource management, and sustainable energy solutions within a real-world context.

During one of the sessions, Professor Alice Odingo reminded attendees, "From drainage to disease, awareness is key. Let's blend tradition with innovation for healthier, greener cities; we all have a role in managing the environment. Let's make the world better, starting with a greener Nairobi."

Mr. Noah Oyembo led an in-depth session on research methods for environmental science projects. He also shared striking statistics, noting that Nairobi generates 3,000 tonnes of solid waste daily, with over 2,000 tonnes ending up in the illegal Dandora dumpsite. Furthermore, he pointed out that while 150 tonnes of medical waste are produced, only one licensed incinerator handles 6 tonnes per day.





## IPBES Announces Co-Chairs for Second Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has announced the selection of three world-class scientific experts to lead the 'Second Global Assessment' of biodiversity and ecosystem services – expected to be published in 2028. Prof. Nicholas (Nick) Otienoh Oguge (Kenya), Dr. Rebecca (Becky) Chaplin-Kramer (United States), and Prof. Zhi Lü (China), have been appointed as co-chairs of the assessment. They will lead and steer a balanced, interdisciplinary team of more than 120 experts undertaking the assessment, which will be announced by IPBES in the coming weeks.

Prof. Nicholas (Nick) Otienoh Oguge is a senior scientist in environmental policy at the University of Nairobi. His research centres on nature conservation and landscape conservation, emphasizing the creation and adoption of strategies that advance both regional and site-specific conservation objectives. His work supports the implementation of measures that aim to provide sustainable livelihoods for local communities, preserve space for wildlife, and encourage sustainable business opportunities in the East African region.

The Second Global Assessment will be a landmark multi-year undertaking to provide decision makers around the world with the best available evidence, knowledge, and policy options about biodiversity and ecosystem services. It will be the follow-up report to the seminal [2019 IPBES Global Assessment](#), which alerted the world to the fact that a million species of plants and animals now face extinction, identified and ranked the most important direct drivers of biodiversity loss, and provided the state of knowledge underpinning subsequent agreement on global ambitions for biodiversity.

The Second Global Assessment will assess relevant knowledge that has become available since the 2019 publication and will explore progress towards achieving the range of global goals and targets relating to sustainability and living in harmony with nature in advance of the 2030

deadline for many of these commitments. The Second Global Assessment will also strengthen the science-policy interface on biodiversity and nature's contributions to people across a range of spatial

scales, from local to global, by providing knowledge and evidence for better –informed decision-making.

The assessment will also highlight and synthesize the findings of prior IPBES assessments relating to the differing roles of a variety of actors and their value systems in delivering the building blocks for transformative change. The authors will address areas highlighted as gaps in the first Global Assessment as well as emerging issues.

Some countries have encountered significant challenges in responding and contributing towards global objectives and targets such as those of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. This assessment will examine these challenges while also showcasing progress made, identifying the enabling conditions behind successful outcomes. It will point to ways of overcoming obstacles so that effective approaches can be scaled up across different contexts.

Making the announcement of the co-chairs, IPBES Officer-in-Charge, Neville Ash, said: “The Second Global Assessment will be one of the most complex, extensive and significant environmental assessments ever undertaken – with great relevance and value to decision makers around the world and in every context, for people and nature.” The first author meeting of the assessment is already planned for November 2025 in Paris, with a first draft of the report expected to be ready for open expert review in the first half of 2026.



## WMI and SEKU Join Forces to Restore Landscapes Under Landscape Repair and Transformation Program (LANSRET)

The Wangari Maathai Institute (WMI), in partnership with Hearts of Green and Pioneer Insurance, launched an ambitious tree-growing initiative under the Landscape Repair and Transformation Program (LANSRET) at the South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) on the 29th April 2025. This joint effort sought to restore biodiversity, promote sustainability and transform the SEKU landscape through the planting of over 3,000 indigenous trees along a 9-kilometer stretch of the university's highway.

The Landscape Repair and Transformation Program (LANSRET) was a reforestation and community engagement initiative in Kenya, specifically aimed at restoring degraded landscapes and improving livelihoods. It involved communities in planting and nurturing trees on public land, with farmers provided with land for farming in return for their labour on reforestation projects.

The launch marked the beginning of Phase 1 of the project, during which indigenous trees were planted across a 4-kilometer section. The tree-planting effort included diverse indigenous species, among them medicinal plants like *Makamia lutea* and neem, symbolizing a commitment to environmental restoration and traditional knowledge preservation.

Speaking at the commemoration ceremony, SEKU Vice Chancellor, Prof. Eng. Douglas Shitanda, emphasized the transformative power of the

project, stating, "We want to change our lives and make a difference in the lives of everyone through this initiative particularly through involving students in ensuring the continuity and survival of the trees."

Prof. Thuita P. Thenya, Director of the Wangari Maathai Institute, stressed the importance of carrying forward Wangari Maathai's legacy by restoring landscapes and ensuring the return of biodiversity. "We are working with the next generation to secure a greener future," he noted.

Moses Muya, the Executive Director of Hearts of Green, expressed the aspiration for a 100% survival rate of the planted trees, underscoring the need for proper care, maintenance and community ownership of the project. In three years, 98% of the trees planted that day were expected to survive.

Pioneer Insurance, represented by Mr. Timothy Mutua, GM Marketing and Customer Experience, reaffirmed the corporate sector's role in environmental stewardship. He noted that the company had previously planted 30,000 trees and remained committed to sustainability pillars by giving back to society through indigenous tree planting.

This collaboration between academic institutions, environmental organizations, corporate bodies and government agencies exemplified a holistic approach to ecosystem restoration, setting a replicable model for landscape repair efforts across Kenya and beyond.





## Improving Livestock Health: UoN and Feed the Future Innovation Lab Team Up on Veterinary Vaccine Delivery

**O**n January 21, 2025, the University of Nairobi participated in the Feed the Future Innovation Lab for Veterinary Vaccines Delivery (VVDIL), a ground-breaking initiative funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the Feed the Future initiative. This consortium sought to tackle critical challenges in the development, delivery and adoption of veterinary vaccines, addressing global hunger and poverty while building local capacities for sustainable vaccine innovation and deployment.

Feed the Future is America's initiative to combat global hunger and poverty. It brings partners together to help some of the world's poorest countries harness the power of agriculture and entrepreneurship to jumpstart their economies and create new opportunities.

The five-year Leader Award, led by Washington State University (USA), united a diverse group of research and development organizations from Kenya, Tanzania and Nepal, including: University of Nairobi (UoN), International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), Kenya Veterinary Vaccines Production Institute (KEVEVAPI), Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST), Tanzania Veterinary Laboratory Agency (TVLA), Nepal Agricultural Research Council (NARC), Nepal Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development.

As part of this transformative initiative, the University of Nairobi received funding to focus on training programs. These efforts were crucial in addressing barriers to effective veterinary vaccine deployment in target regions.

This collaborative effort was expected to create meaningful, lasting change for livestock farmers and communities in Kenya, Tanzania and Nepal, driving economic growth and enhancing food security.

The Veterinary Vaccine Delivery Innovation Lab (VVDIL) focused on multidisciplinary research to address key barriers to veterinary

vaccine delivery at three levels: product, provider and end-user. By improving the quality, delivery and adoption of vaccines, the initiative aimed to:

- Enhance household food security and nutritional health for women and children.
- Strengthen resilience to losses from preventable livestock diseases.
- Increase livestock productivity and farmer incomes.
- Reduce antibiotic use while improving carbon efficiency in animal production.

The lab targeted vaccines for key livestock diseases affecting cattle, small ruminants and poultry in the target regions:

- Cattle: Contagious Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia (CBPP) in Kenya and Tanzania and Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD).
- Small Ruminants: Peste des Petits Ruminants (PPR), Contagious Caprine Pleuro-Pneumonia (CCPP), Sheep and Goat pox.
- Chicken: Newcastle Disease (NCD) and Infectious Bursal Disease (IBD).

Through this collaboration, livestock farmers were empowered with the tools they needed to protect their herds, improve productivity and secure better livelihoods. Together, the partners advanced the science of veterinary vaccinology and worked to create resilient agricultural systems that benefit communities across Kenya, Tanzania and Nepal.



