

**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**



**ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, PROFESSOR JOHN  
DDUMBA-SSENTAMU**

**ON**

**THE OCCASION OF THE 64<sup>TH</sup> GRADUATION CEREMONY  
OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 30, 2014**

**The Chancellor of Makerere University**

**Your Excellency the Vice President of Uganda, Hon. Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi**

**Honourable Minister of Education and Sports**

**Honourable Ministers present**

**Honourable Members of Parliament**

**Your Lordships the Judges**

**Members of the Diplomatic Co**

**The Leadership of Kampala Capital City Authority**

**Chairperson and Members of Makerere University Council**

**Chairperson and Members of the Appointments Board**

**Representatives of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies**

**Representatives of Development Partners at the National and International levels**

**Former Vice Chancellors**

**Religious Leaders**

**My colleagues, Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Principals of Institutions of Higher Learning**

**Members of Management, Senate and the entire Makerere University Community**

**Parents and Guardians**

**Graduands**

**The Media**

**All invited guests in your various distinguished capacities**

**Ladies and Gentlemen:** I am pleased to welcome you to the 64<sup>th</sup> Graduation Ceremony of Makerere University. Today is the third day of the ceremony, which started on Tuesday. You are indeed most welcome. Warm greetings and congratulations to all our Graduands today! Your hard work has paid off and led you to this day when you will be awarded degrees and diplomas of Makerere University. I thank your parents and guardians for their selfless support, both financial and moral, throughout your period of study.

Dear Members of Staff graduating today at the different academic levels, congratulations upon your achievement. Special congratulations go to the staff graduating with doctorate degrees. Your success is ours too because as a University we shall benefit from the knowledge and skills you have acquired. To all members of Council, Management and Staff whose children, spouses and relatives are graduating today, congratulations!

I would like to thank all members of staff of Makerere University for your dedicated service despite the challenges we face. You have played a positive role in the development of higher education as well as the transformation process of this country.

I cannot forget to thank Makerere University Council, under the leadership of Eng. Dr. Charles Wana-Etyem, for ensuring that Makerere University stays on course. I would like to welcome and congratulate Hon. Irene Ovonji-Odida for being appointed Vice Chairperson of Makerere University Council. Council and the entire Makerere University will definitely benefit from your wealth of experience.

Mr. Chancellor, Sir; I wish to thank you for your continuous guidance and support to Makerere University. We thank you for appointing the new substantive Deputy Vice Chancellors; Assoc. Prof. Ernest Okello Ogwang for Academic Affairs and Assoc. Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe for Finance and Administration. Their wealth of experience will contribute to the development of Makerere University, having served in various capacities for more than 23 years.

In the same spirit, I thank the out-going Chaplains of St. Francis and St. Augustine Chapels. Thank you Rev. Dr. Johnson Ebong and Monsr. Dr. Lawrence Kanyike. We thank you not only for your invaluable spiritual guidance but also for spearheading visible and quantifiable development in your respective communities of St. Francis and St. Augustine.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, we are also grateful to you for having appointed College Principals and their Deputies. I would like to assure you that with the support of Council, Management together with the leadership of the Colleges will endeavor to achieve our mission, which is *to provide innovative teaching, learning, research and services responsive to national and global needs* so that we can achieve our vision of *being the leading institution for academic excellence and innovations in Africa*.

Allow me to extend our sincere thanks to Her Lordship Prof. Lillian Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza, who was previously Deputy Vice Chancellor [Academic Affairs], and Prof. Sandy Stevens Tickodri-Togboa, the former Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor [Finance and Administration]. We thank both of them for their love and commitment to Makerere University. We cherish their various individual contributions to building this great institution and wish them well in their new assignments.

On a sad note however, Mr. Chancellor Sir; the Makerere University community has since the last graduation lost several members of staff, former staff and students. These include among others, two former Academic Registrars - The late Bernard Onyango who served Makerere University for 29 years and the Late Gershom Eyoku who served for 18 years. Recently in December 2013, we lost Prof. Remigius Bukenya-Ziraba, a former Professor in the College of Natural Sciences who served Makerere University for over 30 years. We have lost many others, whom I cannot mention by name. We pray to the Almighty to grant them eternal peace.

On a positive note, Mr. Chancellor Sir, Makerere University continues to register significant successes.

