

**SPEECH BY ARCH. DR. BARNABAS NAWANGWE-DEAN FACULTY OF
TECHNOLOGY AT THE FIRST CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON FORMATION
OF THE NATIONAL REMOTE ENGINEERING CONSORTIUM**

27 November, 2009

Our Guest of Honor-Permanent Secretary Ministry of ICT,
The Ministers of State for ICT and Higher Education,
The Vice Chancellor Makerere University,
The Vice Chancellors of other Universities Present,
The Deputy Vice Chancellors Makerere University,
Deans of Faculties and Colleges,
Representatives from the Government,
Representatives from the Private Sector,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen;

I take the privilege to welcome you to this forum, intended to chart the way forward towards the formation of the National Remote Engineering Consortium. I am delighted that one of our very own projects is championing this vital call. iLabs@MAK has had a strongly-felt impact on the promotion and development of higher education by enriching the Teaching and Learning methods in the Faculty of Technology. The dawn of online laboratories has compensated for lack of adequate experimentation equipment in our Faculty, especially in the Department of Electrical Engineering. Students are now able to experiment conveniently by sharing expensive equipment online, and this has greatly enhanced their pedagogical experience. We are here today to discuss how Remote Engineering, as has been demonstrated from our experience, can be applied in other fields to add value to education, health, communication, commerce and Governance.

Our Guest of Honor, the Faculty of Technology was established in 1970. Over the past 40 years, the Faculty has produced more than 3000 Engineers, Architects, Surveyors, Land Economists and Construction Managers. Some of these professions were introduced of recent to cater for the ever changing trends in Science and Technology. This year, the course leading to a Bachelors degree in Computer Engineering was introduced due to the growing need for well trained professionals in the booming ICT Industry. With support from the Norwegian

Agency for International Development (NORAD) and the Government of Uganda, the Faculty recently launched an extension with an additional 60,000 m² of space, necessitated by the increasing student and staff numbers. The current demand for Higher Education poses numerous challenges; shortage of equipment, personnel and space inclusive. It is imperative that we make use of the new technologies at our disposal to enrich the educational experience at an economical cost.

Over the years, the Faculty of Technology has been at the fore front of involvement in Projects, Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and Consultancies in liaison with other Faculties, Institutions and Reputable Organisations. Much as iLabs@MAK is implemented in collaboration with Massachusetts Institute of Technology, others like ARMS (Academic Records Management System), Community Wireless Research Centre, Centre for Research in energy and Energy Conservation, Technology Transfer Development Centre, Technology Consults, amongst others are mainly of indigenous initiatives. I must salute all members involved in these projects aimed at availing and applying technology relevant to needs of society. The Faculty of Technology has taken a step in placing itself in the context of promptly tracing the needs of society and finding methods and creative channels of performing its responsibility to the Nation. The need for a National Remote Engineering Consortium could not have been more timely. The success of more endeavours of this kind requires enormous exchange of information, coordination and sharing of technology amongst the academia, Private Sector and Government. As a Faculty, we express our thanks and appreciation to all those who contributed to the furtherance of the scientific itinerary of the Unit: the University Administration, the Government and our Development partners: Carnegie Cooperation of New York, NORAD, SIDA-SAREC, Rockefeller Foundation and many others.

What does the rapid pace of change in Technology mean to us and our future? No one really knows for sure. What many are predicting, however, is that those who will be best equipped to handle the world are those who can come up with the best ideas at critical times, those who value hard work, collaboration and doing whatever it takes to get something right. We have such an idea here today. It is my hope that today's meeting ushers a new dawn of engineering that will not only revolutionalise education, but our whole lives as well. I wish you a fruitful discussion.