# UoN Explores the Power of AI in Education and Science Through Workshop



**U**niversity of Nairobi, in collaboration with Linköping University (Sweden), hosted a two-day hybrid workshop on March 6–7 under the theme “AI in Education and Science: Applications and Challenges.” The event brought together Kenyan experts and international partners to examine the transformative role of artificial intelligence in higher education, research and conservation science.

Prof. Kerubo, Dean of the Faculty of Science and Technology, underscored the faculty's scale and influence, housing all basic science departments with a community of 5,700 students and 300 staff. She emphasized that, “AI is no longer a futuristic concept but a transformative force reshaping various sectors.” Prof. Kerubo further announced two landmark initiatives: the establishment of the Nairobi School of AI and the launch of a new MSc in Artificial Intelligence program developed by the Department of Computing and Informatics, set to commence in the 2025/2026 academic year.

The discussions examined the evolving AI landscape in Africa, with a strong focus on Kenya. Prof. Miriti of UoN highlighted locally developed AI solutions in crop monitoring and cancer screening, while noting challenges such as under-representation of African talent and insufficient data resources. A presentation by the University of Johannesburg clarified distinctions between discriminative and generative AI, stressing the importance of aligning methods with real-world needs. Linköping University's KenSwed Project

showcased how AI can democratize education by enabling the creation of localized vocational training content for underserved communities. Collectively, the sessions called for greater investment in AI education, improved data-sharing frameworks and strengthened cross-institutional collaboration to generate Africa-specific solutions. The workshop's centrepiece featured a series of cutting-edge research presentations on conservation biology, highlighting how AI is advancing ecological monitoring and wildlife protection. Researchers demonstrated innovative methods for tracking elephant movements through footstep detection and trumpet-call audio recognition, as well as AI-powered systems for analysing environmental sound and vibration data in savannah ecosystems. Notably, Swedish researchers presented AI techniques for identifying individual leopards, offering new possibilities for non-invasive monitoring of endangered species.

Prof. Catherine Lukhoba, Chair of the Department of Biology, spotlighted the Ngulia Project and its critical role in wildlife conservation across Kenya. She stressed that while conservation is grounded in science, technology, particularly AI, can enhance monitoring systems and provide real-time insights into the status of threats.

The University of Nairobi and Linköping University reinforced the importance of global partnerships in developing locally relevant, sustainable AI solutions that address pressing regional and global challenges.



## UoN Champions a Drug-Free Lifestyle Through “Talanta Bila Uraibu” Campus Soccer Tournament

**T**he University of Nairobi, in partnership with Masese Za Abdala & Rapture Resource Agency, hosted the vibrant "Talanta Bila Uraibu" Campus Soccer Tournament at the Main Campus Sports Grounds. Organized through the University's Directorate of Sports, this two-day event held on the 12th and 13th July 2025 aimed to promote a drug-free lifestyle among students through the power of sports.

The tournament is part of a broader initiative to combat drug and substance abuse by engaging the youth in positive, community-centred activities. It drew students, partners and stakeholders together in a shared mission to inspire change and nurture personal excellence.

The event was honoured by the presence of Davies Lomwatu, OGW, HSC Commandant National Police College Embakasi 'A' Campus. In his keynote address, he underscored the vital role of sports in youth development and emphasized that living a drug-free life is a crucial step toward unlocking one's full potential. He pledged continued support for the University's efforts in addressing the challenges of drug abuse among students.

Mr. Abdala Kaka, CEO of Masese Za Abdala & Rapture Resource Agency, reiterated the organization's dedication to working with the University in transforming young lives through sport and community outreach. He emphasized that their shared mission to eradicate drug and alcohol abuse perfectly aligns with the University's vision of nurturing a responsible, empowered and drug-free generation.

Rose Marete, Acting Director of Sports & Games at the University of Nairobi, highlighted the significance of strategic partnerships in enhancing the impact of sports-based interventions. She noted that sports not only cultivate talent but also serve as a vital tool for mentorship and behaviour change. Marete called on the wider community to support such initiatives in building a brighter, healthier future for the youth.

The "Talanta Bila Uraibu" Campus Soccer Tournament stands as a powerful testament to what can be achieved through unity, purpose-driven engagement and a collective commitment to guiding the youth toward lives of resilience and purpose.



## University of Nairobi Launches Feminist Macroeconomics Seminar Series



institutions and feminist organizations, the series is poised to make a substantial contribution to the advancement of gender equality, not only in Africa but also on a global scale.

The Africa Women's Development Studies Network (FEMNET, Rep, Grace said, FEMNET, seminar series is designed to equip students and researchers with the tools necessary to critically analyse and transform economic frameworks. The African

In a groundbreaking move earlier on 6th May 2025, the University of Nairobi's Department of Economics and Development Studies (DEDS) has joined forces with FEMNET and the University of Ghana's Department of Economics have planned to launch a pioneering seminar series on Feminist Macroeconomics. This initiative marks a significant step towards reshaping economic theory and policy to be more inclusive and equitable.

Prof. Mary Lucia Mbithi the Associate Professor of Economics at UoN delved into critical themes within gender economics research, including labour market disparities, the impact of macroeconomic policies on gender equality and the importance of women's economic empowerment. She stated that it will take 150 years to achieve gender equality for woman and this needs to be talked about, necessity of gender-responsive development policies and the significance of inter-sectionality in economic analysis.

"This seminar series represents a crucial step towards transforming economic discourse and ensuring that women's contributions are fully recognized and valued," stated Chairman, department of Economics and Development Studies, Prof. Martine Odhiambo Oleche.

By fostering collaboration between academic

Feminist Macroeconomics Academy (AFMA) has been instrumental in training activists and scholars to effectively influence macroeconomic policies from a feminist perspective.

Key topics covered by Dr. Priscilla Twumasi Baffour from Ghana, include challenging structural inequities, building analytical capacity for gender analysis and contextualizing global feminist economics within African realities. She delved into key themes within gender economics research, such as labour market disparities, the impact of macroeconomic policies on gender equality and the crucial role of women's economic empowerment. Furthermore, the discussions will emphasize the need for gender-responsive development policies and the importance of incorporating inter-sectionality into economic analysis.

The series drew on the expertise of organizations like FEMNET, whose African Feminist Macroeconomics Academy (AFMA) has been instrumental in training activists and scholars to influence macroeconomic policies from a feminist perspective.

The initiative underscores the growing recognition of the need to integrate gender perspectives into mainstream economics to achieve sustainable and equitable development.



# Viva Insurance Supports Conservation Through Site Adoption at WMI



In a significant step toward environmental restoration, Viva 365 Insurance Brokers planted 20 indigenous trees at the Wangari Maathai Institute for Peace and Environmental Studies (WMI) on May 17, 2025. The event marked Viva's adoption of a half-acre meditation site as part of the Landscape Repair and Transformation project (LANSRET), with a three-year commitment to maintain the area. This partnership addresses the challenge of invasive species that have threatened the institute's gardens.

The event brought together representatives from Viva Insurance, Hearts of Green organization, WMI faculty members and students in a collaborative effort to transform degraded land. The site, once overrun by invasive species like Lantana camara and Black Wattle trees, is being reclaimed through their collective efforts to create a meditation area that aligns with Professor Wangari Maathai's vision.

"The impact you're bringing is a legacy, something we are doing for even other generations that are going to benefit," said Emmaculate Cheptoo, Managing Director at Viva 365 Insurance Brokers. "It's the little thing we do. If that little hummingbird is able to carry small water, we feel like we are contributing meaningfully."

The hummingbird reference echoes one of Wangari Maathai's favourite stories about doing what you can, no matter how small. As Professor Thuita Thenya, Director of the Wangari Maathai Institute, explained during the event, "The story of the hummingbird is that it's a small bird and when the forest is on fire, it's the only one that decides that 'I'm going to put out the fire.' Yet, her beak can only carry a drop of water. But it's not discouraged by what it's actually doing."

