



**VICE CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH AT THE LAUNCH OF THE
MICROSOFT INNOVATION CENTRE AT THE COLLEGE OF
COMPUTING AND INFORMATION SCIENCES, 21st
NOVEMBER, 2011 AT 10:00AM**

The Guest of Honour, the Honorable Minister of ICT, Dr. Ruhakana
Rugunda
Ambassadors,
Honourable Ministers,
Representatives from UN Missions,
Representatives from Government departments and authorities,
Representatives from the Private Sector and Non-Governmental
Organizations,
Representatives from Civil Society Organisations,
Vice-Chancellors and representatives from other universities,
Officials from the Microsoft Corporation,
The Makerere University Community,
The media,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen
Good morning

I am greatly honoured to welcome you to the launch of the Microsoft Innovation Centre which is to be hosted here, at the College of Computing and Information Sciences, Makerere University. I specifically thank the Guest of Honour, Honourable Ruhakana Rugunda and all other guests present for honoring this invite. Hon Rugunda, I am glad that during your first visit to Makerere University as the ICT minister, you are going to launch a centre that will greatly spur the development of innovations which will stimulate the growth of the local software industry in Uganda.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Makerere University is extremely overjoyed to host this centre which comes after four years of continuous engagement

and negotiations between Microsoft, the Ministry of ICT, and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

This Microsoft Innovation Centre, as you will see during the tour, is a state of the art technology facility that will ease collaborations in innovative research, technology or software solutions involving a combination of government, academics and industry participants. Microsoft has set up many of these centres in different parts of the world but it gives us, as Makerere University immense pride to be the second hosts of such a centre in East and Central Africa after Tanzania. I am heartened by the continued interest Microsoft has shown in contributing to the development of research in Uganda through partnering with Makerere.

This centre is indeed a timely asset to the university because we are now focusing on avenues of ensuring that more of our students engage in research activities that serve the needs of our local communities. Thus the Microsoft Innovation Centre will create an environment that will facilitate and encourage not only our students, but also other software developers in the country to utilise their creative energy to incubate innovations that will ease the way we interact with technologies.

Ladies and gentlemen, this centre will provide us with more avenues to interact with Microsoft and tap from their resources. Many of you might not know that for the past four years running, our students have been representing East and Central Africa in the worldwide Microsoft Imagine Cup competition. The presence of this centre will offer more youth the freedom for experimentation using various technologies and thus nurture innovativeness and open up new opportunities for the students.

This facility provides Makerere University with an opportunity to engage in more strategic collaborations with other Microsoft Research laboratories thus benefiting from their technical expertise. This will go along way in fulfilling the University's strategic plans aimed at strengthening our knowledge transfer partnerships and increasing our research output.

You might be aware the Makerere recently launched a programme aimed at enhancing the levels of skill development among its young graduates. This centre will facilitate the university's efforts to equip its students and other graduates with more knowledge and skills to enable them become entrepreneurs or more competitive when seeking employment. This will help reduce the current levels of unemployment especially among the youth who are the major users of these new technologies.

Hosting this centre at the College of Computing and Information Sciences, gives us the chance to enhance the functionality of the modern facilities available at the College. Ladies and gentlemen, this college boasts of state of the art computer laboratories and lecture theatres that can accommodate over 10,000 students in one sitting. I am glad, the college is maximizing its resources to compete for and attract research partners, grants and contracts which are critical and pertinent to the growth of any academic institution and the country.

I would like to thank Microsoft, UNIDO and the ICT Ministry for your invaluable contribution to improving human skill development in Uganda. We pray that our partnership will intensify as the university continues to demonstrate its value in championing collaborations with the government, academic institutions and the private sector.

Ladies and gentlemen, once again I welcome you to Makerere University and do have a pleasant morning.

We Build for the Future

Prof. Venansius Baryamureeba, Ag. Vice-Chancellor, Makerere University