

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

**REMARKS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR
PROF. JOHN DDUMBA-SSENTAMU**

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

TUESDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY 2017

FREEDOM SQUARE

- **The Chancellor, Professor Ezra Suruma**
- **The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda**
- **The Representative of the Honourable Minister of Education and Sports**
- **Honourable Ministers present**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament present**
- **Your Lordships the Judges**
- **Members of the Diplomatic Corps**
- **Religious Leaders**
- **Development Partners present**
- **The Leadership of Kampala Capital City Authority**
- **Chairperson and Members of Makerere University Council**
- **Chairperson and Members of Makerere University Appointments Board**
- **My Colleagues, Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Principals of Institutions of Higher Learning**
- **Former Vice Chancellors present**
- **Members of Management, Senate and the entire Makerere University Community**
- **Parents and Guardians**
- **Our Dear Graduands**
- **The Media**
- **All Invited Guests**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen:** It is a great honour for me to welcome you to the First Session of the 67th Graduation Ceremony of Makerere University.

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 This is the time that graduands together with their parents and guardians mark the conclusion of a worthwhile academic journey. Congratulations upon this achievement!

In a special way, I welcome the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda. You are a great alumnus of this University who continues to provide support to Makerere University in various aspects. I recall you played a major role in the formulation of the revised Makerere University Tuition Policy.

We are indeed much honoured by your presence at this occasion. Through you Sir, we extend great thanks to the Government of Uganda for all the support to Makerere University, which is enabling us fulfill our vision *To be the Leading Institution for Academic Excellence and Innovations in Africa.*

Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, the 67th Graduation Ceremony is special because we are officially unveiling the Makerere University Graduation Gown, which is professionally designed with unique and special features. Some of the Graduands today are wearing the customised Gown, which is in line with our strategic direction of enhancing the University brand. With effect from the next Graduation Ceremony, all graduands will be expected to wear the approved official Makerere University Graduation Gown.

I welcome the representative of Hon. Minister of Education and Sports. We thank you and the team at the Ministry for the support towards Makerere University. We are particularly grateful to the First Lady and Hon. Minister of Education and Sports for all her support and guidance to Makerere University. We are committed to ensuring a positive working relationship towards strengthening higher education in Uganda.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen; the Makerere University Council is the supreme Governing Body of the University. Allow me, therefore, to recognise the presence of the Chairperson of Council, Eng. Dr. Charles Wana-Etyem; the Deputy Chairperson of Council, Hon. Irene Ovonji Odida and all Members of Makerere University Council present. May I request you to stand up and wave to the congregation. Thank you.

Allow me, Mr. Chancellor Sir, to express my sincere appreciation to the entire Staff of Makerere University for their dedicated service to this great institution and the nation at large, inspite of the various challenges.

Their dedicated service has enabled Makerere University to fulfill her core functions of *Teaching and Learning; Research and Innovations* as well as *Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and Networking*.

Makerere University is a centre of excellence with several ongoing research activity and innovations. I congratulate all staff and students whose brilliant innovations have excelled at local and international levels. Thank you for keeping Makerere University visible. Because of your hard work, Makerere University, according to the *Times Higher Education*, is ranked number three (3) on the African Continent in terms of research output and publication.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, one cannot talk about a University without Professors. In academia, promotion to the rank of Professor is a testimony to knowledge generation and expertise in one's chosen academic discipline. I am therefore pleased to report that since the last Graduation Ceremony, **8** Members of Staff have been promoted to the Rank of Professor while **19** have risen to the rank of Associate Professor. I congratulate you upon this great achievement.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, you are an Economist and I am sure that you are aware of the positive correlation between the number of Professors in the University and salary enhancement. At this juncture, therefore, I would like to thank His Excellency The President of the Republic of Uganda, for his commitment to the salary enhancement of Professors up to the tune of UGX 15 million. I am positive that the number of Professors is going to increase when the salary reaches UGX 15 million.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the Makerere University Community has lost several Members of Staff and Students since the last graduation. We send our sincere condolences to the bereaved families and pray to the Almighty God to rest their souls in eternal peace.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, Makerere University faces a number of challenges. These challenges can be overcome by the combined effort of all stakeholders including the Government, Chancellor, Council, Senate, Management, Staff (*including Staff Associations*), Students, Parents as well as Alumni. We need to engage in positive dialogue and negotiations, towards fostering the continued progress of Makerere University.

I sincerely thank His Excellency The President of Uganda and Visitor of Makerere University, for appointing a Visitation Committee to look into the affairs of Makerere University. We are hopeful that the recommendations of this Committee will bring about lasting solutions to our challenges.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, you are aware that the major challenge we are facing is inadequate funding. In this regard, I would like to commend University Council Chaired by Eng. Dr. Charles Wana-Etyem, for establishing the Makerere University Endowment Fund and the Makerere University Holdings Company Limited, as channels of resource mobilisation.

I am pleased to inform you that the Board of Trustees of the Makerere University Endowment Fund chaired by Dr. Martin Alikor, is organising an **Endowment Fund RUN on April 2, 2017**, to compliment its resource mobilisation efforts and to create awareness among alumni, friends and well wishers about the Fund.

I take this opportunity to call upon our congregation today including Graduands, Students, Staff, Parents and Guardians as well as all well-wishers to purchase Tickets and T-shirts for the Run, which are currently on sale. Please register and support Makerere University Endowment Fund, whose goal is to expand the resource base of the University.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, there are a number of **developments and achievements** that have taken place over the past year.

I am happy to report to you that Senate and Council have re-structured our academic programmes in line with the National Development Agenda. The academic programmes have been reduced from **450** to **253**.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I am pleased to report that we have acquired an additional **Twelve Thousand, Four Hundred and Sixty Seven (12,467)** square meters of space to support teaching and learning as well as research processes. The University Strategic Plan highlights the need to have in place centralised teaching facilities as a mechanism for management of large student numbers. The commissioning of the Centralised Teaching facilities is expected to take place in July this year.

I wish to thank the Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Education and Sports, for securing a loan from the African Development Bank to support science and technology in Higher Education Institutions.

I am pleased to report that our University road infrastructure including drainages, pavements, street lights, and sidewalks has received a much-needed facelift. The total cost of this major infrastructural uplift is UGX 6 billion. These works will not only enhance the beauty of our Main Campus but also improve the safety of the entire Makerere University community.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, I now turn to the details of the 67th graduation ceremony, during which a **total of Fourteen Thousand, Four Hundred and Ninety Seven (14,897) students** will be awarded degrees and diplomas of Makerere University. Of these, **45.9% are female** and **54.1%** are male graduands. **Seventy Five (75) are Doctoral students of whom** 24 are female and 51 male.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, at this juncture I would like to address the issue of falsification of academic records at Makerere University. I take this opportunity to assure the public and all our stakeholders that Makerere University has the duty to guard jealously and secure the integrity of its academic credentials. Without integrity, research cannot be trusted. Academic credentials cannot be relied upon and all degrees and diplomas lose their value. Makerere University Senate can recall any degree or diploma in cases where they were granted in error. It is regrettable that 58 names appeared in the graduation booklet in error but I am happy to inform you that they have been deleted. I wish to thank the staff who identified this anomaly.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, today we present to you candidates from four (4) Colleges, who have successfully met the requirements for the award of degrees and diplomas of Makerere University.

The College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology is today graduating **Six Hundred and Ninety Seven (697)** students including three (3) PhDs. We wish to congratulate the students and staff upon this great achievement.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, the College continues to be a hub of research and innovations and is a Centre of Excellence in various academic disciplines. The East African Community designated the College as the ***East Africa Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency***. The Centre is sponsored by the East African Community and funded by the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) to a tune of 1.6 million Euros for the first three years.

It is expected to increase access to modern, affordable and reliable energy services, energy security and mitigation of negative externalities of the energy system. We thank the Principal of the College, Prof. Henry Alinaitwe as well as Dr. Okure Mackay; Mr. Michael Kiza and the entire team in the College for this milestone.

With support from the Government, the College established a **Centre of Excellence in Materials, Product Development and Nano-technology** in 2016. The Centre is funded by the World Bank under the East and Southern Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence project to a tune of **Six Million United States Dollars**.

The College is also engaged in agriculture related research and innovations in a bid to improve farming in the country. Researchers in the College are working with farmers in Soroti, Pallisa and Kayunga districts to set-up irrigation systems. The research is investigating the use of different sources of energy including solar driven pumps, diesel and petrol engines. Once fully tested and deployed, the technologies will go a long way in improving farm productivity.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, **the College of Natural Sciences** is presenting **Four Hundred and Fifteen (415)** students including **ten (10) PhDs**. We Congratulate the College for this achievement.

I am happy to inform you that the World Bank has provided a grant of **United States Dollars Five Hundred Thousand (US\$ 500,000)** to support the Uganda National Content Policy for the Petroleum Sector. These funds will support the establishment of a **Chair for Petroleum Geosciences Programme in the Department of Geology and Petroleum Studies**. In addition, several departments have received funding and equipment for research and teaching.

The Department of Physics received equipment worth **United States Dollars Twenty Seven Thousand and Eight Hundred (US\$27,800)**, from the International Science Programme of the University of Uppsala in Sweden. Among the equipment received, is a Spectro-photo-meter, the only one in Uganda. In the past, students had to travel abroad to access a Spectro-photo-meter.

The Department of Plant Sciences, Microbiology and Biotechnology, in collaboration with the Banana Research Programme of the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), won a grant of **United States Dollars Five Million, Seven Hundred Thousand** (US\$ 5,700,000) from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, towards scaling up banana productivity in East Africa for small scale farmers.

Let me also take this opportunity to appreciate and recognise Professor Joseph Y.T. Mugisha, Principal of the College, for leading the Uganda team in a consortium of universities drawn from the Northern Corridor States of Eastern Africa to conduct a skills audit for the Northern Corridor Integration Projects (NCIPs). The universities in the consortium are Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (Kenya), Makerere University (Uganda), University of Rwanda and University of Juba (South Sudan). The overall objective of the assignment is to conduct a skills audit that will enable the development of a Human Resource Capacity Building Strategy (HRCB) for the Northern Corridor Integration Projects (NCIPs).

Mr. Chancellor Sir, **The College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences** is graduating **Six Hundred and Fifty (650)** students today, of whom **ten (10) are PhDs**. We congratulate the College.

The College has established the first ever **Centre of Excellence in Waste Management in Uganda**. The Centre is the outcome of an initial research project on the utilisation of urban market crop wastes in crop/livestock production systems. The Centre will act as a research, technology incubation and dissemination unit hence strengthening linkages with the private sector. We commend Professor Elly Sabiiti-the Coordinator of the Centre, and the entire Team in the College for this initiative. I extend special thanks to the Government of Sweden, Bank of Uganda and the AU/EU for supporting the establishment of the Centre.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, in partnership with Perdue University in Indiana USA, the College with Prof. Noble Banadda as Principal Investigator, developed a Solar-powered Irrigation pump as a cheap and reliable solution for small scale farmers. The irrigation pump was demonstrated and launched on 5th January 2017 by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda. The entire system can be assembled at a cost of UGX 3.65 million.

In partnership with the University of Kentucky, USA, the College came up with a new technology of converting heavy plastics into bio diesel. The innovation was the first of its kind in the country and promotes the utilisation of waste polythene bags/plastics, while addressing the problem of hazards caused by poor disposal of polythene bags in the country. The bio diesel can be used in motor vehicle engines, generators, lighting in the house and charcoal stoves, among others.

Researchers in the College also developed an organic pesticide from agricultural wastes that can be used by farmers to control pests like the red ants.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, **the College of Education and External Studies** will today present to you a total of **One Thousand, Three Hundred and Eighty Four (1384)** graduands, including **Eight (8) PhDs**. We congratulate the students and staff for this achievement.

I am happy to report that the College is engaged in the promotion of food security and livelihoods of low-income women in central Uganda, in partnership with the Global Nutrition and Health Programme at the Metropolitan University College and the *Community Health and Information Network*, a Uganda-based NGO. The five-year project is focused on climate change, vulnerability, existing land tenure systems and the role of HIV/AIDS as determining factors of food security and livelihoods in Uganda.

In line with the Makerere University strategic direction of increasing access to flexible education, the College developed the **Open, Distance and E-Learning policy**, which has been approved by the University Council. The policy aims at mainstreaming open, distance and eLearning into academic programmes of the University in order to increase access to flexible and quality technology supported learning.

In support of our core function of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and Networking, the College is reaching out to the community through interaction with secondary school teachers, who have undergone refresher courses. The College has also made progress in re-organising the teacher-training programme, in preparation for the new proposed secondary school curriculum.

In further support of Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and Networking, the College initiated the Prof. Senteza Kajubi Memorial Lecture aimed at providing space for discussion of education related issues in Uganda and the region at large.

Mr. Chancellor Sir, as I conclude, I wish to once again congratulate our dear graduands upon joining the prestigious list of hardworking men and women who proudly call themselves Makerere University alumni. Our alumni come from every district in Uganda and almost every country in the world. This is, in my own opinion, a significant achievement. This achievement is not only yours but also ours including your parents and guardians as well as country at large.

Dear Graduands, your success is the joy of Makerere University. You are the symbol of our Motto. To our dear Parents and Guardians, thank you for the support to your children.

In a special way, I congratulate all Members of Staff graduating today. In the same spirit, I congratulate the children, spouses and relatives of Members of Staff graduating today. Congratulations to you all.

The job market you are joining comprises many who have gone through the same gates of Makerere University. Make use of this resource through networking, as you make your way in today's competitive global marketplace. We have given you the tools. It is now up to you to use them appropriately. We wish you success and may you always remember your alma mater, Makerere University. May God bless you always.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my honour and privilege to invite our dear Chancellor, Professor Ezra Suruma, to address the congregation.

Thank you.