Professor Kahonge, Chair of the Department of Computer Science, delivered remarks on behalf of Dean Professor Kerubo, emphasizing WMI's

significance as one of 11 institutes at the University of Nairobi. He highlighted how the institute honours Africa's first woman Nobel laureate and UoN alumni who, despite her high education, chose to work with grassroots women to address environmental degradation. "Her courage has continued to inspire many people across the globe, especially on society transformation ideas like linking governance, human and environmental rights and peace. Our actions must mirror this courage and contribute to society empowerment and outreach services today," he stated, underscoring the importance of strategic partnerships like those with Hearts of Green and Viva Insurance Brokers.

This philosophy underpins the entire restoration project. Viva Insurance has committed to maintaining the adopted site for three years through the Landscape Repair and Transformation project (LANSRET), working in partnership with Hearts of Green and WMI.

The institute itself stands as a testament to Maathai's vision. Conceived by her between 2008 and 2011 before her passing, the institute was designed to embody principles of sustainability, peace and environmental conservation. The building incorporates African colours, natural

lighting, water infiltration systems and natural cooling mechanisms all reflecting Maathai's emphasis on blending tradition with sustainability. Moses Muya, Executive Director of Hearts of Green, emphasized the importance of science-based approaches to conservation. "Previously we were just announcing numbers, we've planted 20,000, 50,000, but when we went back after some time, we find there's none. So, we asked ourselves, yes, we are very aggressive in talking so much, but there's no sense, we were not quoting science."

The partnership with WMI brings academic rigor to their conservation efforts. Together, they are implementing the Landscape Repair and Transformation program to restore degraded areas and create a better world for current and future generations.

The half-acre site adopted by Viva Insurance was originally planned as a meditation area within WMI's 50-acre campus. The restoration involves removing invasive species and planting 20 endangered indigenous tree species, including *Prunus africana*, *Mugumo*, *Teclea nobilis*, *Meru oak* and *Cordia africana*.

Professor Thuita P. Thenya from the Department of Earth & Climate Science further highlighted the persistent challenge posed by invasive species. *Lantana camara*, introduced in the 1950s as an ornamental plant from South Africa, forms dense

thickets that displace native vegetation and is considered one of the most problematic invasive plants in Africa. The Black Wattle tree, introduced in the late 1800s from Australia, competes for nutrients and light, with seeds that can remain viable for over a century. "Viva's commitment to adopt half an acre and maintain it for three years through the LANSRET project is greatly appreciated," noted the Prof. Thenya. "The site will realize its intended objective as a meditation area, contributing to human wellbeing while serving as a demonstration and learning platform."

The Managing Director further affirmed Viva's commitment to sustainability: "We promised to walk the journey. We do not want to do a one-stop solution. We do not just want to dash our ship works in terms of sustainability and we challenge each other with hope that soon we'll set up a program where we can come here and learn something."

The restoration initiative aligns perfectly with one of Wangari Maathai's most quoted statements: "You can make a lot of speeches, but the real thing is when you dig a hole, plant a tree, give it water and make it survive. That's what makes the difference."

Through this partnership between corporate sponsors, environmental organizations and academic institutions, Wangari Maathai's legacy continues to grow, ONE TREE AT A TIME!





## Shanghai University of Electric Power Backs UoN in Developing Micro-Grid for Training Engineers



In collaboration with the Shanghai University of Electric Power (SUEP) officially announced on 22 July 2025 the establishment of a state-of-the-art Smart Micro-Grid following support pledged by the Vice President of SUEP, Professor Fu Yang. The facility will serve as a key training and research infrastructure for students from the Department of Electrical Engineering at UoN.

The collaboration between the University of Nairobi and SUEP, which has spanned over six years, continues to deepen with this milestone. The strategic partnership is designed to foster academic exchange, promote innovative research and strengthen ties between the two institutions.

Vice President of SUEP, Professor Fu Yang emphasized that SUEP is China's only Smart Micro-Grid University and has been recognized as a Ministry of Education Energy Efficiency Leader Demonstration Project. Founded in 1951, SUEP has played a critical role in China's energy sector,

specializing in electric power education and talent development. He further outlined areas of cooperation, including the construction of the micro-grid at UoN, joint research on new energy technologies, co-authored scientific publications, staff participation in global conferences and a proposed tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) involving industry partners.

The visiting delegation was also joined by Mr. Dylan Yu, CEO of Yocean Group and alumnus of SUEP, who pledged his company's support for the initiative. Yocean Group, a Chinese manufacturer of smart transformers and meters for the regional market, committed to collaborating with the two universities in an industry-academia partnership. Mr. Yu further assured that Yocean will provide research collaboration, as well as internship and attachment opportunities for UoN students.

University of Nairobi Vice Chancellor, Professor Margaret J. Hutchinson, welcomed the initiative, noting that it reflects the resilience of universities worldwide and the growing partnership between Kenya and China. She stressed that higher education institutions must play a pivotal role in advancing national and global transformative agendas, highlighting the expected impact of the partnership on energy innovation and academic excellence.

Also present at the event was the Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Professor Mumenya, who expressed optimism about the faculty's readiness for micro-grid development, while appreciating SUEP's technical support. The Shanghai delegation included Professors Xu Xinyan, Xu Qunjie, Tan Kehui and Shurong Wei. Representing UoN were Dr. Omondi, Dr. Njoroge Mwaura, Dr. Nyete and Mr. John O. Orindi

## University of Nairobi Co-Hosts 4th Regional Research Conference on Land and Natural Resources



The University of Nairobi reinforced its national leadership in land governance research and policy dialogue by co-hosting the 4th Regional Research Conference on Land and Natural Resources, held from May 20 to 22, 2025, at the Kenya School of Government. Convened under the theme “Taking Stock of the Land Reform Progress in Kenya,” the conference was organized by the National Land Commission in collaboration with the University of Nairobi, the National Research Fund, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and other esteemed partners. This timely gathering brought together a broad range of stakeholders to assess the progress made since the enactment of the 2010 Constitution and to explore how legal, institutional and policy reforms have transformed Kenya's land sector.

Representing the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Jesang Hutchinson, Dr. Silas Muketha, Associate Dean at the Faculty of the Built Environment, delivered opening remarks that emphasized the University's longstanding commitment to shaping equitable and sustainable land policy. He emphasized that the governance of land is central to Kenya's development priorities ranging from food security and affordable housing to environmental protection and infrastructure growth and urged stakeholders to ask whether the reforms introduced over the last fifteen years have translated into secure tenure, fair access and inclusive governance.

As a co-host, the University's contribution to the conference was both intellectual and practical. Drawing from years of multidisciplinary engagement in Geospatial Engineering, Land Law,

Valuation and Environmental Planning, the University presented critical insights and innovations aimed at improving land administration in Kenya. These contributions were rooted in real-world experience and designed to inform policy and empower communities.

Justice Oscar Angote of the Environment and Land Court emphasized the judiciary's pivotal role in land justice, highlighting key rulings that have reshaped the legal landscape and called for the urgent enactment of pending legislation under Article 68 of the Constitution. National Land Commission (NLC) Commissioner Esther Murugi spoke of the need to convert knowledge into action and to confront persistent challenges such as climate change, unsustainable land use and gender inequality in land access. NLC CEO Kabale Tache Arero commended the strong collaboration among stakeholders and affirmed the importance of evidence-based policy and shared learning.

Throughout the three-day forum, stakeholders engaged deeply on themes including legal frameworks, historical land injustices, community land registration, natural resource management and the use of digital technologies in land services. Cross-cutting discussions on inclusivity, decentralization and dispute resolution mechanisms reflected the complexity of Kenya's land reform journey and the urgent need for cohesive, responsive systems.

The event marked another meaningful step in the University's commitment to shape knowledge, influence policy and advance equity and justice in the country's land reform journey.



## University of Nairobi and Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology University Sign a Collaboration Agreement

In its efforts to increase its strategic partnerships globally, the University of Nairobi, through the Faculty of Business and Management Science, has officially signed a collaboration agreement with RMIT University. The collaboration agreement was signed on Wednesday, 21st May 2025, when Prof. Colin Picker, Deputy Vice Chancellor, College of Business and Law and Vice President, paid a courtesy call on the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Jesang Hutchinson.

During the signing ceremony, Prof. Hutchinson affirmed the partners of the roadmap that the University is on, including the Big 5 Initiatives, increased effort on Research and Innovation and optimizing the global alliances that the UoN is a member of.

