

**OPENING REMARKS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR  
ANNUAL PLANNING MEETING OF THE MAKERERE & SWEDISH  
INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (SIDA) BILATERAL RESEARCH  
COOPERATION, 10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2014**

- Your Excellency, Ambassador of Sweden to Uganda
- Members of Swedish Embassy in Kampala
- Representatives of Research and Development Partners
- My Colleagues in the University Administration
- The Director and Staff of the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training
- Principals, Deans and Directors
- Researchers and Mentors in your various capacities
- Ladies and Gentlemen: Good morning and you are most welcome to Makerere University.

I welcome you all to this year's Annual Planning Meeting, an event organised to share and take stock of our performance as per the agreed research undertaking. As you might be aware, Makerere University is the oldest premier Institution, producing high-performing graduates, who are innovative, and responsive to the development challenges at national and regional levels.

Ladies and Gentlemen, in July 2011 Makerere University officially started to operate as a collegiate University. Before then, there were 22 Faculties and Institutes. That arrangement had an array of challenges especially in terms optimization of our Human resource and quality assurance.

It is against this background that the Council of Makerere University decided to take the path of the collegiate system. Under this system the 22 Faculties and Institutes which were previously "autonomous" merged based on "shared research and training interests and mandates" and formed Nine Colleges and One School. Undoubtly, the collegiate system will improve the quality of the Research and Training function of the University.

I wish to thank the Royal Swedish Embassy in Uganda for supporting the ongoing institutional reforms and Change Management Process at Makerere University.

We acknowledge and appreciate the significance of this Annual Planning Meeting, which symbolises the nature and character of the relationship between Makerere University and the Royal Government and People of Sweden.

Makerere University and Uganda in general have enjoyed and continue to benefit from the generosity of the Royal Government of Sweden in the areas of human resources capacity building, research, library services/information technology and infrastructural development.

This support has been monumental and critical to the realisation of our core functions of teaching and learning, research and innovations, and partnerships and networking. A number of our staff have received PhD training through Sida funding. I am happy to report that since 2000 when our cooperation began, over 140 staff have completed PhDs and over 30 have completed masters degrees.

The support has greatly improved the research culture of the University. I must say that many of our research teams are now writing multidisciplinary proposals and are winning big research grants both in the basic and social sciences. More quality publications have been produced which have improved the University's Research Ranking. This achievement is partly due to the support from Sida.

Sida support has also contributed to the enhancement of centres of excellence in waste management, health systems research, and renewable energy research, among others. Guided by the University Research policy (2008), we have improved the research environment with modern equipments available in our modern GIS and Biomedical Laboratories.

With support from Sida and other development partners, we have been able to improve ICT and Library services. The library provides up to date information, not only to Makerere University but also to the entire country. Internet services have greatly improved throughout the whole university. We are now able to provide a functional Online Public Access Catalogue, more than 15,000 journals on-line; 40 e-journal databases give country wide access to the most recent literature. I invite you to visit our Library as well as other facilities.

Through Sida support, Makerere University has been able to establish strong collaborations with leading universities including those from Sweden. We have learnt best practices from these universities and we have also benefitted from joint supervision, which has ensured high quality of our graduates. All these achievements have enabled us to contribute substantially to the attainment of the National Development Goals and reduced the degree of brain drain.

Despite these achievements, the University still faces a number of challenges. These include among others, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate research funding, about half of our academic staff lack PhD training, poor staff welfare, a high student-staff ratio, lack of a university press and lack of adequate facilities for students including a students centre.

Research dissemination and translation of outputs into policy briefs has not been successful as would have been desired. Both senior researchers and students have collected plenty of raw data, but these have not been translated or transformed into desired outcome so as for them to be able to serve the reason(s) for which they are gathered.

To solve this problem, emphasis, especially in the successor sida programme, will be put on the proper dissemination of interdisciplinary research findings, thematic research inventories, so as to contribute to and enhance evidence-based policy development. This would make the programme directly relevant to the national development goals.

I am aware that the Sida phase III will come to an end in 2014 and Makerere University has already submitted a Concept Note for the consideration for possible continued support beyond 2014. I look forward to continued support to Makerere University for the mutual benefit of our people.

Once again, I welcome you to Makerere University and wish you fruitful deliberations in the days ahead.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my honour and pleasure, to officially declare this year's Planning Meeting Open. AS WE BUILD FOR THE FUTURE.