



CONCEPT NOTE

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY -

2025 CAREER AND MENTORSHIP FORUM

Building and Nurturing Impactful Careers in International Relations and Diplomacy

Date: Friday March 14, 2025

Location: CUEA Campus, Nairobi, Kenya

1.0 Introduction

The field of international relations and diplomacy is increasingly vital in a world characterized by globalization, interdependence, and complex geopolitical dynamics. As nations navigate challenges such as climate change, economic disparities, and security threats, the need for skilled professionals who can effectively engage in diplomatic efforts has never been greater. However, many aspiring diplomats and early-career professionals encounter significant obstacles that hinder their career advancement. These challenges include limited access to practical opportunities, which can restrict hands-on experience in real-world diplomatic scenarios. Additionally, inadequate mentorship can leave individuals without the guidance needed to navigate their career paths successfully. Furthermore, a lack of clarity regarding the specific skills and competencies required for success in this field can create uncertainty among those seeking to enter or advance in international relations. Addressing these barriers is crucial for cultivating a new generation of leaders equipped to tackle global challenges through diplomacy.

The **2025 Career and Mentorship Forum**, themed ***"Building and Nurturing Impactful Careers in International Relations and Diplomacy,"*** seeks to address these challenges by equipping participants with the tools and knowledge to excel in this dynamic sector. Scheduled for March 14, 2025, this forum aims to equip participants with essential tools, knowledge, and networking opportunities necessary for success in international relations and diplomacy. It therefore represents a valuable opportunity for aspiring diplomats and early-career professionals to engage with industry leaders while exploring diverse career pathways. By fostering an environment that prioritizes mentorship, skill development, and networking, we aim to equip participants with the tools they need to succeed in an increasingly interconnected world.

As highlighted by various panelists during the 2024 Career and Mentorship Forum, successful careers in international affairs require not only academic knowledge but also practical experience gained through internships and networking opportunities. To address this need, this forum seeks to connect attendees with experienced professionals who can offer guidance and support, thereby preparing them for the challenges they will face as future leaders in diplomacy. The forum will feature keynote addresses from distinguished diplomats, panel discussions on emerging trends, and interactive workshops focused on practical skills such as research, negotiation and communication. Participants will also have the chance to network with mentors who can provide guidance and support in their career journeys. Ultimately, this forum aims to empower the next generation of leaders in diplomacy, ensuring they are well-equipped to address global challenges effectively.

2.0 Objectives:

The 2025 Career and Mentorship Forum has several key objectives designed to empower participants and enhance their prospects within the field of international relations and diplomacy:

- 2.1 Provide an in-depth understanding of career opportunities in international relations and diplomacy.
- 2.2 Enhance participants' capacity to navigate and succeed in global careers through skill-building sessions.
- 2.3 Cultivate professional networks by connecting attendees with accomplished mentors and peers.

3.0 Key Themes

The forum will cover several key themes relevant to careers in international relations and diplomacy:

- 3.1 Diplomacy and Foreign Service: Exploring roles such as foreign service officers, diplomatic attachés, and consular officers.
- 3.2 Development, Social Justice and Human Rights: Discussing careers focused on international development and humanitarianism, social justice, and human rights advocacy.
- 3.3 Security, Conflict and Crime: Exploring career paths in national security, conflict resolution, and criminal investigations.
- 3.4 Leadership and Emotional Intelligence: How to develop emotional intelligence, build resilience, and lead with influence in diverse, cross-cultural environments.
- 3.5 Professional Image and Personal Branding: Practical tips on cultivating a distinctive, credible, and influential presence, positioning oneself as a thought leader, and professional etiquette.
- 3.6 Media Engagement and Communication: Communication techniques, how to engage different audiences effectively, and enhance their ability to influence conversations in professional, diplomatic, and policy-making spaces.

4.0 Key Activities:

Participants at the 2025 Career and Mentorship Forum will engage in:

- 4.1 Expert-led discussions on the future of international relations and diplomacy.
- 4.2 Workshops on core skills, including negotiation, policy analysis, and intercultural communication.
- 4.3 Mentorship sessions featuring diplomats, policy advisors, and thought leaders sharing their career journeys and advice.
- 4.4 Networking activities to foster relationships with industry professionals and peers.

5.0 Expected Outcomes

By the end of the forum, participants will:

- 5.1 Gain a clearer understanding of potential career paths within international relations.
- 5.2 Enhanced their professional networks by developing valuable connections with mentors who can guide their career journeys.
- 5.3 Enhance their skills through targeted workshops that prepare them for real-world challenges.
- 5.4 Expanded knowledge and Insights that empower them to pursue impactful careers in diplomacy.

6.0 Participants

The Career and Mentorship Forum will bring together a diverse group of participants:

- 6.1 Government officials
- 6.2 Seasoned diplomats
- 6.3 IR Scholars and thought leaders
- 6.4 Career counsellors
- 6.5 Job placement agents
- 6.6 Early career professionals
- 6.7 Students
- 6.8 Media

7.0 Tentative Program

The tentative program for the 2025 Career and Mentorship Forum is as shown below:

TIME	ACTIVITIES		
8:00 – 8:30	Arrival and Registration		
8:30 – 10:00	Opening Ceremony Organizing Partners		
10:00 – 10:45	Launch Ceremony Young Diplomats Fellowship		
10:45 – 11:00	Photo Session All Participants		
11:00 – 11:30	Tea/Coffee Break		
11:30 – 1:00	Breakout Session 1 Diplomacy and Foreign Service	Breakout Session 2 Development, Social Justice and Human Rights	Breakout Session 3 Security, Conflict and Crime
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch Break		
14:00 – 15:30	Breakout Session 4 Leadership and Emotional Intelligence	Breakout Session 5 Professional Image and Personal Branding	Breakout Session 6 Media Engagement and Communications
15:30 – 16:00	Tea/Coffee Break		
16:00 – 17:00	Closing Ceremony Organizing Partners		

8.0 Partnering Organizations

International Relations Society of Kenya (IRSK)

IRSK is the professional body for the international affairs and diplomacy fields in Kenya. The Society serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas, networking, and programmatic initiatives among those involved in the study, teaching, and practice of international relations and diplomacy. IRSK works to promote policy dialogues on international affairs and diplomacy between various parties, carry out pertinent and substantial research, and engage in conversation and collaboration with various actors at national, regional, and international levels.

Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA)

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), established in 1984 in Nairobi, Kenya, is a premier private institution dedicated to academic excellence and moral leadership. Rooted in Catholic values, it offers diverse programs across faculties such as Theology, Law, Education, and Business. CUEA emphasizes research, ethical leadership, and community service, addressing societal challenges and promoting social justice. With additional campuses in Eldoret and Kisumu, it fosters holistic education for local and international students.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS)

KAS is a German political foundation, present in over 100 countries around the globe, and has been active in Kenya since 1973. The KAS cooperates with governmental institutions, political parties, civil society organizations, and academia, building strong partnerships along the way. The Foundation seeks to intensify political cooperation at the national and international levels through the promotion of productive diplomatic engagements and shared democratic values.

International Relations Students Association of Kenya (IRSAK)

The International Relations Students Association of Kenya (IRSAK) is a student-led organization that unites and mentors International Relations students across the country. It provides a platform for engagement in international relations and offers mentorship and capacity-building through partnerships, equipping members with the knowledge and skills needed for their professional careers.