The UoN VC also mentioned that the University is on course to achieve a digitally-enabled University that produces the next cadre of cutting-edge graduates that will impact the globe.

The Collaboration agreement will foster joint research projects, capacity building by sharing experiences,

Industry linkages and promotion of international exchanges.

Prof. Colin noted that the implementation of the ideas for collaboration has been set three weeks from signing and pledged to increase the industry connections that the students from the two institutions can work on, share of educational technology space and growth in the existing partnerships.

H.E. Chris Ellinger, Deputy Commissioner, Australian High Commissioner, expressed gratitude on the milestones that Kenya and Australia have made over the past 60 years. He mentioned that there are a lot of Kenyan students pursuing education in higher institutions of learning in Australia and he appreciated the addition and growth of partnership.

Present during the signing of the agreement was the Chair of the Department, Dr. Thomas Ombati, Dr. Stephen Odock and other Faculty of Business and Management Sciences Faculty Members.



## University of Nairobi Kicks Off Emerging Leaders Australian Africa Diplomacy Initiative



exchanges. He further highlighted that nominations for the inaugural fellowship opened on Wednesday, July 2, 2025, with the program set to begin in October 2025. The six-month fellowship will run virtually and will be jointly convened by four AAUN member institutions: the University of Nairobi, Curtin University, the Australian National University and the University of Pretoria.

The University of Nairobi, through its Department of Diplomacy and International Relations, has launched the Emerging Leaders Australian Africa Diplomacy (ELAAD) Program in collaboration with the Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN) on 2 July 2025.

Speaking during the event, the Australian High Commissioner to Kenya, H.E. Jenny Da Rin, commended the University for hosting the launch. She emphasized the importance of member states working together to address global challenges such as food security, artificial intelligence and sustainable development. She noted that partnerships and collective action are crucial in shaping a more resilient and inclusive future.

Prof. David Mickler of Curtin University and AAUN explained that the ELAAD program is a professional development initiative designed to foster stronger ties between Australia and Africa through academic diplomacy. Its key objectives include building a network of emerging leaders, enhancing expert knowledge and skills and generating innovative policy ideas through

In remarks delivered on her behalf by Prof. John Mande, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Human Resource and Administration, the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Margaret Hutchinson, underscored the significance of the program's launch at the University of Nairobi. She described ELAAD as “a beacon of innovation in leadership development, fostering a vital connection between two vibrant regions Australia and Africa. At a time when our world faces unprecedented challenges such as climate change, food insecurity and global health threats, it is imperative that we nurture a generation of leaders who can think critically, act collaboratively and engage diplomatically on the international stage.”

Also present at the launch were Prof. Patrick Maluki, Chair of the Department of Diplomacy and International Studies, Prof. Aldo Stroebe of the University of Mpumalanga, Prof. Chris Isike of the University of Pretoria, Prof. Mathew Neuhaus of the Australian National University and Ms. Grace Musolo, a Kenyan ELAAD fellow, among other distinguished guests.



# UoN Hosts LEAP Job Fair 2025 to Drive Youth Employment and Digital Transformation in Kenya

**T**he Nation/Huawei LEAP Job Fair, a joint initiative by Nation Media Group, Huawei Technologies and the University of Nairobi was running from 8-9 July 2025 at the University of Nairobi Grounds. The event marked a milestone in tackling youth unemployment and strengthening digital skills development in Kenya under the theme “Unlocking Potential, Building Connections.”

More than 1,000 job opportunities were opened to Kenyan youth through 70 Chinese and Kenyan enterprises, reflecting deepening Kenya-China collaboration in industrial growth and inclusive development.

University of Nairobi Vice-Chancellor, Professor Margaret Hutchinson, welcomed Deputy President Kithure Kindiki and thanked Huawei Technologies for partnering with the institution. She praised the LEAP initiative as a symbol of innovation and collaboration, adding that the Huawei ICT Academy trains over 600 students annually in areas such as artificial intelligence, data communication and cloud computing.

Deputy President Kindiki reaffirmed government commitment to creating a conducive environment for both local and foreign enterprises while leveraging technology for employment. He underscored that with more than 60% of Kenya's unemployed being youth, partnerships between the public and private sectors are critical. He cited the Nairobi Expressway as an example of impactful collaboration and warned that lack of training often pushes young people into crime and despair. Huawei Technologies Kenya CEO Gavin Gao assured continued investment in young talent, highlighting the Huawei Management Trainee Program (HMTTP), which has already absorbed 133 graduates as full-time employees. He noted Huawei's broader LEAP initiative (Learn, Engage, Accelerate, Progress) targets equipping over 100,000 Kenyan youth with advanced digital skills in cyber-security, networking, AI and cloud computing by 2026.

Kenya-China Economic and Trade Association (KCETA) President Yu Xiaodong hailed the job fair as a powerful symbol of Kenya-China

cooperation. He emphasized that Chinese enterprises in Kenya employ more than 60,000 locals, with a localization rate of over 90%.

The Nation/Huawei LEAP Job Fair reinforced the importance of skills transfer, employment creation and cross-sector collaboration in empowering Kenya's youthful population and preparing them to lead in the digital economy.



## Empowering Women Through Value Addition: 12 Collectives Graduate from Business Incubation Program



On July 30, 2025, the University of Nairobi Towers at the Main Campus came alive with excitement and purpose as twelve women-led community collectives from nine counties graduated from a business incubation program dedicated to advancing women's entrepreneurship and rural industrialization. The event marked the culmination of a transformative three-year journey that has reshaped how grassroots women engage in enterprise development.

Implemented by the University of Nairobi's African Women Studies Centre (AWSC) under its Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Hub, the program was delivered in collaboration with strategic partners, including the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute (KIRDI), Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE), CRAWN Trust and Sweet and Dried, with technical support from the University's Environmental Biosystems Engineering Department.

The graduating collectives hailed from Kisumu, Busia, Kwale, Kilifi, Kitui, Turkana, Kajiado, Meru and Tharaka-Nithi counties. They included Oltiili Women Dairy Self-Help Group, Maasai Kajiado Women Dairy Cooperative, Ntharene Highway CBO, Futsesezane Women Group, Lunga Crossborder Traders Women Group, Good Neighbors Women Group, Lobur Women Group, Keega Women Group, FireQueens Women Group, Small Fish Patel Women Group, Patanisho Women Group and Good Neighbours Women Group.

Since 2022, these groups have been part of the project "Evaluating What Works for Kenyan Women's Collective/Group Business Models for Upscaling and Creation of 12 Model Cottage Industries for WEE." The initiative assessed how women-focused incubation models contribute to enterprise growth while documenting strategies and advocating for supportive policies.





Anchored on five key pillars: capacity building, access to credit, technology transfer and value addition, market linkages and mentorship. The program enabled participants to transition from selling raw farm produce to processing, packaging and marketing value-added products. Formerly limited to selling bananas, cassava, milk, or fish in their raw form, the groups now produce items such as banana and cassava flour, crisps, yoghurt, cakes, scones, processed fish and cashew nut butter.

One participant, Charity of Keega Women Group in Tharaka-Nithi, highlighted this transformation: "Before the training, we sold raw bananas at throwaway prices. Now, we produce banana crisps and flour that we package and sell to supermarkets and schools."

The graduation ceremony underscored how integrating academic research, technical expertise and private-sector mentorship can catalyse rural enterprises. "Today's graduation is not just a celebration of what these women have learned; it is a bold step toward industrial transformation at the grassroots level," remarked Professor Jackson Maalu, Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance, Planning and Administration, who represented the Vice Chancellor, Professor Margaret Hutchinson. Ingrid Wekesa of KIRDI echoed the sentiment, commending the women for emerging as value chain leaders aligned with Kenya's manufacturing goals.

Professor Jackson Maalu, the Executive Dean of the School of Business at UoN, further praised the AWSC and the WEE Hub under Professor Wanjiku Kabira's leadership, noting that the project not only advanced the University's mission of community

transformation through research but also aligned with Vision 2030 and the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda.

The product showcase at the graduation attracted buyers, investors and policymakers, with several groups already supplying institutional markets and export aggregators. Others, such as cross-border traders, are exporting processed fish to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Chief Guest Susan Mang'eni, Principal Secretary for the State Department of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, applauded the women's achievements: "These graduating women entrepreneurs are not just creating businesses, they are adding value to our rural economies and feeding Kenya with dignity." She pledged government support for the next phase of incubation and assured funding to strengthen the enterprises.

The event concluded with an awards ceremony recognizing excellence in product innovation, sustainability and community impact. Each group received a certificate jointly awarded by the University of Nairobi, KIRDI and KIE.

In her closing remarks, Professor Wanjiku Kabira, Associate Professor of Literature, reaffirmed AWSC's commitment to scaling the initiative with government support and extending the benefits to more women across the country. The graduating entrepreneurs pledged to mentor peers, expand inter-county networks and continue building resilient, value-driven businesses. "We are no longer just producers. We are processors, brand owners and change-makers," affirmed Florence Atieno, Chair of the Busia Cross Border Women Traders SACCO.



*A globally competitive  
University transforming society.*

## University of Nairobi Partners with KCB and Peers in Joint MoU to Boost Innovation

The University of Nairobi joined fellow institutions of higher learning in a strategic partnership with KCB Bank Kenya following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on August 7, 2025, at the Sarova Stanley Hotel. The agreement, which brought together both public and private universities, seeks to strengthen support for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) within the university ecosystem while advancing institutional financial sustainability.

The ceremony was graced by the Principal Secretary for Higher Education and Research, Dr. Beatrice Inyangala and the Managing Director of KCB Bank Kenya, Mrs. Anastacia Kimtai. Representing the University of Nairobi was the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Margaret Hutchinson, who joined fellow Vice Chancellors from across the country. The MoU was co-signed by Prof. Henry Mugendi, Vice Chancellor of Embu University, on behalf of public universities and Prof. Henry Kiplagat, Vice Chancellor of Kabarak University, on behalf of private universities.

As a premier institution of higher learning and research, the University of Nairobi stands to benefit significantly from the collaboration. The partnership will expand opportunities for student-

and staff-led MSMEs, strengthen entrepreneurship training and embed innovation and enterprise development as central to the University's transformation agenda.

Speaking at the event, Mrs. Kimtai described the signing as the beginning of a long-term journey. "This is the beginning of a journey to build a stronger education ecosystem. Our partnership with universities will support MSMEs, create sustainable impact and nurture the next generation of business leaders," she remarked.

Principal Secretary Dr. Inyangala lauded the initiative as a benchmark for impactful public-private partnerships. "This is more than just a banking package. It is a holistic solution that will help universities achieve financial sustainability while empowering students and faculty to drive innovation. The government is ready to walk this journey with you," she affirmed.

The University of Nairobi has consistently championed innovation and enterprise through its Innovation and Incubation Hub, the Nairobi Innovation Week and incubation initiatives such as those under the Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) Hub. The MoU now creates new avenues for access to tailored financial solutions, credit facilities and business support, further enabling the

commercialization of research outputs and the growth of university enterprises.

Through this collaboration, university start-ups will gain increased access to financing, financial literacy programs will be expanded among students and universities will be positioned on a path of long-term sustainability. The University of Nairobi will continue to work closely with KCB Bank Kenya and partner institutions to ensure the effective implementation of the MoU, in alignment with its mission to transform society through education, innovation and enterprise.





# University of Nairobi Unveils KATIC at Upper Kabete Campus in Partnership with Elgon Kenya



**O**n Thursday, August 14, 2025, the University of Nairobi (UoN), in partnership with Elgon Kenya, officially launched the Kantaria Agricultural Technology and Innovation Centre (KATIC) at the Upper Kabete Campus. The Kshs. 80 million facility marks a major milestone in industry-academia collaboration, creating a hub where research, innovation and community engagement converge to advance agricultural transformation.

The launch ceremony was presided over by Her Excellency Mama Rachel Ruto, First Lady of the Republic of Kenya and attended by farmers, students, government representatives and industry leaders.

In her keynote address, the First Lady hailed the partnership between Elgon Kenya and UoN as a visionary step toward youth empowerment and national food security:

"KATIC is our answer. A place where knowledge

meets the soil, where farmers test solutions and where youth and women are empowered to turn ideas into lucrative ventures. Through training, internships and incubation programmes, KATIC will open new pathways for prosperity, productivity and entrepreneurship."

She further situated the initiative within the government's Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), which places agriculture at the centre of improving livelihoods and strengthening the economy. She underscored KATIC's hub-and-spoke model with the hub anchored at UoN to drive research and innovation and the spokes extending to TVET institutions, Ministry of Agriculture centres and community platforms to deliver solutions directly to farmers, schools and markets.

Hon. Salim Mvurya, Cabinet Secretary for Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports, emphasized the urgent need to attract young people to agriculture:

"For the longest time, youth in Kenya have not been interested in agriculture. It is about time we engage them through the latest innovations and create an enabling environment for them to participate in food security initiatives."

Similar sentiments were echoed by Dr. Paul Ronoh, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development, who called agriculture the key to national transformation:

"Investing in agriculture, innovating within it and bringing in youth and women will transform this country in a big way. I commend the University for taking up this leadership role and championing initiatives with such transformative impact."

From the education sector, Dr. Esther Muoria, PS in the Ministry of Education's State Department for TVET, highlighted the importance of linking training to industry:

"This is a milestone in agricultural training. We must move beyond internships and attachments to embrace training with industry, ensuring that students gain practical skills directly relevant to the agricultural sector."

Representing Elgon Kenya, Dr. Bimal Kantaria, Managing Director, shared the inspiration behind KATIC, framing it as both a personal legacy and a national resource:

"This centre is dedicated to sharpening the skills of

UoN students while honouring the legacy of my family. Elgon Kenya has worked for generations to strengthen agriculture in Kenya and KATIC is our way of building capacity for the future."

Prof. Chacha Nyaigoti Chacha, Chair of UoN Council, welcomed the guests and reaffirmed the centre's broader mission:

"KATIC is not only a hub for educating and training youth in agricultural technologies and innovations but also a conduit for empowering farmers through targeted demonstrations. As a public university, we will leverage this centre to address unemployment, boost food security and generate revenue through agribusiness value chains."

Beyond speeches, the event featured an exhibition of agricultural innovations, the unveiling of the KATIC plaque and the planting of a commemorative tree by the First Lady.

KATIC stands as a model of successful industry-academia collaboration, designed to strengthen agricultural productivity, enhance food security and nurture entrepreneurship across Kenya and the region. By bridging theory and practice, it promises to transform not only how agriculture is taught but also how it is practiced; linking research, policy and community needs into a unified framework for sustainable development.

## Students from Marian University, Indianapolis to learn about Kenyan Culture

In June The University hosted students and staff from Marian University, USA, for a 10-day international exchange programme (June 2–10) centered on Kiswahili language and Swahili culture. The visitors engaged in Kiswahili lessons and lectures on Kenyan history, public health, education systems, and social work, alongside immersive shadowing experiences. This vibrant exchange strengthened cultural understanding, enriched academic perspectives, and showcased the power of global collaboration in higher education.





## UoN Faculty of Law Boosted with FAO Digital Equipment for Flagship Land Governance Project

On August 11, 2025, the Faculty of Law at the University of Nairobi (UoN) marked a significant milestone as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) formally handed over digital equipment to support the flagship project, "Fostering Thought Leadership and Evidence-Led Research for Sustainable Land Governance in Kenya." The handover represents the deepening collaboration between international organizations and Kenyan academic institutions in addressing the country's pressing land governance challenges.

The donation is part of the wider EU-FAO Digital Land Governance Programme, a five-year initiative co-financed by the European Union in Kenya. Implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development, the National Land Commission and the Council of Governors-Kenya, the programme seeks to strengthen food and nutrition security, improve livelihoods and promote sustainable development. Its objectives are aligned with Kenya's Vision 2030, with a central focus on ensuring equitable and secure land access and management.

The equipment package includes three laptops, a digital learning screen, a projector, a public address system and a camera. These resources are expected to transform both teaching and research,

enabling faculty and students to engage with complex land governance issues using modern technological tools.

