

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



ADDRESS BY THE CHANCELLOR

PROFESSOR GEORGE MONDO KAGONYERA

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 64TH GRADUATION CEREMONY
OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

FRIDAY 31ST JANUARY, 2014

The Honourable Minister of Education and Sports

Honourable Ministers present

Honourable Members of Parliament

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Your Lordships the Judges of the Judicature

Religious Leaders

Your Worship the Mayor, Kampala Capital City Authority

Representatives of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies

Chancellors and former Chancellors present

Chairperson and Members of Makerere University Council

The Vice Chancellor and your Management team

Former Vice Chancellors and Management Present

Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Principals of other Universities and Institutions

Members of the University Senate

Members of Staff of Makerere University

Parents and Guardians

Graduands

The Media Fraternity

Ladies and Gentlemen:

1.1 CONGRATULATORY STATEMENT

I am pleased to preside over the 64th Graduation ceremony of Makerere University during which a total of **12,616** students will be graduating. At the third session held yesterday, I conferred degrees and awarded diplomas to **2,488** graduands. Today's **fourth and final session** of the 64th Graduation Ceremony is dedicated to Makerere University Business School (MUBS). The Vice

Chancellor has presented a total of **3,794** Graduands for the conferment of degrees and award of diplomas of Makerere University. Congratulations!

I congratulate all the students who have excelled by attaining First Class degrees. Please do not take these achievements lightly. You are expected to maximally exploit your ability for the service of mankind. I also congratulate all other Graduands and wish you the best as you go out into the world to contribute to the welfare of your communities. You must realize that success in your future performance does not depend on the class of degree alone.

I pay special tribute to the members of staff who have prepared our students during their stay here. However, I continue to hear complaints about some people who continue not to perform their duties according to the rules. These are far in between but all effort must be exerted to stamp out these irregularities. I also thank the parents, guardians and sponsors who have made your stay here possible through their selfless dedication to meeting all your tuition requirements and living costs. I am aware that some of you make extreme sacrifices to pay your children's fees. Property, including family land, is sold to meet this obligation.

Today you graduate into a community faced with multiple opportunities and challenges. Your success or failure will depend on how you view the world before you. To a great extent your destiny lies squarely on your shoulders. When faced with challenges, quickly ask yourself how you can use your knowledge and skills to turn them into opportunities.

Likewise, when you encounter opportunities, ask yourself how you can harness them to serve humanity at large and not just your own interests. Often people do not realize that service to others leads to personal satisfaction. I am happy and proud to note that Makerere University's biggest contribution to the region and beyond has been the ability to produce key human resource to serve humanity both at political levels and in large corporations. Graduates of Makerere University have distinguished themselves in the business world.

1.2 TAPPING INTO THE YOUNG INTELLIGENT BRAINS

I wish to commend Makerere University Business School for standing out as a trainer for Business and Management courses in Uganda and the region. I further commend you for extending Makerere's reach to as far as Arua, over 400km from Kampala. In so doing, you have saved our students the burden of commuting to and from Kampala and also increased our proximity to Southern Sudan and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Congratulations. Graduands of MUBS are prominently prepared to be job creators rather than jobseekers. In our times, business was looked at as either for Indians or uneducated Ugandans. This kept us out of the economy of this

country. You know what happened when Idi Amin expelled the Asians. Ugandans who acquired the businesses sold the shirt by the color size. Soon matooke and banana leaves replaced foods on kampala road.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, a country that does not value knowledge is doomed. I appeal to the Government of Uganda to come up with a Strategic Plan focused on tapping into the brains of intelligent young men and women throughout the country. The leading economies world over have managed to maintain their market leadership through the use innovations like Centers of Excellence. These are often joint efforts by Governments, the Universities and the private sector, where young men and women go for highly specialized training for transformation of their countries' economies. We need to emulate countries like India.

The first two things that strike any first-time visitor to Uganda are the welcoming nature of our people and the entrepreneurial spirit as exhibited by the various roadside businesses. Unfortunately due to lack of basic business etiquette like proper record keeping and customer care, many of these promising businesses close shop before the first year of existence.

Whereas many see this as a challenge, I encourage you, the students of business to see this as an opportunity to inspire our people to take their businesses to the next level.

1.3 THE CHALLENGE OF UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment is a big problem in most countries of the world as exhibited by the number of countries struggling to keep the figures low. The Government of Uganda has come up with various strategies including the youth fund to try and address this problem. I would like to thank the President for this very timely intervention. However, the challenge is how this more than Shs. 250 billion will be put to use.

