

**MAKERERE**



**UNIVERSITY**

**REMARKS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR**

**PROF. JOHN DDUMBA-SSENTAMU**

**AT THE PRESIDENTIAL VISIT**

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2014,**

**FREEDOM SQUARE**

- Your Excellency, The President of Uganda and Visitor of Makerere University, Lt. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
- The Minister of Education and Sports, Hon. Jessica Alupo
- Government officials here present
- The Makerere University community
- Ladies and Gentlemen

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Your Excellency, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you to Makerere University as the Visitor of this prestigious institution. Let me request all members of Staff and students of Makerere University here present to join me in welcoming His Excellency, the Visitor, to Makerere University with a thunderous applause. We are greatly honoured that you found time within your busy schedule to be with us today, in fulfillment of your promise made on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2014 during the second annual convention of the Great Lakes Students' Union. We thank you for this special visit.

Your visit this day indeed seeks to address several matters but first and foremost, permit me to deeply thank you for hosting a delegation from Makerere University at State house on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2014. We were indeed honoured by your invitation and kind consideration of all matters presented and as a delegation we left with hearts full of hope owing to the resolutions made.

During this meeting Your Excellency, you promised that Government was to take over the entire wage bill of public institutions come financial year 2015/16 by increasing the funding to public institutions from 120b to 300b. This would in effect see the salary of a Professor revised to the tune of UGX 15m and 2m for a Teaching Assistant. Your Excellency, this news was received with ululations back here at Makerere University. Your visit here today is in this regard a reaffirmation of your exceptional good will towards the country's higher institutions of learning and we are confident that your promise will come to pass next financial year. We thank you.

You also requested that we provide the actual unit cost of educating a student at Makerere University. I am happy to report that we have embarked on this assignment through our Planning and Development Department and shall report to you in due course. As advised, we are comparing our own unit cost with that of top universities in the region and beyond with particular focus on countries like Ethiopia, India and others in the East African Community. We are also in the process of critically looking at all our academic courses to identify those that

might need strengthening so as to be more relevant to the country's socio-economic development. The office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Academic Affairs has seriously embarked on this assignment. As you are aware Sir, the University conducted a similar exercise in 2011, at the time of the formation of the collegiate system which you launched in on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2012, together with His Excellency, Mwai Kibaki of Kenya. We have benefitted a lot from the merger of course units and clean up, and have since realized that this is a necessary periodical process if we are to remain ahead of any socio-economic environment. As Management, we want to present a proposal to Council for this process to be done every two years. Our academic courses are further sharpened by the partnerships we enter into with local and international universities. Of late we have started attracting and entering into partnerships with universities in the Middle East particularly in Iran, that are mostly interested in science disciplines. This is an indication that Makerere University has worldwide impact and willing partners in the advancement of her Internationalisation agenda.

Your visit is also a reaffirmation that you will take on the 10% tuition increment to private students of Makerere University to the tune of 2.4bn. As ably noted by Your Excellency, fees increment is indeed an occasional source of student unrest at Makerere University. We are optimistic that the proposed strategies to close the funding gaps at Makerere University will sustainably guarantee tranquility at this great institution.

With all the above in mind, I take this opportunity on behalf of Makerere University and on my own behalf to thank Your Excellency for the unrivalled support to Makerere University. We are still basking in the glory of the support to science disciplines through the 5 year Presidential Initiative on Science and Technology. Two months ago in July, we held a stakeholders forum to among other things identify interested and potential partners to collaborate with, in the execution of the current and future research initiatives. The forum, held under the theme, **'University- Public- Private Partnership: The University as an Engine for National Development through Science, Technology and Innovation,** brought together stakeholders from the industry, academia and the international community. I am happy to report to you Your Excellency that we had healthy deliberations from this forum and are looking forward to partnering with some of the interested companies to commercialize our innovations. For these and many more, I take this opportunity to assure you Your Excellency that Makerere

University is fully in support of your Government and we shall indeed support all the government programmes in as much measure as is possible within our means.

At this juncture Your Excellency, permit me to sincerely thank the Uganda Police Force for always promptly and effectively securing and restoring calm at Makerere University whenever the need has arisen. As you celebrate your centenary, we congratulate you upon this milestone and appreciate the strategy you have embarked on, of emphasizing community policing. We are aware that you occasionally train the youth, some of them university students, to be more alert of the security threats in their environment, acquire self-defense tactics and be nationalistic in their engagements. We sincerely thank you and wish you good health in the fulfillment of your mandate.

Your Excellency, I am pleased to inform you that Makerere University has now embraced Public Private Partnerships. I thank Government and the Parliament of Uganda for assenting to and passing the Public Private Partnerships Bill; a key tool in streamlining our operations. I report to you Your Excellency that in this pursuit, we have managed to attract top investors from China, Japan and Uganda, to develop our vast land resources in what has been code named '**The Makerere University Infrastructure Marshall Plan.**' We are in the process of vetting their feasibility studies on these various plots of land in Katanga, Katalamwa and Makindye, before we enter into final agreements with any one of them. We are confident that these partnerships will go a long way in broadening Makerere University's resource base.

I once again thank you for spending this time with us. We look forward to similar visits as ***We Build for the Future.***

**I thank you.**