Placing the initiative within a global context, Dr. Nyabenyi Tipo, FAO Country Representative, observed that the equipment allows the University to align with international trends in technology and innovation, noting its importance in expanding research capacity across multiple fields from demographic analysis to laboratory-based investigations making it a critical driver of Kenya's broader development agenda.

Representing the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Jackson Maalu, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Finance, Planning and Development, described the handover as an investment in human capital and societal transformation. He reiterated that while land remains central to Kenya's economy, culture and social fabric, it continues to present challenges around ownership, access and conflict resolution issues this partnership is determined to address.

Prof. Winifred Kamau, Dean of the Faculty of Law, highlighted the programme's achievements to date, including three brown-bag symposia, a joint conference with the Law Society of Kenya, a research fair and a public lecture in honour of Professor Okoth-Ogendo. She further noted the establishment of a dedicated think tank focused on advancing research and policy in land

administration, land use planning and dispute resolution. Ultimately, the collaboration demonstrates how international partnerships can catalyse sustainable development by connecting academic research with policy and practice. With a foundation now laid for long-term impact, the initiative is poised to influence not only Kenya's land governance landscape but also regional and global conversations on sustainable land management.



## UoN Forges Strategic Partnership with University of Hargeisa to Advance Nursing and Midwifery

The University of Nairobi (UoN) and the University of Hargeisa (UoH) entered into a pioneering partnership that set to reshape nursing and midwifery training in East Africa. Through a five-day curriculum development workshop held between 11th and 15th August 2025, the two institutions unveiled a suite of new postgraduate programs under the UK-funded Global Health Workforce Programme. The initiative is particularly historic for Somaliland, where these programs represent the very first of their kind.

Leading the effort, Prof. Emmah K. Matheka, Chair of UoN's Department of Nursing and Midwifery, emphasized the power of regional alliances in addressing healthcare challenges. She described the collaboration as evidence that collective action can significantly strengthen healthcare systems across borders.

During the workshop, experts from both universities co-created five new academic pathways, designed to bridge existing gaps in health service delivery:

- Bachelor of Science in Nursing Informatics
- Postgraduate Diploma in Uro-nephrology
- Master of Science in Uro-fellowship Nursing
- Master of Science in Nephrology Nursing
- Master of Science in Nursing

The programs are tailored to meet urgent healthcare demands in Kenya and the Horn of Africa, particularly in areas such as maternal and

child health, emergency response and critical care. In his keynote address, Prof. Francis Mulaa, UoN's Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise, framed the initiative as more than just an institutional agreement. "This partnership embodies a shared vision for a healthier Horn of Africa. The professionals we train will be at the forefront of reducing maternal and infant mortality, confronting public health threats and delivering compassionate, high-quality care," he said.

Echoing this sentiment, Prof. Peter Mungai Ngugi, Director of the East Africa Kidney Institute, highlighted the launch of the postgraduate diploma in uro-nephrology as a milestone. He noted that elevating nurses into advanced specializations is essential in ensuring they are accorded the same professional respect as doctors.

Curriculum development discussions also underscored the importance of aligning programs with national health goals. Dr. Ruth Maithya stressed the need to ground the curricula in public health priorities and professional standards, while Dr. Norbert advocated for embedding clinical practice into Nursing Informatics to enhance decision-making through technology.

This five-way collaboration involving UoN, UoH, the Somaliland Ministry of Health and Development, academic faculty and UK partners sets the foundation for building a stronger, more sustainable healthcare workforce for the entire region.







*Professor Margret J. Hutchinson at the announcement of the establishment of A Smart Micro- Grid at the University of Nairobi department of electrical Engineering*



*Attendees at the workshop on AI in Education and Science.*



*"Talanta Bila Uraibu" Campus Soccer Tournament*



Members of Wangari Maathai Institute (WMI), Hearts of Green and Pioneer Insurance at the SEKU Landscape Repair and Transformation Program launch.



The delegation at the 4th Regional Research Conference co-hosted by UoN.



University of Nairobi and RMIT University Sign a Collaboration Agreement. Prof. Colin Picker, Deputy Vice Chancellor, College of Business and Law, and Vice President, paid a courtesy call to the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Jesang Hutchinson.



## University of Nairobi Annual Staff Recognition Awards



**T**he University of Nairobi celebrated its staff at the Annual Staff Recognition Awards ceremony on Monday, February 10, 2025, in a warm gathering that honoured excellence across the institution. The mood was proud and grateful as colleagues applauded one another's achievements and reflected on the year's progress. At the heart of the celebrations was the recognition of top-performing units: the Information, Communication and Technology Centre (ICT), the Directorate of Internal Audit and the Directorate of Corporate Affairs were named the three best central performing units/directorates. The Department of Food Science was singled out as the best overall performer in the Performance Contract results for 2023/2024, a testament to focused teamwork and sustained commitment.

Individual achievements also shone. The three researchers recognised as the best were Prof. Daniel Olago, Prof. Walter Jaoko and Prof. Salome Bukachi. The Best Lecturers of the Year were Prof. Loise Wambui Gichuhi from the Faculty of Education, Dr. Sammy Mulei Musyoka from the Faculty of Engineering and Prof. Dalton Wamalwa from the Faculty of Health Sciences each

applauded for their dedication to teaching and mentorship.

In line with the Strategic Plan 2023–2027, the Vice-Chancellor introduced special award categories that celebrated innovation, global reach, resource mobilisation, industry ties and core values. Under Innovation and Creativity, Prof. Sylvia Opanga, a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Pharmacy, Prof. Lilac Osanjo, an Associate Professor in the Department of Art and Design, and Prof. Peter Odero Akuon, a Senior Lecturer and Researcher in the Department of Electrical and Information Engineering were recognised for their imaginative approaches. Prof. Loice Ombajo from the Faculty of Health Sciences received the Global Recognition award. The Department of Advancement and Institutional Development was acknowledged for Resource Mobilization in Infrastructure. Contributions to Industry–Academia Linkage were honoured in Prof. Wang, Director of the Confucius Institute; Prof. Marc Zolver, a visiting professor from France; Dr. Fred Bukachi, Director at ARUA; and Dr. Ann Kamanu, Deputy Director at ARUA. Gladys Chepkorir from the Vice-Chancellor's office was celebrated under Core Values for her steadfast

service.

Presenting the awards, Prof. Amukowa Anangwe, Chair of the University Council, spoke candidly about institutional challenges, noting concerns over declining student enrolment and reduced research output. He stressed the value of the Performance Contracting process in helping the university respond to these obstacles, saying, "The Council has noted with concern that the university's productivity is on a downward trend. Performance management tools like Performance Contracts are critical in enhancing productivity, improving our ranking and restoring our reputation."

Acting Vice-Chancellor Prof. Jesang Hutchinson took the podium to celebrate the staff's contributions and to encourage continued effort. She reminded the gathering that the ceremony was not just about handing out awards but about honouring a spirit of dedication, collaboration and excellence that defined the University of Nairobi: "Today, we are here not just to issue awards but to celebrate the spirit of dedication, collaboration and excellence that defines the University of Nairobi." She added words of congratulations on behalf of the Chancellor and noted a marked improvement in performance evaluation compared with 2022/2023, when only four units

achieved an "Excellent" grade: "This marks a significant improvement compared to the 2022/2023 performance where only four units achieved the 'Excellent' grade."

Chief Operations Officer Mr. Brian Ouma reviewed the year's achievements through a gender lens and announced that more women than men had been recognised a point of pride for the institution. He emphasised that the awards represented collective effort rather than individual triumphs, inviting everyone to reflect on the year's gains: "As we gather together on this historic occasion, it is fitting to reflect upon the previous year and all the wonderful things it brought our way. Collectively, we continued to enhance the stature of the university through demonstrated academic excellence, exciting research and meaningful community engagement."

The ceremony closed on a celebratory note as awards were distributed to the winners. Their achievements stood as a bright reflection of the university's commitment to excellence, research, innovation and community outreach and the event served as a heartfelt reminder of the power of collaboration and the university's continued pursuit of greatness in every sphere of its activity.