However, we cannot afford look at the Government as the sole provider of solutions to all our challenges. The common Luganda saying "*Tusaba Gavumenti etuyambe*" is not befitting of any graduate of Makerere University. We all have a role to play as the private and business sectors. I advise the graduands not to fix your minds on what you have studied. You should be open minded and use the knowledge and skills that you have acquired to seek opportunities in various fields so that you become self reliant.

Take off time to not only read the inspiring stories from youths, entrepreneurs and low income earners who have over the years turned into billionaires but also book appointments with them. Most of these successful entrepreneurs are willing to share their success through training

programmes and apprenticeships and so I encourage you all to take time off to seek them out. Most of these success stories are of your fellow East Africans who live under the same conditions as you do and yet have managed to excel and stand out in society.

Makerere University as a regional leader in Higher Education attracts students from all corners of the world, especially the East African community. I encourage all of you to make the best of the contacts you have established by taking business trips and not holidays, to the various corners of East Africa. I am confident that the opportunities are abundant, if and only if you humble yourselves and choose to see them. It is interesting to note that most of these business trips will cost you less than the smart phone you own. I therefore encourage you to weigh your opportunities carefully. Nevertheless, I strongly advise you against inspiring, creating or joining any schemes that will make you rich at the expense of the wellbeing and life of others.

1.4 MOBILISATION OF RESOURCES

I urge the University to continue to be innovative in resource mobilization and wealth creation. In this connection you must move quickly to develop all the land you own into wealth creation facilities. There are institutions ready to partner with you. Let there be no excuse for not moving forward.

1.5 FUNDING FROM THE ALUMNI

As alumni of Makerere you should always be interested in the affairs of Makerere as a University and a brand. Your involvement in the development of our University can play a very critical role in where Makerere heads. As Chancellor, I am doing my part personally to forge linkages aimed at mobilising resources from alumni in the East African region. I therefore appeal to the alumni; both past and those graduating today, to passionately support development activities at your Alma mater. I reiterate the Vice Chancellor's request for you to generously contribute to the construction of the Makerere University Students' Centre. We are Building for the Future. The Makerere that you see here today is a combined result of the British Government's 1922 decision to allocate resources and subsequent efforts from our partners.

Over the years, development partners have put up buildings such as the extension of the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology; the Pharmacy Department Building, Block A of the College of Computing and Information Sciences, to mention but a few. Most of you have enjoyed these facilities and the Students' Centre Project is the perfect opportunity for you to now give back. I am happy to note that pledge cards for the Student's Centre have been given out. I appeal to you to give generously.

1.6 FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

We appreciate and thank the Government and development partners for funding research at Makerere; although the bulk of it is from our development partners. As Makerere University is a public-funded institution, I appeal to the Government of Uganda to increase funding to 100% of the wage bill as per the request from the Vice Chancellor. We also appeal to the Government to increase funding to research and development activities at Makerere and all public universities.

1.7 APPRECIATION TO THE GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA-PEACE IN UGANDA

i) I thank the Government of Uganda led by H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni for ensuring that this country is free from war. I commend the efforts and sacrifices made in the liberation of the war in Northern Uganda. We do not hear of Cattle Rustling in Karamoja. This peaceful environment brought about by the Government has allowed people to exercise their ability, hence the over thirty Universities in the country. Everyone should know that Makerere University has continued to grow and registered the breakthroughs in research and innovations as reported by the Vice Chancellor because we have peace in this country.

ii) I commend the Government especially H.E. The President for the timely intervention in South Sudan and Somalia. Our gallant sons and daughters have continued to make the utmost sacrifice of life for the good of our neighbours and ourselves. I have no doubt in my mind that the Government of Uganda deployed our troops there for selfish reasons. We should continue to recognize the sacrifices made by our soldiers in South Sudan.

1.8 SPECIAL MESSAGE TO GRADUANDS

As a country, our hope for a better tomorrow undoubtedly lies in you; the younger generation. I urge you to guard against greed wherever you may go and in whatever field of endeavour you may engage. I encourage you to always be disciplined and observe proper time management.

Even as you set out to be self-employed, you must always be disciplined and also manage your time so that you propel yourself and all those you may be fortunate to lead into the right direction. I encourage you to also acquire soft skills in addition to the degrees you have acquired today. Technical ability is good but technical ability with the social skills to match is even better. I once again congratulate you upon this milestone as reached today and urge you to make both your parents and Makerere proud wherever life may lead you after today. I thank you.

Prof. George Mondo Kagonyera

CHANCELLOR