

FIDA Student Chapter launched at Mak School of Law

On Thursday, 14th September 2023, the first student chapter of the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA) was launched at Makerere University School of Law (SoL).

In her opening remarks, Dr. Zahara Nampewo – Ag. Principal, SoL welcomed FIDA(U) to SoL. She highlighted that this is an opportunity for female and male students to learn more about the work of FIDA(U). Dr. Nampewo encouraged students to be open minded and be willing to learn when they join FIDA. ‘FIDA(U) has been a training ground for many young lawyers through research activities, internship and continuing legal education (CLE) points for practicing lawyers’. She further said, ‘It is almost impossible to leave your mark as a woman lawyer without crossing paths with FIDA(U)’, mentioning senior judges and advocates who served the organisation in the past. She highlighted faculty at SoL like Associate Professor Damalie Naggita Musoke who served as Board Chairperson for FIDA(U), Dr. Maria Nassali also serving on the board and many others who are registered members.

Dr. Nampewo advised that FIDA(U) should work with SoL leadership for smooth governance and accountability.

Explaining why the chapter was launched, Ms. Patience Ayikoru – Membership Officer, FIDA(U) said, ‘we wanted to start a students’ chapter so that student lawyers can learn more about FIDA(U) as well as get access to the resources available to legal professionals which include: lectures and webinars, access to learning from experts like High and Supreme Court Justices through online and in-person learning and hands-on workshops and trainings’.

The Project Coordinator at FIDA(U), Ms. Deborah Okia noted that one of the aims for the FIDA(U) students’ chapter is movement building which provides space to cultivate and mobilize human rights and access to justice initiatives. She said “Under movement building we have what we call creative action: the younger generation is very innovative and creative so we are looking to you to assist us. Then we have lobbying efforts which also require creativity to push our agendas forward’.

In her remarks, Associate Professor Naggita welcomed FIDA(U) to Makerere University and SoL. ‘FIDA(U) has done a lot of work for vulnerable people and family. The work is not only for women but the wider society to access justice’, she said. She encouraged the students to get involved in the multiple opportunities available in FIDA.

The Advocacy Manager of FIDA(U), Ms. Elizabeth Kemigisha highlighted the thematic areas of the organisation including; Access to Justice, Economic Justice and Advocacy. She expressed that she looks forward to engaging and working with the students in the various activities. ‘We are not here to re-invent the wheel but support the work that Makerere Law Society does and more especially support better futures for women, children and wider society’, she added. Ms. Kemigisha explained that registration with the student chapter is free, however an annual fee of 20,000Ushs is required to access activities. In addition, while female students are registered as members, the male students are categorized as ‘friends of FIDA(U)’ and they will also partake in the activities.

