



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

ADDRESS BY THE CHANCELLOR

PROFESSOR EZRA SURUMA

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 67TH GRADUATION CEREMONY
OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

WEDNESDAY 22ND FEBRUARY, 2017

Honorable Ministers
Honorable Members of Parliament
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Your Lordships the Judges of the Judicature
Religious Leaders
The Leadership of Kampala Capital City Authority
Representatives of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies
Chancellors and former Chancellors
Chairperson and Members of Makerere University Council
Vice-Chancellor and Members of the University Management Team
Former Vice Chancellors
Former University Management Staff
Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Principals of other Universities and Institutions
Members of the University Senate
Members of Staff of Makerere University
Parents and Guardians
Graduands
The Media Fraternity
Distinguished Visitors
Ladies and Gentlemen:

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A Word of Appreciation:

1. It is a great honor and privilege for me to add a warm welcome to you all to this historic occasion of the 67th Graduation of Makerere University.
2. I thank the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ddumba Ssentamu, for his remarks and for all the efforts made by the University faculty, staff and Administration towards the implementation of this occasion.

I wish to recognize the contributions of various institutions and organizations towards the University notably, the Government of Uganda, the Makerere University Council, the Senate, the students, the development partners and all stakeholders, especially the parents, for the vital role you have played in supporting Makerere University to pursue its monumental educational vision of *academic excellence and innovation in Africa and beyond*.

Congratulations to graduands

3. Let me now join the Vice Chancellor in congratulating today's graduands. Today is the Second Session of the Makerere University 67th Graduation Ceremony and we are conferring degrees on graduands from four colleges namely:
 - i. **the College of Business and Management Sciences**
 - ii. **the College of Computing and Information Sciences**
 - iii. **the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity**
 - iv. **And the College of Health Sciences.**

4. I sincerely commend the spirit of hard work, of endurance and of self-control that has brought you, the graduands, this far. The degrees we are awarding you today testify to the hardships, the discipline, the commitment, the pain and the tears you have shed over the years and decades of academic and emotional struggle. Your graduation testifies to the world that in the face of all adversity, poverty, deprivation, doubt and even danger, you possessed the determination to strive on, to rise after the fall and today you are counted among the survivors.

5. But of course you have not realized the success alone. Makerere University is an integral part of your successful story. I must therefore thank the academic staff and the administration and support staff whose guidance has helped to bring you this far. They have done their part to guide you through the complexities of academic life. I am sure that you will always remember their enduring contribution to your struggles.

6. Equally significant has been the social, emotional and financial support that you have received continually from your parents, relatives, friends, religious leaders and fellow students. Many among you have been supported by generous donors who provided you stipends and scholarships. Please join me in thanking all those men and women whose love and sacrifice has contributed to your achievements today.

Turn challenges into opportunities

7. Yesterday and today, the Vice Chancellor highlighted a long list of the Makerere University's achievements. They range from domestic

to regional, continental and global. There is no doubt that Makerere is a significant player on the continental and global academic and research stage. I do not wish to repeat what the Vice-Chancellor has already enumerated. Suffice it to say that the expectations from all the colleges represented here today are high.

8. The College of Business and Management Sciences and its graduates must do much more to improve the quality and quantity of goods and services for the Ugandan population. It is not foreigners who are going to improve the quality of services. It is you.

9. The College of Computing and Information Sciences and its graduates have a huge challenge to bring all the people of Uganda into the information age. It is you to set up electoral processes that are free and fair, it is you to work out technologies to bring knowledge and information to all our people; it is you to adapt and enhance life-saving technologies and make them work for our people

10. The College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Biosecurity and its graduates need to help us improve our protein diets, increase our exports of meat and milk products and protect us from diseases that cross over from animals to humans. It is your responsibility. Do not point a finger at foreigners. It is our problem.

11. Finally, the College of Health Sciences and its graduates face the near impossible task of bringing health care to a people truly desperate for a better health system. From the increasing prevalence of cancer to the persistent ravages of malaria we have a long way to go to bring health to our suffering people. We desperately need affordable and effective health insurance systems. We have to invent this here. There are tons of money waiting to be made by the creative minds and geniuses that are sitting here today. Please get started today. Churchill is quoted to have said during the 2nd world war that: ***“Our task is enormous. And so are our resources.”*** ***He also said:*** “Success is not final, failure is not fatal, it is the courage to continue that counts.”

You are all critical actors in the improvement of the lives of the Ugandan people. Get started and never quit.

Honoring Distinguished Professors

12. Let me now take a moment to congratulate all members of staff who have risen to the rank of Professor. Thank you for your contribution to academia, to knowledge discourse, to policy formulation, and to mentorship of the next generation of academics and leaders.

Message to Graduands

13. Dear graduands, now the hour has come for you to go out to the field, to fight the good fight, to run the race for which you have been preparing. I hope you will remember love in the middle of the tough battles ahead. I hope you will struggle for the possibility of joy in a sad world. Ponder the possibility of godliness and contentment in a broken world. Remember love in a loveless world.
14. I believe with all my heart that every human being has the capacity to love - in other words to make a difference in someone else's life. May be that is what it means to be human. Many years ago when I was in exile from the regime of Idi Amin I used to attend a church and I used to hear a song that stuck in my head: It said that

*“If I can help somebody as I pass along
Then my living will not be in vain.”*

15. You might not make the headlines in the Daily Monitor or the New Vision or the Red Pepper because you helped a child to cross the street or offered your seat on the bus or taxi to an elderly or disabled person or even just offered a smile to a lonely stranger. Whatever the challenges and hardships of tomorrow I hope you will make it a habit, to sacrifice here and there for somebody else. And to experience the joy of making life a little bit better for another Ugandan brother or sister. That way perhaps we can make Uganda, inch by inch a little less harsh and a little more humane.
16. After all, if it had not been for the love and sacrifices of all these people gathered here and so many others who are not here today,

you probably would not be sitting where you are now. The hour has now come for you to love them back and to make a difference in an often indifferent world. This is your moment.

*“If you can help somebody as you pass along
Then your living will not be in vain.”*

17.
FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY.