



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

SPEECH BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER

DR. RUHAKANA RUGUNDA

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 67TH GRADUATION CEREMONY

OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

TUESDAY 21ST FEBRUARY, 2017

The Chancellor of Makerere University Professor Ezra Suruma

The Honourable Minister of Education and Sports

Honourable Ministers present

Honourable Members of Parliament

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Your Lordships the Judges of the Judicature

Religious Leaders

The Vice Chancellor and your Management team

Members of Staff of Makerere University

Parents and Guardians

Graduands

Ladies and Gentlemen:

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I am happy to address this great congregation of the 67th Graduation of Makerere University. I congratulate all Graduands upon reaching this important milestone in your respective lives and I equally congratulate your Parents, Guardians and Sponsors upon a job well done. You have a bright future ahead of you and so choose to approach today and every day with great optimism.

As Government, we appreciate the role that Makerere University plays in training vital human resources for the region. We are indeed fully aware of the many challenges which are facing this great institution and Government is committed to solving them. As you are aware, on 14th November 2016, His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni appointed a Visitation Committee led by Dr. Abel Rwendeire to inquire into the affairs of Makerere University. I have been informed that the Visitation Committee has received full cooperation from the Management and Staff of Makerere University and I thank you for that. We look forward to the successful conclusion of the Visitation Committee's work and to receiving its recommendations

The Government of Uganda is fully committed to supporting the vibrant Higher Education Sector of Uganda. We recognize that we need to pay regionally competitive wages in order to attract and retain quality academic staff. We therefore remain committed to increasing the salaries of staff in public universities. Despite severe constraints in the national budget, we shall progressively increase staff wages until the salary levels which His Excellency the President promised you, are achieved.

The Government of Uganda has been consistently committed to the growth and expansion of the national infrastructure in general and educational infrastructure in particular. As I made my way to the Freedom Square, I observed that some of the road infrastructure had been recently renovated. I also noticed that a gigantic building has

since risen out of the formerly vacant plot next to the School of Social Sciences. The Government of Uganda secured a grant through the African Development Bank to fund the infrastructure and laboratory construction and renovation at Makerere University and other public institutions. I appeal to the University Management to ensure that all construction works are completed on on schedule, and are of high quality.

In June 2016, Government established a committee to review Makerere University's Fees Policy. In order to involve all stakeholders in the new fees policy formulation, it was proposed that the committee should receive contributions from the general public. I am happy to note that the committee has successfully completed its work after receiving contributions from both students and other stakeholders. I therefore urge all parties to continue abiding by the new Fees Policy in order to ensure the financial health and sustainability of the University.

I also want to urge all our students and staff to embrace dialogue at all levels as a means of solving conflicts. I urge the University community to endeavor to be a prime example of peaceful dialogue and solutions as opposed to violence and industrial action. I appeal to you all to uphold personal and institutional integrity and to treat one another with respect, humility and dignity.

Once again, I wish to assure you that the Government is fully cognizant of the invaluable contributions of Makerere University to our country and to the world. We are more than fully committed to supporting the youth to advance their careers through various programmes, initiatives and innovations. For example, on 23rd January 2017, I launched

the Young Achievers Awards 2017 which was organized under the theme of “***Rewarding Innovation and Excellence and Inspiring the Next Generation of World Leaders***”. The Government supports and appreciates such initiatives by the youth to develop, mentor and enhance the skills of the youth through innovation.

Please take advantage of the Government financed Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. I am confident that the Livelihood Support Component, which takes up 70% of the funding will be of great benefit to your income generating enterprises. I urge you to do more research on this programme as well as many other Government funded and supported programmes so that you can take full advantage of them for your own improvement.

Now more than ever before, you will be hard-pressed to exercise your creative imagination, your intellectual capacities and your endurance to achieve success. Your knowledge is going to be tested in the rough fields beyond academia. Be of good cheer. The faith and perseverance that has brought you this far is still available to sustain you through the decades that lie ahead of you. I welcome you into the arena of life beyond the university and I wish you every success in your lives.

Before I conclude, let me share two points about Makerere University days of our time. Makerere University of today is significantly different from that of our times. Our Makerere University of the 1970s was grossly insecure because of the reign of terror of the Idi Amin regime. The security and political situation at the time made it impossible for some of us to complete our course here. Forinstance, I left Makerere

Medical School after four years without a university degree. The same happened to the current Governor of Bank of Uganda Ndugu Tumusiime-Mutebile, as well as Ndugu Olara Otunnu. Our only crime was that we were student leaders. During that time, we also lost the University Vice Chancellor Prof Frank Kalimuzo for no justifiable reason at all.

Therefore, take advantage of the existing better environment to advance your academic and research endeavors so that you can make a contribution to Uganda, Africa and the world.

Secondly, a day after Idi Amin took over power, Yoweri Museveni, a young man who had graduated from Dar es Salaam University came to Makerere University, and we met him just near the Main Building. He said that the regime of Idi Amin was a bad regime which would not help Uganda to develop, transform and progress. He said that it was a regime we must oppose, and remarked that he moving to Tanzania to organize resistance. We agreed that we would work closely together in the struggle to get rid of the Idi Amin regime.

I am glad that Makerere University was then and remains a source of patriots who work for building a free, democratic and transformed Uganda and Africa. I therefore urge you to use the education you have received from Makerere University to add value to the county's development process, and to consolidate the gains that have been scored.

With these remarks, I once again congratulate you upon all your achievements and wish you the best for your future.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY.