

KENDSA Inaugural Scientific Conference's Write-up

The Kenya Nutrition and Dietetics Students Association (KENDSA) marked a historic milestone with its first-ever scientific conference on March 8th, 2024, held at the University of Nairobi's Upper Kabete campus. This landmark event served as the official launch of KENDSA, following its establishment eight months prior.

Under the visionary leadership of KENDSA President, George Omollo, and the dedicated organizing committee, the conference took shape, guided by the theme "Nutrition and Food Systems for Sustainable Health". Delving into the intricacies of this theme, the conference explored sub-themes: biotechnology and food safety, integrating nutrition into primary care practices, Opportunities for nutrition professionals in diverse settings, nutrition intervention for equitable health outcome, and sustainable agriculture practices.



With a vibrant attendance of 886 students and professionals in person, and an additional 200 participants joining online, the conference showcased a diverse array of perspectives and insights. Representing 11 universities, KMTC Karen, and 5 TVET institutions, alongside exhibitors highlighting innovative food processing solutions, the event fostered an enriching exchange of ideas.

Distinguished speakers, including the long-serving Prof. Ruth K. Oniang'o, PhD in Nutrition and Food Science, founder and Editor-in-Chief of the African Journal of Food, Agriculture, Nutrition and Development (AJFAND) and Dr Okeyo, CEO of KNDI, delivered keynote addresses, setting the stage for thought-provoking

discussions. Prof. Oniang'o's extensive experience, spanning across local and international organizations, where she has chaired and served on advisory boards,

lent invaluable depth to her insights. Her wealth of knowledge and leadership in the field of nutrition underscored the significance of the conference's theme and its implications for sustainable health outcomes. Other invited speakers were: Simon Chege, Kennedy Okinda, Joyce Awuor, Alex Mutua and Lillian Mumina.

Highlighting the pivotal role of students, approved abstracts on food systems were presented, showcasing groundbreaking research from Kenyatta University and



Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). Despite encountering challenges along the way, the organizing committee's resilience ensured the smooth execution of the conference, setting a precedent for future endeavors.

The conference's success was a testament to its objectives, providing a platform for meaningful interaction and networking among students and professionals alike. As students gained invaluable insights into the

myriad opportunities within the nutrition field, such as, the role of nutritionists in research, clinical, community and public health nutrition, the conference left an indelible mark on all who participated.

KENDSA officials wish to extend heartfelt gratitude to the unwavering support and pivotal roles of professionals, esteemed speakers: Prof. Abong'o, Prof. Oniang'o and Dr. Okeyo, and the University of Nairobi. Above all, we acknowledge the divine guidance that paved the way for this momentous occasion.

In reflection and anticipation, we echo the sentiment that this conference was just the beginning of an extraordinary journey. Together, we are poised to transform nutrition education and make a lasting impact on health and well-being.

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