

**CLOSING REMARKS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, PROF. JOHN DDUMBA-SSENTAMU, AT THE ORIENTATION AND AWARD CEREMONY FOR FIRST YEAR MASTERCARD FOUNDATION [MCF] SCHOLARS FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2015-2016**

- **My Colleagues in University Management present**
- **Members of the Steering Committee, MasterCard Foundation Scholars Programme at Makerere University**
- **The Director, Planning and Development Department/Coordinator of The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Programme at Makerere University**
- **Leaders from the Colleges present**
- **H.E The Guild President**
- **The MasterCard Foundation Project Implementation Team**
- **MasterCard Foundation Scholars at Makerere University**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen:** Good evening.

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I am honoured to preside over the closing session of the Orientation and Award Ceremony for the 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort of The MasterCard Foundation Scholars at Makerere University.

As you may know, Makerere University is the oldest and premier University in East Africa, having started its journey in 1922. Over the years, Makerere University has nurtured very many prominent alumni. It is therefore the premier destination in Africa for many people like you seeking higher education. Indeed Makerere University was my first choice University too. I attained my first degree and Ph.D. from here and I am now the Vice Chancellor of this great institution. Makerere University nurtured me to be the person I am today and I am very proud to be associated with it.

The vision of Makerere University is *“to be the leading institution for academic excellence and innovation in Africa”* and its mission is *“to provide innovative teaching, learning, research and services responsive to national and global needs”*.

The clarity of the vision and mission places us in a very unique position, which we strive to uphold.

It is on this note, therefore, that I would like to welcome our new cohort of Scholars that have been admitted to different programmes for academic year 2015/2016. I congratulate you upon being selected to join your colleagues, some of whom are here, as MasterCard Foundation Scholars at Makerere University. I wish, at this moment, to congratulate the second year Scholars upon your achievements thus far.

As MasterCard Foundation Scholars, you all have a rare gift of resources, both financial and moral, at your disposal. The MasterCard Foundation Scholars programme will give you a wholesome experience that will open pathways to a bright future. It is upon you to use these resources as best as possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen, The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Programme seeks to create positive social and economic transformation through education of academically bright but economically disadvantaged youth from Africa. The Foundation is offering scholarships to 1,000 such youth to study at this great institution. The scholars in our midst are among the beneficiaries to date.

We are here today to witness the orientation and award ceremony for the 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort of The MasterCard Foundation Scholars at Makerere University. It is my responsibility as Vice Chancellor to welcome you to this great institution and congratulate you, once again, upon being selected from many, to be MasterCard Foundation Scholars. I hope you know that this is a great privilege because there are many people like you out there that have neither had the opportunity to join this great institution nor received this scholarship that is comprehensive and holistic.

As MasterCard Foundation Scholars at Makerere University, your full tuition including functional fees and accommodation are catered for. In addition, you have extra support in form of stipend, transport, medical insurance and laptops. I am informed that you have had fruitful discussions with the Project Implementation Team (PIT) about the scholars programme, your academic obligations and responsibilities, leadership opportunities at the University, tips on how to succeed academically and the support services at your disposal.

Dear Scholars, you have been given everything to enable you excel. Both Makerere University and our partner The MasterCard Foundation, expect continued academic excellence from you. We are training you to be the next generation of achievers and leaders who will be committed to service and giving back to your community. My advice to you, both new and continuing Scholars, is:

- Be grateful every day for having received this comprehensive scholarship
- Be prayerful
- Associate with people that will add value to your life: academically and socially
- Participate or contest in the leadership positions and opportunities that present themselves at the university because if you want to transform this nation, it starts now at the University.

Finally, I take this opportunity once again, to thank The MasterCard Foundation for offering scholarships worth US\$ 21 million to 1,000 Scholars to access an education at Makerere University over the next 10 years. I thank the management of the university and the Steering Committee of the Programme for actively supporting programme implementation.

I would also like to thank Dr. Florence Nakayiwa and her team for organising this orientation and award ceremony for the Scholars. As Vice Chancellor, I commit myself to supporting The MasterCard Foundation Scholars Programme to be able to achieve both the vision and mission of Makerere University and that of the Programme.

*We Build for the Future.*

I thank you.