# Cynthia Wamukota: Designing Cities for People and the Planet



From her days at the University of Nairobi, where she earned both her Bachelor's in Urban and Regional Planning and her Master's in Sustainable and Regional Development, Cynthia Wamukota has been driven by a vision: cities that are inclusive, just and sustainable. That passion took her all the

way to the University of Oxford, where she pursued a Master of Public Policy (MPP). Today, Cynthia is making her mark on the global stage. She is part of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), contributing to the Special Report on Climate Change and Cities under the Seventh Assessment Report (AR7). Beyond this, she lends her expertise in Abu Dhabi with Green Sustainable Transport, shaping forward-looking, people-centred public transport strategies.

Her work has not gone unnoticed. Recently recognized and profiled by Oxford, Cynthia spoke of her commitment to channelling global knowledge back home to Kenya, where she continues to champion equitable and sustainable urban development. Among her academic contributions is a thought-provoking paper, Unintended socio-economic transformations associated with large-scale renewable energy projects: the case of Menengai Geothermal Project in Kenya. Cynthia's journey reflects not only her academic brilliance but also her dedication to building cities and futures that work for everyone.



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**Time:** 8:00 am - 1:00pm  
**Distance:** 10 KM  
**Venue:** Chancellor's Court,  
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## Leading the Fight: Dr. Ombajo's Global Impact on HIV Care

**D**r. Loice Ombajo, a distinguished expert in Infectious Disease and senior lecturer in Internal Medicine at the University of Nairobi, continues to make her mark on the global stage. As Co-Founder and Co-Director of the Centre for Epidemiological Modelling and Analysis (CEMA), her work has been at the heart of shaping policy and practice in HIV care.

In 2023, she was honoured by the World Health Organization for her groundbreaking contributions to the management of HIV, particularly her research on second-line antiretroviral therapy. Her evidence-based work

has influenced publications, informed USAID guidelines, shaped Ministry of Health directives and guided the British HIV Association underscoring the global impact of her expertise.

This year, Dr. Ombajo has also co-authored eight papers, including Approaches to the Management of Virologic Failure on Dolutegravir-Based Antiretroviral Therapy in the 50 Countries with the Highest Adult HIV Prevalence and the SONIA Trial a pragmatic randomized controlled study evaluating corticosteroids in the treatment of pneumonia in Kenyan hospitals.





# 20 Years of Impact:

## UONAA Celebrates a Milestone Anniversary

**T**he University of Nairobi Alumni Association (UONAA) marked its 20th anniversary with pomp, colour and an undeniable sense of pride. The evening brought together generations of alumni, university leadership and key partners to celebrate two decades of achievements while setting a bold vision for the future. More than just a commemoration, it was a moment to honour a legacy of connection, service and transformation. Founded in 2004 under the leadership of the late Prof. David Wasawo, UONAA has grown into one of the University's most vital pillars linking graduates across the world, supporting current students and enhancing institutional growth.

Speaking on behalf of the Chair, Council Member Sally reflected on UONAA's remarkable journey. He noted that what began as a bold idea had blossomed into a vibrant association of professionals, innovators and leaders whose impact extends far beyond the university gates. From a strong presence at graduation ceremonies to contributions at the Nairobi International Trade Fair and Innovation Week and from scholarships to mentorship, alumni continue to demonstrate what partnership looks like in action. "Tonight, we do not just celebrate an institution we celebrate you. Your impact is not just in what you've given, but in what you've inspired. The University of Nairobi is stronger because of you," he affirmed.

Prof. Margaret Hutchinson, the Vice Chancellor, highlighted the University's journey of

transformation against a backdrop of shifting educational landscapes and national demographics. She pointed to innovations such as the UoN Innovation Park and the Nairobi School of AI as symbols of the University's forward-looking vision. "Through resilience and the support of our alumni, we have been able to sustain progress despite challenges," she said, underscoring the shared responsibility in shaping the University's future.

Prof. Nicholas Letting, a proud alumnus, captured the mood of the evening with a heartfelt challenge to fellow graduates. He reminded them that across the world, alumni are the lifeblood of institutions, powering scholarships, research and infrastructure. "Many of us disappear after graduation and are never heard from again," he said. "It is time we embrace a culture of giving back." He urged alumni to contribute not just financially, but also through mentorship, career opportunities and advocacy that strengthens the University's global standing.

The evening shone a spotlight on initiatives such as the UONAA Annual Alumni Walk, which supports more than 5,000 needy students and the Scholarship Fund, which has already disbursed over KES 29 million.

As UONAA steps into its next 20 years, the celebrations served as a reminder that alumni are more than just former students, they are lifelong partners in building the legacy of the University of Nairobi.



# Breaking the Stereotype: Deconstructing the Myth of the Mad Genius



Beyond decolonization, he argued, African literature serves as entertainment, a source of empathy and a tool for resilience, offering hope and resistance in times of oppression while opening readers to new perspectives.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Margaret Hutchinson praised Prof. Wasamba's dedication and scholarship, noting how his research challenges long-held misconceptions about creativity and mental health while affirming literature's power to reshape narratives and inspire inclusion. Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Prof. Ayubu Gitau, echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the importance of inaugural lectures in bringing scholarly insights to both academia and the wider public.

**O**n March 29th, the University of Nairobi celebrated a remarkable academic milestone with the 51st inaugural lecture, delivered by Prof. Peter Anyanga O. Wasamba at Taifa Hall. Recently elevated to full professorship, Prof. Wasamba presented his groundbreaking research titled *We Are Not Mentally Ill: Deconstructing the 'Mad Genius' Trope in Literature*, an exploration of how literature shapes societal values, beliefs and intellectual discourse. In his lecture, Prof. Wasamba examined the enduring idea of the “mad genius” and how literature has often reinforced or challenged such perceptions. He highlighted how literary works, when misinterpreted, risk perpetuating stereotypes recalling a student's misunderstanding of *Things Fall Apart* as a telling example. He drew on the works of Achebe, Trotsky, Gorky and Shakespeare, who each regarded literature as a medium for education, social change and humanistic inquiry.

Prof. Wasamba also traced the “mad genius” trope back to philosophy, exploring the intersections between literature and philosophical thought. He revisited Plato's *Republic*, where poetic excellence was linked to madness: “The poet in the throes of creation is mad” (Plato, quoted in Kessel, 1989). Plato's unease with tragic plays by Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus lay in their ability to stir deep emotions fear, pity, even the tears of kings as in *King Oedipus*, where fate overpowers reason. To Plato, this capacity to move audiences raised concerns about manipulation, imitation and moral corruption.

Prof. Wasamba's lecture illuminated how literature, far from being a passive art, challenges assumptions, confronts societal norms and redefines cultural narratives especially around mental health and the myth of genius in creative expression.



# Humanizing Fiscal Law:

Prof. Attiya Waris's Inaugural Lecture and Global Vision Unveiled



**O**n June 3, the University of Nairobi celebrated a landmark moment: Professor Attiya Waris the youngest academic ever to deliver an inaugural lecture at the institution took center stage at Taifa Hall. As the United Nations Independent Expert on Foreign Debt, International Financial Obligations and Human Rights, Prof. Waris delivered a lecture titled "Navigating the Nexus: Exploring a Multifaceted Discourse on International and Domestic Economic Justice by Humanizing Fiscal Law and Policy."

Her address was both deeply personal and profoundly intellectual. She began by revisiting childhood memories of financial insecurity recalling how curtains were used to obscure poverty as a powerful metaphor for the structural inequalities that societies too often conceal. Those formative experiences posed enduring questions: Where does money come from? Who controls it? And crucially, who benefits or is excluded from the financial systems that shape our lives from birth onward?

Prof. Waris challenged her audience to see fiscal

systems not as impersonal mechanisms, but as deeply human constructs with life-altering implications. She illustrated this by overlaying the human lifecycle onto the tax and debt lifecycles. Even newborns, she explained, can become taxpayers through VAT on baby formula or diapers and in some countries, infants are born into debt through hospital bills.

Her message escalated to a searing critique of global financial systems: tax treaties, illicit financial flows and sovereign debt frameworks were often designed without meaningful input from developing countries, perpetuating inequality and limiting their ability to invest in citizens. With clarity and conviction, she declared, "Rights require resources and resources require rights."

She went on to deliver a chilling image that grounded fiscal policy in moral terms: "There is blood on the budget line." It was a reminder that budget choices fund not only essential services like hospitals and schools but also war and oppression unless they are guided by justice, not mere efficiency.

