

Launch of the Chinese Confucius Institute

The Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi was recently launched in a colourful ceremony attended by high ranking officials from the Chinese and Kenya governments as well as staff and students from the University of Nairobi.

Dr. Kilemi Mwiria, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Education represented the Kenya government. The Chinese side was represented by the Chinese Ambassador to Kenya, Mr. Guo Chongli. The President of Tianjin Normal University, Prof. Ji Run Chen and Miss Xu Lin, Director of China National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language led the delegation from China. The University of Nairobi Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha and the entire University Management were in attendance.

During the launch, there were performances by the University Choir, "I Choose Life" (a students Aids awareness group) and the first Chinese Language class which presented a song in authentic Chinese.

The Institute was established following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of



Assistant Minister for Education, Hon. Kilemi Mwiria and the Chinese Ambassador to Kenya H.E. Guo Chongli, officially launch the Confucius Institute.

Kenya and the Chinese government on the Establishment of a Confucius Unit at the University of Nairobi in June 2004. The Confucius Institute is the first of its kind to be established in Africa by the China National Office for Teaching of Chinese as a Foreign Language.

Currently the Institute offers a certificate course but will soon be able to offer diploma and degree courses. It is proving to be quite popular with Kenyan

students interested in learning Chinese Language and culture. One of our students from the Institute, Ruth Njeri, was awarded a scholarship for five years to study Chinese Language at the Tianjin Normal University in China.

The Chinese government attaches a lot of importance to the establishment of the Confucius Institute at the University of Nairobi. Indeed the Chinese President, Hu Jintao, himself created time to meet the students and staff of the Institute during his recent visit to Kenya. The Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha, and the Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Isaac Mbeche, also attended a Confucius Institute Conference in Beijing at the invitation of the Office of Chinese Language Council International (Hanban) in early July 2006.

The establishment of the Institute is in line with the University's strategy of strengthening links with other institutions of higher learning and will contribute towards making the University of Nairobi a truly world-class university.



Prof. G.A.O. Magoha handing over a gift to the Chinese Ambassador, H.E. Guo Chongli.