

Prominent Scholars Give Insights At The PACE HIV Symposium



Prof. Robert Gallo receives a gift from Prof. George Magoha, Vice-Chancellor, UoN.

The Partnership for Advanced Clinical Education (PACE) project held the first HIV symposium at the College of Health Sciences, University of Nairobi (UoN).

The two-day symposium featured prominent scholars among them Prof. Robert Gallo, who is known for his role in the discovery of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), the infectious agent responsible for AIDS and is currently working on a vaccine. He is the Director of the Institute of Human Virology at the University of Maryland Baltimore.

Prof. Gallo made a presentation on viruses and epidemics with special emphasis on HIV-AIDS. He also pointed out some lessons from the past and prospects for control. He said that technologically, the world was prepared to deal with HIV but was lacking in attitudes, awareness and availability of responsible and qualified basic medical virologists. However with time, this is changing. There has been increased awareness of global health needs, funding and emergence of many surveillance groups.

The symposium focused on the role of training and research in health service delivery and the lessons learnt from the HIV pandemic. Roles played by different establishments in the fields of HIV prevention, care and treatment, training, diagnostics and research whether through original research that informs national health policy or as implementing partners in service delivery within the health sector were highlighted.

The official opening ceremony was graced Prof. Jacob Kaimenyi, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs on behalf of the Vice Chancellor. He remarked that the HIV symposium was a testament to the continued distinguished record of the university's achievements in teaching, research, development and consultancy while strategizing for a greater future as a centre of academic, research and professional excellence.

He challenged the participants to explore different ideas that will emerge from the symposium and come up with the best way forward. The symposium was attended by over 300 faculty drawn from six local public universities and various stakeholders among them government health bodies including the National AIDS & STI Control Programme, in-service health care providers, government implementing partners, patient bodies and international funding agencies.

PACE is a President's Emergency Plan Fund For Aids Relief (PEPFAR)/CDC-funded program of the University of Maryland, Baltimore and University of Nairobi, working in close collaboration with the Kenya National AIDS & STI Control Programme (NASCO) to strengthen pre-service and in-service HIV education and training in Kenya.

Prof. Gallo together with other prominent scholars paid a courtesy call to the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. George Magoha. The Vice-Chancellor commended the visitors on the great research breakthroughs made in the area HIV. He pointed out with great concern, the need to have more professional virologists especially in Africa to not only carry out research projects but to also disseminate the knowledge to upcoming virologists.



Participants follow proceedings during the symposium.