

VICE CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH FOR THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE ICP CONFERENCE

I am very delighted to be here today for the opening of this conference. Let me take the opportunity to welcome you to Daystar University and to Nairobi Kenya.

This conference provides a very unique opportunity for all of us because of its scope; it has attracted delegates from all over the world; people with wide-ranging knowledge on the issue of child protection: From vulnerability to resilience, innovation and evidence.

Jesus said, *“Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”* Mathew 19:14. Jesus was talking about access. A lot of children do not have good environment in which they can grow. They have difficulties in accessing the basic necessities such as education, food, health and security.

The need to nurture and create an enabling environment where children feel safe is important in any education establishment. It is for this reason that Daystar University has decided to be on the forefront in matters, children.

As a university we endeavor to work towards developing children who are strong in character, and who will be able to bring influence in the society.

As a Christian University, and in line with our Vision *“To be a distinguished Christ-centred, African institution of higher learning for the transformation of Church and society,”* Daystar University is delighted to be part of this noble cause that will impact lives of children in Kenya and the world. It is our desire to ensure that our nation and the continent at large has people of character, and this begins with molding the little children.

Daystar University is a pioneer of Child Development programmers since establishing the Institute of Child Development in 2008. In fact, the programme has been around much longer because of our interaction with organizations that deal with children, such as Compassion International. It is worth noting that for a long time Daystar has been the training arm of Compassion International, and has trained many of their children workers.

Also, Daystar offers an MA in Child Development and various certificate courses. We have sent out many child workers who are exemplary models in the job market.

Daystar has produced people who have gone out to work directly with children; in their own NGOs and by coming up with homes for the less privileged children for example, Mrs. *Mary Mambo*, founder *Cana Rescue Centre in Sinai*, a charitable organization that takes care of the abused, orphaned and vulnerable girls in Sinai slum-Nairobi County.

We have also developed collaborations with organizations that deal with children. For example Compassion International, Childline Kenya, African Network for the Prevention and Protection

Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN), African Institute for Children Studies, Christian AID – CASE OVC and SOS Children Villages – Kenya. Additionally, Daystar has hosted three International conferences in Child Development, which got people engaging and creating networks and influenced the agenda of such networks.

As a result, two books have been published from the proceedings of these conferences and a journal is underway. These publications have helped to ensure that the agenda of children is sustained.

Once more, as we host this conference, we look forward to meet and discuss children's issues, as well as listen to other people's views with regard to children. We also invite you to be part of our institution by joining any of the 42 academic programmes we offer at different levels.

To those of you who might be visiting Kenya for the first time, I invite you to feel at home. While here, please take time to look around and enjoy the beauty of our capital city and country.

Once again welcome to Daystar, Welcome to Kenya.

Thank you