

Statement by Gjermund Sæther, Minister Counsellor/Deputy Head of Mission Royal Norwegian Embassy Kampala, On the Occasion of the Official Opening of the Faculty of Technology Extension.

Date: 14Pth August 2009
Makerere University, Kampala

**Hon Ministers,
Your Excellencies, Ambassadors present
The Chancellor, Makerere University
The Vice Chancellor, Makerere University
Representatives from Government
Distinguished Guests,**

It is my pleasure to have been invited to participate at this official opening of the Faculty of Technology Extension at Makerere University. As you may all be aware, Norway provided the funding that enabled this extension to be built. What many of you may not be aware of is how old the cooperation between Makerere and Norway is.

Norwegian support to Makerere University started as far back as the 1960s with the establishment of the then Department of Botany in the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry.

Norwegian support has, over the years included both capacity building and technical assistance, and has from the beginning also support the infrastructural development of the University. The support from Norway in the 70's included extension to the building of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry, construction of Laboratories at Kabanyolo as well as providing technical assistance by Norwegian academics. However this support was suspended in 1973 due to political instability that prevailed at the time.

Norwegian involvement at Makerere resumed in 1987 with the Faculty of Forestry in Uganda. In 1991, NUFU "The Norwegian Programme for Development Research and Education" was established, and the first phase of support from 1991 to 1995 focused on equipping laboratories for basic sciences and building capacity for research at the University.

The year 2000 marked a significant change in the way the cooperation with Makerere and Norway was structured. In that year the Government of Norway, working in consultation with Makerere agreed to support the formulation of an Institutional Development Plan. In addition it was agreed that Norway would support the implementation of this plan. Support to the first 5 year Makerere University Strategic Plan:2000/1 – 2004/5 amounted to NOK 110m (aprox USD 12million). In order to complete various

activities that had already started this agreement was extended to 2008. In all, 15 units at the University benefited from this support. The Department of Women and Gender Studies, the Faculty of Computing and Information Technology and Department of Food Science and Technology, are the main buildings that were built with this support.

In addition this support also contributed to the renovation and equipping of laboratories at Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute at Kabanyolo for various Departments under the Faculty of Agriculture.

The agreement for support to the Institutional Development Programme Phase II:2005/6 to 2008/9 was signed on 27th October 2005 and is worth NOK 60million(approx USD 9million). The overarching goal of the support in phase two is to improve capacity for optimal utilization of scarce academic talents in national policy formulation and poverty eradication.

The extension to Faculty of Technology Building, is supported under Phase two. With this extension, it is envisioned that there will be an improved environment for teaching, research and office accommodation given the growing staff and student numbers in the Faculty of Technology as a result of the Government of Uganda policy of promoting Science and Technology. The Norwegian contribution to the expansion is NOK14.67m equivalent to Ushs.4,278,750,000.

It is our hope that with expanded facilities, there will be better quality research, better teaching, more collaboration with private sector, improved quality of staff and students and improved outreach services. The improved physical facility should contribute to a positive teaching and learning environment in which staff and students interact productively.

Research is a key activity for scientific discoveries and innovation. Technological innovations are drivers of industry, commerce and national economies. Research is essential national development. We hope that with this facility, research and innovation at the faculty can be enhanced.

Finding solutions for any of the challenges faced by Uganda should be a focus of the research that is done at universities. Issues of how to address the increasing energy demands, the need for improved use of locally available resources, addressing the infrastructure constraints at both national and regional level. Key challenges are also arising from the threats of global warming- how can technological innovation help people to cope? Uganda's population is growing at an unprecedented rate. What are the foreseen challenges, to for instance urbanization?

What we hope to see are long term results from this investment. That is students and staff who are at the forefront of innovative techniques, new approaches, improved technologies and better services that drive the development process of Uganda.

That is why the overall Norway support to Makerere has been aimed at assisting the University to better meet its stated role in the development of Uganda. The interventions we support should help the University to develop human resources in various fields and to increase the practical orientation of the graduates to better relate to the needs of society.

At this point I would like to raise some challenges that face both Makerere and the Government of Uganda in terms of Infrastructure development. Where as development partners can provide the funds for investment in the infrastructure, it is expected that Government of Uganda's should provide funds for maintenance and upkeep of both the buildings, various equipments and technically advanced instruments. It should be kept in mind that a lack of proper maintained can halt or put an investment out of use. It is therefore essential to address this challenge as soon as possible to ensure that the infrastructure and equipment continue to serve the University for a long time.

In conclusion, I would like to say that Norway appreciates the role that Makerere University has played in the development of the country providing the country with its pool of professionals and academics. We also recognise that in the ever changing world, Makerere will also have to adapt itself to continue to provide that pool of talent that is relevant to the needs of modern society. In order to retain its position as a centre of academic excellence Makerere will have to face the many challenges ahead in an innovative and pragmatic way. It is our hope that Makerere will be able to raise up to the challenge.

Let me also mention that coming to Maker ere is almost like going to Norway, there are so many Ugandans here that have spent time in Norway, before and after the NUFU-programme. Several Norwegian universities have cooperation with Makerere and Norwegian students and staffs are regular visitors here. This is an important asset in the bilateral relationship between our two countries.

I take the opportunity to commend the Office of the Vice Chancellor, management and staff and the Government of Uganda for good working relationship we have enjoyed throughout our support to Makerere University.

Thank You.