

## **VICE CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH ON THE FIRST CONSULTATIVE MEETING ABOUT FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL REMOTE ENGINEERING CONSORTIUM**

The Guest of Honour-Permanent Secretary, Ministry of ICT,  
The Ministers of State for ICT and Higher Education,  
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,  
Representatives from National Instruments,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am delighted to be part of today' inaugural consultative meeting on the formation of the National Remote Engineering Consortium. I wish to extend a warm welcome to our Guest of Honor and all delegates present at this event, organized by one of Makerere University's blossoming projects, the iLabs Project supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. I wish also, to congratulate the Faculty of Technology for astutely being a model as far as furthering research critical to improving the teaching and Learning methods in Makerere University is concerned. My dear colleague and friend, Prof. Tickodri Togboa, thank you for making a valuable contribution to the University's intellectual capital. I believe it is your effort that has led us here today.

As you are well aware, I am fresh in the reigns of this position. However, I have always followed developments in the Faculty of Technology with interest. I also fostered some joint research efforts in my previous capacity as the Dean of the Faculty of Computing and Information Technology. As part of my business plan, I promised and will ensure that Makerere University repositions itself as service provider to government and the Private Sector in line with our mission of *"Providing innovative teaching, learning, research and services responsive to*

*national and global needs*". I will say again what I said at the recent research dissemination workshop organized by Makerere University: Much as we can not be better than the quality of our research outputs, the research is useless if it is not sold to the private sector and Government. I am glad iLabs@MAK has taken a positive step in the right direction. Today's meeting should inspire more projects and academic units to forge academia-private sector-Government collaborations as well as encourage inter-disciplinary coherence. Since our nation thrives on the younger brains, I am also particularly thrilled by the presence of Heads of secondary schools here today. The message should be loud and clear to the younger generation, that a good ground is being laid upfront for them and a new dispensation has dawned. In my capacity, I pledge to fully support all efforts like this, which do not only demonstrate the relevance of Higher education to National needs, but also highlights the vitality of a concerted effort in tackling issues of common interest. As we sit shoulder to shoulder here today, I still voice that the true worth of a University is not only its ability to instruct, but to create, and it is the role of both State and Private Sectors to promote that environment, that ambiance, that milieu in which creative energy will grow and flourish.

Our Guest of Honor, Remote Engineering is a very novel concept today. The world is turning into a global village and the current trend is to allow and organize a shared use of equipment and resources, including specialized software amongst institutions (Educational, Government and private) for the sake of a huge knowledge base and for economic reasons. The demands of globalization cannot leave us stalling on. In my view, a Remote Engineering Consortium in Uganda will improve educational training, foster research and harmonize the relationship between academia and the public/private sectors. Makerere University embraced remote engineering a few years ago and the dividends are evident. We have an e-learning environment that has tremendously improved the pedagogical experience of students in all

academic units. iLabs are a case in point where remote access to equipment has enabled students to share limited resources, at the same time gaining a hugely beneficial educational experience. I must thank National Instruments for all the support in this endeavor. Makerere University is ready to collaborate with you in other disciplines as well.

Our dear delegates, today is the beginning of an important journey. If our nation is to develop and thrive, the investment in creation and opportunities of new knowledge will need to be far more robust than is currently the case and remote engineering gives us an opportune platform to realize that. It is my hope that what we have started today will be brought to fruition.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a privilege to be here today and to be part of this historic occasion.

I thank you and wish you fruitful deliberations!