

VICE CHANCELLOR REMARKS AT THE LAUNCH OF THE CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

19TH DECEMBER, 2014, 6:00PM – MAIN HALL

- The Vice President of Uganda, H.E. Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi
- The Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China, H.E Zhao Yali
- The President of Xiangtan University Board, Prof. Zhang Jing
- The Chancellor, Makerere University, Prof. George Mondo Kagonyera
- The Principals and Deputy Principals present
- Our visitors from China
- Distinguished guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening to you all.

On behalf of Management and the staff of Makerere University, I warmly welcome you all to this landmark event of the launch of the Confucius Institute. I wish to specifically welcome the Vice President of Uganda, H.E. Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi, and the Ambassador of the People’s Republic of China in Uganda, H.E Zhao Yali. Thank you for honouring our invitation and for your continued support to Makerere University.

I wish to extend our sincere appreciation to the Chinese government for choosing Makerere University to host the Confucius Institute in Uganda. The establishment of the Confucius Institute at Makerere University is indeed an important milestone in the history of cooperation between Uganda and China. May I use this opportunity to thank the Confucius Institute Headquarters (Hanban), the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in Uganda and Xiangtan University for the strong financial and material support rendered towards the establishment of the Institute. You did not only facilitate the application process and signing of agreements for setting it up, you supported the renovation of the house where it is hosted, and also sent us teachers and a consignment of teaching materials. We sincerely appreciate the support. I wish to also extend our

gratitude to the Government of Uganda for exempting us from paying taxes for some of the equipment imported for the Institute.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you may be aware, China is currently one of the fastest growing economies in the world and its influence in global affairs cannot be underestimated. Understanding China and the Chinese language is therefore a sure way of tapping into the vast potential of the country, especially at this point in time when it has become Africa's leading trading partner. Today, China accounts for at least 30 per cent of all of Uganda's foreign trade. China has a footprint in Uganda's oil sector where the state-owned Chinese National Offshore Oil Company (CNOOC) bought a stake in the company that discovered the black gold. In the communications sector, Huawei Technologies is a major player in the expansion of Uganda's fibre-optic infrastructure among other multi-million dollar telecommunications deals, and in the construction sector, Tian Tang Group of Companies, is a leading producer of construction materials. In total, according to the Chinese Embassy in Uganda, there are currently more than 200 Chinese companies in Uganda, which are estimated to employ about 30,000 locals.

As the interaction between Chinese and Ugandan business continues to grow, communication becomes more important. I believe, with collective efforts, the Confucius Institute will surely act as a window for Ugandans, especially the youth, to understand and study Chinese culture. It will also act as an important platform to promote the bilateral cultural exchange, thus pushing the bilateral friendly cooperation to a higher level. The Confucius Institute will offer credit courses in Chinese to Makerere University students, and short courses to staff and the general public interested in learning Chinese for all purposes.

Ladies and gentlemen, besides the support rendered towards the establishment of the Confucius Institute, the Chinese government has been supportive to Makerere University in many other aspects.

The Chinese government through Xiangtan University supported us to develop a Bachelor's Degree programme in Chinese. I am pleased to inform you that the first intake was this Academic Year 2014-2015. The programme is open to undergraduate students and diploma holders. Xiangtan University further pledged to support students

who successfully complete their degree in Chinese at Makerere University to do a one-year degree course in Chinese at their University. Xiangtan University has also trained our students in different courses. We are indeed honoured to have you as our development partners.

In addition to that, Makerere University recently entered formal collaboration with Liaoning University, Shenyang Aerospace University, and Liaoning Shihua University in China to enhance cooperation in Education, Science, Engineering and Technology transfer. In the Memoranda of Understanding, the parties agreed to collaborate in awarding joint Bachelors and Masters Degrees, Student and Staff exchanges, joint research and publications and scholarships for Masters Students in the respective universities. This will further strengthen partnership between Uganda and china.

Our dear guests, I wish to assure you that Makerere University is committed to the various partnerships and will provide all the necessary support for the success of Confucius Institute. I thank the Directors of the Confucius Institute at Makerere University; Prof. Oswald Ndoleriire and Prof. Hong Yonghong for their diligent service that has contributed to the success of this project. I also thank the team that has worked tirelessly in organizing this event.

Thank you for listening to me.