



COMMUNICATION FROM THE ACTING VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. VENANSIUS  
BARYAMUREEBA,  
AT THE 24<sup>TH</sup> MONTHLY PRESS CONFERENCE,  
ON  
5<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2011

## **1. Makerere University in Search of Public Private Partnerships (PPPs)**

The Presidential Initiative Fund enabled staff and students to come up with innovations to prove to the public and private sectors both locally and internationally that Makerere University staff and students have potential to innovate. They only need funding to support the innovations. Also in colleges like College of Computing and Information Sciences where development partners like Rockefeller and the Netherlands Government through Nuffic have funded incubation activities, staff and students have been able to prove that they have potential to innovate through their various innovations.

There are lots of problems that the public and private sectors face. There are also ideas the public and private sectors have not been able to implement. At the University we also have ideas that can be turned into innovations to benefit both the public and private sectors. Makerere University provides an opportunity for partnership. Right from inception we would like to work with the private/ public sector. We would like the public and private sectors to provide the funding for specific innovations they are interested in and the staff and students will ensure that the innovations are realised. Once the innovations are in place, the next step will be for the private sector to commercialise the innovations in partnership with the University under a PPP arrangement.

## **2. Makerere University Ranked among African Centres of Excellence in Drug R&D**

Makerere University is among recognized universities in Health Research in Africa according to the African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation (ANDI) that listed 32 institutions as centres of excellence in health research on 31 October. The details are contained in the November issue of Research Africa to which Makerere

subscribes (report attached).

The report says that in East Africa, the region usually considered strong in health research-lags behind Southern and Western Africa in terms of number of centres.

The six include two in Uganda: Makerere University, which has been listed as a centre of excellence in epidemiology of infectious diseases, and the Joint Clinical Research Centre, an HIV/AIDS research institution based in Kampala.

In neighboring Kenya, there are three: the Institute of Primate Research is listed for pre-clinical research; the Kenya Medical Research Institute for its work in HIV research; and the Trypanosomiasis Research Centre for its work in pre-clinical development.

In Sudan, the National Research Centre was recognized for drug and diagnostic innovation.

### **3. Makerere University to hold 62<sup>nd</sup> Graduation Ceremony from 16<sup>th</sup> January -20<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

The next regular graduation ceremony, the 62<sup>nd</sup> graduation ceremony will be held from 16<sup>th</sup> January 2012 to 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and the Chancellor of Makerere University, Professor Mondo Kagonyera shall preside. Details are in the attached report from the Academic Registrar of Makerere University.

### **4. African Centres of Excellence in drug R&D Identified**

**Source: Research Africa Issue 412 21 Nov 11**

The African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation (ANDI) listed 32 institutions as centres of excellence in health research on 31 October. This issue of Research Africa looks at the distribution of the centres across the continent and how they are chosen.

The centres, presented in more detail later in this bulletin, were chosen from 117 applications. They have received a certificate from ANDI identifying them as having expertise in specific areas of health research that include drug development, HIV/AIDS and malaria.

Getting a certificate is “the same as winning a Grammy”, according to Solomon Nwaka, acting director for ANDI.

The centres needed to meet criteria that included sustainable funding and postgraduate qualifications among staff. Some of the 85 that failed to qualify as centres of excellence had not followed instructions, Nwaka said.

“They were required to provide [details of] funding for the last three years but some left that column blank. The head of the institutions did not sign some of the applications as required. That immediately disqualified them,” he said. Some institutions were disqualified because staff members did not have a publication record.

The initiative was born from the realisation that Africa had no systematic way of identifying centres of excellence, said Nwaka.

“There are some institutions that have in the past been identified as centres of excellence and got good grants without following a review,” he said.

Recognising the 32 as centres of excellence could help them leverage international funding for research, he added.

“They will get much more visibility and much more competitive in terms of applying for resources,” he said. Some donors are already enquiring about the institutions, he added.

Nwaka expressed the hope that the initiative would encourage African governments to fund research: “Through this we hope that African policymakers can begin to ask why there are no centres of excellence in their countries and take necessary corrective steps.”