Prof. Waris also traced the cultural roots shaping financial law, contrasting British common law's reputation for dispassionate efficiency with the philosophy of North African thinker Ibn Khaldun, who centered justice and public welfare. She urged that indigenous knowledge systems be woven into modern fiscal discourse so justice, not efficiency alone, defines financial systems.

The launch included the creation of a Commission on Financing Development, tasked with building the conceptual and institutional foundations for the HFW marking the transition from theoretical critique to concrete institutional innovation.

Through HFW and her lecture, Prof. Waris's academic and global policymaking roles become deeply intertwined: one grounds justice in narrative; the other builds institutions that can carry it forward.

## UoN UNSA elections 2025



The UoN held its annual UNSA elections with Derrick Troy Rusana Odhiambo, a 4th Year BSC Electrical and Electronics Engineering student, becoming the newly elected University of Nairobi Students Association (UNSA) 2025/2026 President. Derrick is the chair of Team Fresh Perspectives, whose members are Vice-Chair, Purity Mwendwa Mutua, Secretary General, Elisha Wasike, Treasurer, Julia Wasi, Sports Welfare, Erick Muturi, PWD Representative, Collins Cheruiyot and International Representative, Sarah Tabahola.

The New Student Leaders were sworn in the historical Taifa Hall on Friday, April 25, 2025 in the presence of University Management and the Student Community.

The electoral process was plagued by Court Cases, as revealed by the Chair of the Commission, Dr. Kenneth Ombongi in his speech at the Swearing-in Ceremony, 'What we had envisioned as a 30-day process extended to 52 days—nearly two months. We found ourselves navigating not just logistics, but litigation. Six court cases—three in Nairobi and three in the far-flung High Court of Siaya. Some may ask, "Why Siaya and not my home town of Kisii, Kisumu, or even Kiambu, a stone's throw away?" Perhaps history will answer that in time. What matters is that when we were called to defend our decisions, we did so with the courage of our convictions and the clarity of the Constitution.'

On her part, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Jesang

Hutchinson congratulated all the student teams that won and called them into a responsible leadership, she invited the student leaders to work closely with management to address issues that are affecting the UoN student population and especially, on the critical issue of mental health, 'To our newly elected leaders: the time for campaigns is over. The time for action is now. The University Management stands ready to work with you, as partners, not opponents, in addressing the needs of our students. We encourage regular engagement, structured dialogue, and a spirit of mutual respect. Together, we can make tangible progress on issues such as

access to learning resources, campus infrastructure, student welfare, and inclusive development. I would also like to address an issue that is becoming increasingly urgent within our university community: mental health.'

Prof. Hutchinson also congratulated the Independent Electoral Commission, led by Dr. Ombongi, 'you rose to the occasion and conducted yourselves with professionalism, impartiality, and integrity. We thank you for your tireless dedication to ensuring a free, fair, and credible electoral process. You have set a strong precedent for the future.'

There was election in 6 electoral colleges and 7 teams won uncontested. There was a decrease in voter turnout from 45% to 30%, The Chair of commission highlighted, 'At Kenya Science Campus, turnout reached an inspiring 73.7%. At the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, 60.8%. And while some areas—like Arts & Social Sciences (21%) and Business & Management Science (24.6%)—lagged behind, these contrasts offer us insight and opportunity.

We saw progress in representation—nine students with disabilities elected, ten international students taking leadership, and for the first time, a female student elected Chairperson in Kisumu Campus. These are not just victories—they are symbols of what is possible when equity and inclusion are more than slogans, but standards.'



## UoN Students' *Journey Uncharted* wins best documentary at Filamu International Student film festival

**T**he *Journey Uncharted* team from the University of Nairobi shone brightly at the 5th Filamu International Student Film Festival, hosted at Multimedia University. The team had submitted two compelling documentaries, *Hope in the Dumps* and *Grogon Garage* for consideration. Both were shortlisted and screened alongside other remarkable university students' productions such as *The Mystery River*, *Dragon Fruit*, *Narco Incorporated*, and *Initiator*. But *Hope in the Dumps* stood out, earning the prestigious title of Best Documentary of the Year.

Produced and edited by third-year journalism student Anastacia Kiragu, the documentary offers a deeply moving exploration of life within the Dandora dumpsite. It captures the harsh realities faced by residents living in one of Nairobi's largest wastes disposal areas, yet brings to light the strength, hope, and humanity that thrive amidst adversity.

Anastacia, reflecting on the experience, said, "Hope in the Dumps stood out because it reflected the experience, livelihood, and resilience of the community in the dumpsite from young to old. It's simply a story of hope in despair." Her passion for using storytelling as a tool for social impact was evident in every frame.

Assistant producer and scriptwriter Tyberius Barasa echoed this sentiment, stating, "The episode won because the message was clear. The story displayed a real struggle. We even struggled shooting it since it was in the midst of the Dandora dumpsite. But that rawness made it authentic."

Sarah Cindy, who handled research and reporting alongside Whitney Lubidu and Nelius Wangu, added, "Super happy is an understatement. The work we put into it was so invested. The sound was good, the editing was well done, it had human interest, it intrigued emotions and the documentary deserved to win."

Behind the scenes, Robert Otiebo worked as the camera person, while John Gavin and Georgina Mwikali brought the visuals and sound to life. The intro graphics were created

by John Chacha, adding a polished opening to the powerful narrative.

The documentary was praised not only for its emotional storytelling but also for its technical finesse from the smooth cinematography to the impactful sound design and thoughtful editing. The team went beyond just filming a story; they immersed themselves in the lives of their subjects, building trust and capturing voices that are often unheard. Their work is a shining example of what happens when journalism, empathy, and creativity converge.

This victory is a celebration of bold storytelling, a recognition of student excellence, and a powerful reminder that the voices from the margins matter. It shows the University of Nairobi's growing footprint in media and film, and sets a new standard for student productions in Kenya and beyond. As the *Journey Uncharted* team looks ahead, their win is not the end, but the beginning of a bigger journey, one that promises to keep telling real, raw, and revolutionary stories.



## UoN Dynamites detonates storms in 52-36 Premier League Victory

**O**n the 29th April 2025 at the Nyayo Gymnasium in Nairobi, The UoN Dynamites delivered a commanding performance in the KBF Premier League, blowing away the Storms with a 52-36 win.

From the tip-off, it was clear the Dynamites were not just playing for points; they were playing for pride, momentum, and a statement to the rest of the league. In front of a crowd dotted with university students, alumni, and basketball fans from across the city, the Dynamites showcased a blend of raw energy and polished execution that left their opponents struggling to keep pace.

The opening quarter set the tone. UoN's guards pressed high, disrupting Storms' ball movement and forcing multiple turnovers. The Dynamites capitalized with quick transitions, finishing with layups and sharp mid-range shots. By the end of the first period, they had carved out a comfortable lead that only grew as the game progressed.

Their defensive discipline was equally impressive. Every Storms' possession seemed to run into a wall of navy blue jerseys, with the Dynamites collapsing quickly into the paint and shutting down any attempt at inside scoring. When the Storms tried to find relief from beyond the arc, the Dynamites' wings closed out hard, contesting every shot.

The Storms, one of the league's experienced teams, came into the match with hopes of steadying their season, but the Dynamites' relentlessness left them playing catch-up all evening.

By halftime, UoN had stretched the lead into double digits. The gym roared as the Dynamites' fast-paced attack continued into the third quarter, where they effectively put the game out of reach. A series of back-to-back baskets off steals electrified the crowd, with fans leaping to their feet as the team sealed their dominance.

In the fourth quarter, the Dynamites slowed down their tempo, but the damage was already done. The Storms fought bravely to close the gap, but their shots continued to rim out, leaving UoN firmly in control until the final buzzer.

When the horn sounded, the scoreboard read 52-36 and the Dynamites celebrated at midcourt. Their chants of victory filled the gym, with teammates embracing each other after what was arguably their most decisive win of the season.

For the Dynamites, this was more than just another league victory. It was a declaration of intent. Too often seen as underdogs in the KBF Premier League, the UoN side showed that they have the talent, discipline, and chemistry to challenge the traditional giants of Kenyan women's basketball.







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