

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS OF THE OCCASION OF
OPENING THE FACULTY OF TECHNOLOGY
EXTENSION AND CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF
ENGINEERING INSTRUCTION AND RESEARCH
IN UGANDA**

By

ASSOC.PROF. DR. E. LUGUJJO

14TH AUGUST 2009

The Chief Guest Your Excellency the Ambassador of Norway to Uganda,
The Chairman of the Electoral Commission, Eng Prof. Badru Kiggundu,
The Ag. Vice-Chancellor and Members of Management,
The Deans, Directors and Principals of Schools and Institutes,
Heads of Departments,
Members of Academic and Support Staff,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am greatly honoured and privileged to be standing before you here today on behalf of the entire workforce of the Faculty of Technology. I was touched and sincerely gratified when my Dean, Prof. B. Nawangwe requested me to do so.

First, let me add my voice to the echo of the Dean to welcome you to this place.

You were invited to join us in celebrating our multiple achievements, namely the acquisition of a new real and magnificent building, to acknowledge 40 years of engineering instruction and research and 20 years of Architectural and surveying training at Makerere.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to recall that this Faculty started humbly with 24 students in 1969 and a year later those students moved to the now old building that has stood alone for the past 40 years and undergone all the modifications any human

being can think of in order to accommodate 6 departments and over a thousand students.

In 1979 we made excavations for a Civil Engineering building exactly in this place where you are seated. Twenty years later, these excavations would fill up with water during the rainy season and we feared that our students would drown in them. Out of desperation we covered them, and that was the end of hope of a new building. This state of despair and hopelessness was rescued by close collaboration and negotiations between the Government of Norway and Makerere University.

It was through good anticipation that allowed positive thinking and commitment on both sides, that the concept of this building was nurtured and over a period of the past two years this concept has been transformed into a functional 6,600m² physical facility!

We therefore thank wholeheartedly and salute the people and the Government of Norway for yet another act of benevolence on Makerere University Campus! A good seed has been sown and this is a landmark and legacy as generations of students and researchers will use this building from now on.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The existence of this building has started to impact on the way we think and do things. Previously it was not unusual to accommodate 3 lecturers in a small room sharing one table. They could take shifts in sitting! You can

imagine a building that was meant for one department was eventually accommodating six!

Let me quote the observations of the renowned Swiss architect, Le Corbusier, who said that dwelling units should be a '*machine for living*'(1923). Likewise educational buildings like this one as well as the sites that surround it and the furniture inside, are 'machines for learning' specially designed to accommodate their specific functions including receiving lectures, discussions, discovery and individual learning.

This building, therefore, is not an ordinary building; it is a machine for learning that has been achieved through globalization rendered humane. This building houses specialised Architecture studios, laboratories, lecture theatre, lecture rooms, conference rooms, cafeteria, lobbies, Board rooms, just to mention a few.

In this short address, I want to reiterate that there is never a favourable wind for the one who does not know where he is heading. We pledge that the path has been charted and the compass direction is visible and clear; we will not let you down. We pledge to use this infrastructure wisely and optimumly!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to turn to 40 years of the Faculty of Technology. This era has been marked by challenges, anxiety, hope and progress. The Faculty has been transformed from exclusively a teaching organ to one with

multidimensional functions of teaching, research, consultancy and community interaction.

Our student number has gone up 50 fold and gender mainstreaming has been kept at the heart of our development.

Currently 6 departments graduate 300 students annually and our twelve graduate programmes have diversified their research interests. Over the past few years our productivity and competitiveness have greatly increased thanks to the support by the Government of Norway and other stakeholders. The number of staff with Ph.Ds has increased threefold in the last ten years. Our research capacity has improved significantly and our research output has gone up tenfold.

I am also happy to inform you that this current year we had 20 first classes 109 Upper second. Allow me also to show you some milestone, namely our first Ugandan lady Ph.D holder Dr. Assumpta Naggenda, an Architect. She is now playing the card of a role model and a catalyst to all young women in this country.

As you have noted, our major challenges include equipment, textbooks, furniture and retention of more qualified staff, and inspiring more young students to pursue graduate studies.

In this context, I want to pay tribute to those academic, technical and support staff who are still serving the Faculty and have hope for a better future.

These people have recognized that education and training constitute a force of change, and kept the fire burning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We celebrate 20 years of Architecture and Surveying departments that have existed and endured the storm through improvisation. Let us salute Prof. Nawangwe and Dr. Batungi who started the departments and continue to offer services and guidance. We equally salute their colleagues in the two departments which have supported them through thick and thin. There are still major problems to be overcome especially in increasing enrolments and training more qualified staff who can teach in the two disciplines.

As I said before, our Faculty is in the mainstreaming of serious research and development.

Our research programmes have been supported immensely by several research and development partners. These are:

- Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Higher Education.
- Sida/SAREC
- Italian Corporation
- Directorate of Water Development (DWD)
- Nile Basin Capacity Building Network Initiative
- Carnegie Corporation of New York
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) USA
- I@Mak.Com Supported by Rockefeller Foundation

- Millennium Science Initiative (MSI)

The way forward is a challenging future, but a future of values. We are always inspired in this Faculty by the famous German philosopher Max Weber who wrote,

“the possible would never be achieved if, in the world, we did not constantly keep trying to achieve the impossible”.

For Weber’s words to be fulfilled, we will need to nurture and strengthen more international collaboration, internal national cohesion and restructure our concepts about higher education and situate it on a new platform!

In conclusion, I would like to thank you for sparing your precious time and for listening to me most attentively.