

UoN looks to developing sign language curricula



(Left) Prof. Michael Ndurumo, Department of Psychology, Ms. Yamamoto Minako, JICA and a JFD representative.

The University of Nairobi (UoN) has entered into talks with the Kenya National Association of the Deaf (KNAD) and the Japanese Federation of the Deaf (JFD) through Japan Co-operation Agency (JICA) on the possibility of incorporating the Kenyan Sign Language into the academic curricula.

The Kenyan Sign Language is the third official language in Kenya as enshrined in the Constitution.

In a meeting between the three parties, it was agreed that an institutionalized Kenyan Sign Language programme will be developed and offered by the University. The main objective of the programme is to increase the number of professional interpreters in the country as well as conduct research on sign language recognition and the challenges facing the deaf in the society.

Presiding over the meeting on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, [Academic Affairs](#), Prof. Henry Mutoro, welcomed the initiative which will address equity concerns and policy development and implementation in the communication process between the hearing and the deaf.

The University has interpreting facilities for hearing impaired students and training on sign language for staff members have been conducted. In addition, the University has a team led by Prof. Okoth Okombo working with partners on research and training on sign language.

Mr. Nickson Kakiri, Chairman, KNAD, said that the Association and JFD are in the process of entering into a joint collaboration to undertake research in efforts to standardize Kenyan Sign Language using the Standardization Model. He noted that with a sign language curriculum in

place, interested Kenyans will have an opportunity to pursue courses in sign language and train others thus building a sign language profession in the country.

Present during the meeting was Prof. Enos Njeru, Principal, [College of Humanities and Social Sciences](#), Dr. Rayya Timammy, Acting Dean, [Faculty of Arts](#), Prof. Peter Wasamba, Associate Dean, Faculty of Arts, Prof. Okoth Okombo, Department of Linguistics, Prof. Michael Ndurumo, [Department of Psychology](#) and Ms. Yamamoto Minako, JICA representative.