- i. Makerere University continues to rise in academic ranking. I am pleased to note with satisfaction that as of today, Makerere University is ranked in 4<sup>th</sup> position. This is attributed to more research output and publications, as well as innovations taking place here at Makerere University. I would like to thank the entire Makerere University community for this achievement and at the same time I would like to appeal to all of us to double our efforts so that Makerere University can be number one (1) in Africa.
- ii. Library services have been tremendously transformed with the additional 8,000 square metres of space that includes seminar rooms, research commons and access points for persons with disabilities. The library catalogue is online and visible to the world, complete with a new offline feature that allows for continued circulation of documents even when the internet is inaccessible. The Makerere University Library has also provided professional support not only to local institutional libraries but also regional libraries including the University of Juba Library and several others in South Sudan.
- iii. In order to consolidate an ICT-enabled environment, we are working with the Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU) to explore possibilities of connecting several universities, colleges and research institutions to an affordable countrywide high-speed fibre-backbone.
- iv. Mr. Chancellor Sir, I am happy to report that our staff and students have won several local and international awards. We thank and congratulate them. Indeed you are the true ambassadors of Makerere University. You have ensured that our flag keeps flying higher and for that, we salute you. Keep it up.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, we do appreciate the support of all our stakeholders who contribute to our success. We salute the Government and People of Sweden. We appreciate the generous support of the Royal Kingdom of Norway and its people. We are grateful to the Carnegie Corporation of New York. We appreciate the support of the MasterCard Foundation. Because of their support, there has been tremendous improvement in research management, quality of supervision, teaching, research output and gender mainstreaming at Makerere University. Their support has also enabled a number of our staff to obtain PhDs. I am happy to note that 53% of our staff now have PhDs.

We cannot forget to thank the Government of Uganda for its continued financial support to Makerere University in general and specifically to the fields of technology, engineering, science and veterinary medicine, through the Presidential Initiative for Science and Technology. Additionally, the Government of Uganda is supporting Makerere University and five other institutions to benefit from the Higher Education Science and Technology project. The project will support infrastructure development, equipment, staff development and ICT facilities. We are hopeful that this project will be kick-started by the end of this year.

Mr. Chancellor, Sir, Makerere University still has a number of challenges. Our main challenge however is the lack of adequate funding. In order to improve our financial situation, we intend to develop idle University land and renovate Halls of Residence through the Private Public Partnership model. I appeal to the Private Sector to take advantage of this opportunity to collaborate with Makerere University.

As a key highlight of celebrations to mark 90 years of Makerere University, the Students' Centre project was launched, and its foundation stone consequently laid by the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Amama Mbabazi on behalf of H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. The Students' Centre will be a one-stop centre for all student activities including recreation. It will also have space for business entities, as a way of generating income for the University. We have engaged and will continue to engage the private sector through Public Private Partnerships to see this project to completion.

We appeal to our Alumni and friends of Makerere University to generously support this cause. Contribution cards are being circulated during the ceremony. We thank you for your favourable consideration.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, during this 64<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony of Makerere University, a total of **twelve thousand six hundred and sixteen [12,616]** candidates are being awarded degrees and diplomas. **50.3%** are female and **49.7%** are male. A total of **51** candidates of which **23.5%** are female and **76.5%** are male are graduating with doctorate degrees in different disciplines. **244** candidates will graduate with First Class degrees and of these **38.5%** are female and **61.5%** are male. **One thousand one hundred and ninety two [1192]** will graduate with Masters degrees of which **38.4%** are female and **61.6%** are male.

I would like to highlight four aspects, which make the 64<sup>th</sup> graduation ceremony unique:

**One, 62** pioneer candidates of the Bachelor of Science in Software Engineering have graduated, five of whom have first class degrees. **Two, 67** of the pioneer students at our Jinja Campus will receive degrees in Information Technology, Business Administration and Development Studies. Of the 67, four **[4]** will receive first class degrees. We congratulate the pioneer students and the administration of Jinja Campus. **Three, ten [10]** pioneers of the Female Scholarship Foundation [FSF] who benefitted from tuition waiver offered by the University are graduating. The Female Scholarship Foundation was established in November 2010 and as a sign of commitment and ownership, Makerere University offered 20 scholarships per year in form of tuition waiver starting with the academic year 2010/2011. This is a gesture of our social responsibility and efforts to ensure equitable access to higher education in Uganda. **Four,** for the first time, students from **Somali land** who have been pursuing their studies from Sheik Technical Veterinary School with support from the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity are receiving diplomas of Makerere University in absentia. We congratulate the College for this initiative.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, **two thousand four hundred and eighty eight [2488]** candidates will graduate today from the *College of Education and External Studies; the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences; the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology;* and the *School of Law.*

As a way of contributing to the emerging oil sector in Uganda, **The College of Education and External Studies [CEES]**, in partnership with *Quest Energy*, has initiated a *Postgraduate Certificate in Oil and Gas Studies* aimed at training and empowering Ugandans with appropriate knowledge and skills for effective and maximum exploitation of the oil and gas industry. The College will soon start a new project with support from *The Swedish Programme for ICT in Developing Regions [SPIDER]* aimed at enabling timely and frequent interaction between students and their teachers, irrespective of the location of each. The College is also at the center of a project promoting ICT-led training at Makerere University in line with the new educational infrastructural developments. The project's

goal is to ensure technical capacity of staff to be able to offer online learning programmes at Makerere University.