The centres will also be involved in ANDI research projects to be rolled out in 2012. ANDI will fund the projects but plans to approach donors for additional finance. Projects will include research on sickle cell anaemia and other diseases.

The centres will be re-assessed after five years to ensure they maintain high standards.

## **East Africa**

Six East African institutions have been recognised as centres of excellences by the African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation (ANDI).

The region—usually considered strong in health research—lags behind Southern and Western Africa in terms of number of centres.

The six include two in Uganda: Makerere University, which has been listed as a centre of excellence in epidemiology of infectious diseases, and the Joint Clinical Research Centre, an HIV/AIDS research institution based in Kampala.

In neighbouring Kenya, there are three: the Institute of Primate Research is listed for pre-clinical research; the Kenya Medical Research Institute for its work in HIV research; and the Trypanosomiasis Research Centre for its work in pre-clinical development.

In Sudan, the National Research Centre was recognised for drug and diagnostic innovation.

## **South Africa**

South Africa dominates the list of the recently published African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation (ANDI) centres of excellence. It clocks up the most centres both overall in Africa and in the Southern African region.

Of the 15 centres clocked up by Southern Africa, 12 are in South Africa. The University of Cape Town has three centres; focusing on drug discovery, TB diagnostics and proteomics/genomics.

Stellenbosch University and the University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg have two centres each. The former in TB translational research and HIV translational research, and the latter in viral gene therapy and advanced drug delivery technology.

South Africa's other centres of excellence are hosted by a mix of private and public institutes, and range from a centre for nanomedicine at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research in Pretoria to medicinal chemistry at iThemba pharmaceuticals, a Cape Town-based company funded by the South African government.

Solomon Nwaka, acting director for ANDI, said South Africa dominated because its government had invested in infrastructure and training scientists. "We realised in our assessment that South Africa was putting a lot of funding in infrastructure and scientists," he said.

South Africa invests just under 1 per cent of its gross domestic product in research and development, much more than most other African countries. It also has the highest publication record in Africa, with 5,248 papers produced in 2008.

South African institutions identified as centres of excellence include Stellenbosch University (for tuberculosis/ HIV translational research) and the University of Cape Town (for drug discovery and tuberculosis diagnostic research).

Others recognised as centres of excellence include the University of Zambia, for HIV and tuberculosis diagnostic tools research, and the African Institute of Biomedical Science and Technologies in Zimbabwe, identified as a centre of excellence in toxicology studies.

The University of Mauritius also got centre of excellence status for its research on biomedicine and biomaterials.

## **North Africa**

North Africa is home to only four of the 32 centres of excellence in health research identified by the African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation (ANDI)—making it the region with the fewest centres in this round.

The four are in Egypt and Tunisia. The Institut Pasteur de Tunis was included for excellence in bio-molecule discovery.

The Egyptian centres are the Theodor Bilharz Research Institute for excellence in anti-trematodal research and two centres at the Holding Company for Biological Products & Vaccines (VACSERA), a pharmaceutical company, for its work on anti-venom and virus strains.

### **West Africa**

Nearly a third of the institutions classified as centres of excellence by the African Network for Drugs and Diagnostics Innovation (ANDI) are from West Africa.

The region hosts eight of the 32 institutes that have been singled out by ANDI as having good staff and financial stability (See: Up Front).

The nine include the University of Buea in Cameroon, which was selected for its research on drugs for onchocerciasis, sometimes known as river blindness. A second Cameroonian centre of excellence is the Institute of Medical Research and Studies of Medicinal Plants in Yaoundé, listed for its expertise in research on traditional medicine.

The Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research at the University of Ghana directed by Alexander Nyarko is a centre of excellence in disease surveillance and prevention. The Kumasi Centre for Collaborative Research at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Technology is one other Ghanaian institution that made the list for its work in applied biomedical research.

The University of Ibadan is one of three Nigerian institutions to gain recognition which was acknowledged for its research on malaria. The other two are the National Institute for Pharmaceutical R&D in Abuja, selected for expertise in phytomedicine, and the University of Lagos for its work on malaria diagnosis.

The eighth West African centre of excellence is the University of Bamako in Mali, for its work on clinical development of malaria products.