

**MAKERERE**



**UNIVERSITY**

**SPEECH BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR,  
PROF. JOHN DDUMBA-SSENTAMU**

**AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 6<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNUAL CEDAT OPEN DAY AND FASHION  
SHOW ON THE THEME:**

***“ADDRESSING UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG THE  
YOUTH THROUGH TECHNOLOGICAL  
INNOVATIONS AND ADVANCEMENT”***

**FRIDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2016**

- **Our Guest of Honour representing the Minister of Education and Sports, Hon. Charles Bakkabulindi**
- **Members of University Management**
- **The Principal, College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology**
- **Representatives of Government Departments and Agencies**
- **Members of Administration and Staff of the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology**
- **Students**
- **The Media**
- **Distinguished Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;** On behalf of Makerere University, I welcome you to the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT) Open Day. Thank you for coming to this important event and supporting Makerere University.

I would like to especially welcome the Guest of Honour, Hon. Charles Bakkabulindi, who is representing the Minister of Education and Sports. You are most welcome Sir. Through you, we extend our sincere appreciation to the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports for her exceptional support to Makerere University since becoming Minister of Education and Sports. Her support has been noteworthy during the recent challenges around staff pay and the financial standing of the University. On behalf of Makerere University Management, I pledge to continue working closely with the Hon. Minister of Education and Sports and the entire Ministry to advance higher education service provision.

Hon. Guest of Honour, allow me to also use this platform to sincerely thank Government of Uganda for its support to Makerere University advancement, particularly through various projects such as the Presidential Initiative and the African Development Bank funded projects. We further thank the Government for strongly supporting the designation of Makerere University as a centre of excellence under two World Bank funded projects. The College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT) was designated a Center of Excellence in Materials, Product Development and Nanotechnology with funding to a tune of US\$ 6 million. This demonstrates the level of confidence the Government has in the University.

It is indeed through such support that the College has been able to engage in research and innovative projects, outcomes of which are being showcased here this morning. All this support is continuing to support Makerere University's Mission, *"To provide innovative teaching, learning, research and services responsive to National and Global needs"*.

Today's theme is *"Addressing Unemployment among the Youth through Technological Innovations and Advancement"*. Youth unemployment remains a big challenge in Uganda. I wish to assure you, our Guest of Honour, that Makerere University is committed to contributing to reduction in the unemployment levels in Uganda through various innovations and skilling projects.

Our aim is therefore to have graduates with practical and relevant skills through engaging them in appropriate research and innovative projects. We are indeed privileged and pleased to share with you some of these technological innovations, which we hope will contribute to propelling the country forward towards industrialisation and increased employment opportunities.

The staff and students of the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT) have for the last six years undertaken several research projects such as the Kiira EV under the Centre for Research in Transportation Technologies (CRTT). As you are aware, the Kiira EV model has been taken up by Government of Uganda for commercialization under the Kiira Motors Corporation.

Other innovations of the College include the MAKAPADS Project, which has helped to reduce girls' absenteeism in schools. As part of community outreach, the College continues to distribute these sanitary pads made out of paper and papyrus to various schools across the country. In the schools where girls have benefited, the girl-child drop out rate has tremendously dropped. I would like to appeal to the Ministry to partner with us in growing the number of beneficiaries, so that we can keep the girls in school.

The College has also produced the Academic Records Management System (ARMS), the iLabs Project, Irrigation project, the Center for Technology Design and Development as well as the Clusters initiative, among others. I am happy to report that research on the solar irrigation pumps is also going on well.

Hon. Minister, as a research-led institution, Makerere University relies on partners, particularly in the industries to turn our innovations into products that are marketable. However, our challenge remains finding investors with whom we can work to commercialise all our innovations. We therefore take this opportunity to appeal to the Ministry for support in attracting appropriate investors to join us in this cause.

I hope that the various projects and innovations showcased by the College today will give us more lessons and experiences that should open further avenues of collaboration between Makerere University, the Government of Uganda, entrepreneurs and industry practitioners.

I would like to thank the College Administration and staff for working closely with the student and ensuring that students and staff are given this platform to share their different projects. Special appreciation goes to the students who have spearheaded this event.

Once again, I welcome the Chief Guest and all guests in your various capacities to Makerere University. I wish you fruitful learning experiences during this Open day and Fashion Show. Thank you all for honouring our invitation.

It is now my pleasure to invite our Guest of Honour to officially open this event.

*We Build for the Future.*