**The College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences [CAES]** has over the years established itself as a regional centre of excellence in agricultural and environmental research. The College has several new programmes including the *Regional PhD in Agricultural Rural Innovations (ARI)*, the *Master of Science in Watershed Management*, the *Bachelor of Science in Meteorology*, the *Masters course in Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM)*, *Masters program in Climate Change and Sustainable Development*, *Bachelor of Science in Geography*, *Bachelor of Science in Water and Irrigation Engineering*, *Bachelor of Science in Bio-process Engineering*, and a *Training Programme for Plant Doctors*, among others.

The staff of the College have been very active in research work and have won a number of awards. We congratulate them and we thank them for scaling up the research profile of the University.

The School of Food Technology, Nutrition and Bio-engineering developed the *Mobile Fruit Factory* for processing fruit juice, the first of its kind in Uganda. We thank the Government of Uganda through the Presidential Initiative for supporting this project. The College also registered success in a project of preserving and breeding local edible insects (the grasshoppers/*Nsenene* and *Nswa*).

Besides working with farmers to develop tools for forest harvesting and development of tree varieties for different regions; the School of Forestry, Environmental and Geographical Sciences secured over 15 research grants and published over 70 book chapters and papers in international journals. The College has also established several strategic partnerships including one with the *Israel Agro Studies International Training Programme* to enhance student's theoretical and practical skills, among others. The College sent 50 students to Israel under this internship partnership.

I am happy to announce that the College acquired a modern State-of-the-Art Biotechnology Laboratory worth UGX 250 million, funded by the Millennium Sciences Initiative (MSI). The College has launched various Centers and acquired structures like the Rockefeller Foundation funded *Climate Change Centre for Research and Innovation (MUCCRI)* and the US\$ 1.5 million Sida/Danida supported *Controlled Growth Chamber for Plant Science Research and Molecular Laboratory*. The College will also house East Africa's *Centre of Excellence in Plant Breeding and Biotechnology* with support from DAAD. The Centre will support PhD training in plant breeding and biotechnology.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, as already stated, Makerere University is grateful for support from the Government towards science and technology. This support has enabled **The College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology** to equip its laboratories to state-of-the-art standards. The famous *Kiira EV* was built and is being upgraded in one of these state-of-the-art laboratories. The College continues to conduct research on alternative sources of energy as well as the *Kiira EV*. The College also benefitted from a generous grant from *Tullow Uganda* to support Masters students for specialized training on the oil industry. I am glad to note that all the supported students have successfully completed their studies.

**The School of Law** has undertaken several important activities since the last graduation. The Environmental Law Centre at the School of Law was selected to serve as a Centre of Excellence for Water Law and Policy to benefit all countries under the Intergovernmental Authority on

Development [IGAD]. The Center is funded by the European Union and will be managed through the Inland Water Resources Management programme.

In a bid to contribute to the improvement of public service delivery, the School has continued to offer the Administrative Officer's Law Certificate Course, which is recognised by the Public Service Commission for entry, confirmation and promotion of administrative cadres of staff. The School also once again won the 3<sup>rd</sup> East African Regional Child Rights Moot Court Competition organized by Save the Children.

In collaboration with the University of Pretoria Centre for Human Rights, the School of Law hosted the *Inaugural Julius Osega Memorial Public Lecture*, which was given by H.E. Joaquim Chissano, former President of the Republic of Mozambique. The Lecture will be held annually in honour and remembrance of the Late Julius Osega, a Ugandan police officer who studied both at Makerere University and the University of Pretoria.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I will conclude my remarks by giving thanks to all of us present here today. Thank you indeed for your individual support to the Graduands, which has led them to this day of success. I once again congratulate the Graduands and extend my best wishes to them as they embark on life after school. Dear Graduands, this is not the end of the journey but the beginning. I encourage you to strive for greater success in your professional and social life through dedication and hard work. Remember that good things come to those who are patient and honest. I am aware that all success is a continuous process. It cannot be achieved within a day. Therefore, I urge you to exercise patience as you strive for success.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I now take the pleasure to invite our Chancellor, Prof. George Mondo Kagonyera, to address the congregation. God bless you.