

## **Innovation guru Saul Singer speaks at pre-event workshop**

Mr. Saul Singer, American-Israeli journalist and co-author of the bestselling book *Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel 's Economic Miracle*, was the keynote speaker during the pre-event Nairobi Innovation Week workshop held in Nairobi Serena Hotel today, August 4, 2015.

Mr. Singer urged Kenyan innovators to work together with other countries even as they work to put Kenya on the global map of innovation. This has been the case between Israel and the United States of America who have worked together on very many innovations. He was speaking at the Innovation Workshop at Serena Hotel, today, August 4, 2015.

"The best innovators leave the country," said Mr. Singer. In this regard the government needs to create a culture that encourages innovation and the government as well needs to give 'oxygen' to the business start-ups to help them thrive. This oxygen involves removing taxes from business start-ups, creating a conducive platform and buying from the business start-ups. This helps them thrive.

Unless the business start-ups thrive to become multinationals, they get bought by large corporations like Google, IBM, Microsoft, who are good at scaling businesses due to their huge size.

While recognizing the technological developments that Kenya has made in the past like *Mpesa* and *Ushahidi* that are now global recognized, Mr. Singer urged entrepreneurs to be persistent. Entrepreneurial success is not a quick fix to riches. It takes time, and requires a lot of perseverance and teamwork.

Mr. Singer said that entrepreneurship is not taught in the classroom, you "*just do it*". People learn best through doing.

He urged the academia to teach students the soft skills that are much needed in the entrepreneurship like emotional intelligence, persistence and leadership. In Israel, the young people gain such skills in the military service.

On her part, the University of Nairobi Chancellor, Dr. Vijoo Rattansi noted that together, we will succeed, no matter how many times we fail.

Present during the event included : Prof. Peter Mbithi, the Vice-Chancellor, Vimal Shah, the CEO - Bidco, and Innovation Week organizers : Prof. Bitange Ndemo from the School of business, Prof. Timothy Waema and Dr. Tonny Omwansa from the School of Computing and Informatics,