

OPENING REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ECONOMIC RESEARCH CENTRE (EPRC), DR. SARAH SSEWANYANA, AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE UGANDA DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION CENTRE (UDIC) ON 2ND MARCH 2010

The Chief Guest

Your Excellences, the Ambassadors and High Commissioners

The World Bank Country Manager

Government of Uganda Officials

Members of the EPRC Board of Management;

Vice Chancellor, Makerere University;

Invited Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure and honour to welcome you officially to the official launch of the Uganda Development Information Centre (UDIC), a one stop centre for development learning resource. It is a partnership between the World Bank and Economic Policy Research Centre.

On behalf of the EPRC Management and Staff, I would like to pay special tribute to the World Bank Office Kampala, which has decided to entrust the Centre with its Public Information Centre (PIC). The decision to transfer and relocate the PIC (now UDIC) to EPRC is a great honour and recognition of the role EPRC plays in policy research, analysis and dissemination of research based knowledge and information. From today, people yearning for development related information will no longer be going to the World Bank's offices in Kampala. The UDIC is here for such information.

The majority of publications, reference books, e-journals as well as software databases have been brought to the EPRC. We expect a large number of visitors to the UDIC. The World Bank has also pledged to continue supporting the UDIC through provision of new publications, reference books, journals and others.

On our part, we promise to serve our customers promptly, efficiently, diligently and humanely. Where we do not live up to your expectations, please do not hesitate to send an email to the concerned authorities.

The benefits of the UDIC are enormous but allow me to mention just a few: enhancement of the capacities of the EPRC researchers; improvement in the quality of research outputs from university students and academia; enhancement of the quality of university teaching; improved quality of national debates on development issues; and instant access to information.

Since EPRC's inception in 1993, it has evolved into a high quality research organisation and has contributed significantly to the formulation of national policies. EPRC is an independent, autonomous not-for-profit-organisation, limited by guarantee. We are very grateful to the continued core financial support from the Government of Uganda, the African Capacity Building Fund (ACBF), and the International Development Research

Centre-ThinkTank Initiative (IDRC-TTI). To our previous and present Members of the EPRC Board of Management, please accept our appreciation for the continued guidance you provide to the EPRC Management. Your commitment to the Centre's activities has made us what we are now.

We are totally aware that the journey we have started is not an easy one. However, with your support we shall reach our goal of promoting knowledge for sustainable development. We look forward to other development partners agreeing to put together their development related information to the UDIC's knowledge base.

We conduct high quality and policy oriented research which is guided by our medium term strategic plan research agenda. We conduct core research, which is initiated by the in-house researchers; and commissioned research, which is demand driven but always in line with our research thematic areas. Over time we have built and maintained strong institutional networks both locally and internationally. For instance, we have undertaken collaborative research with Makerere University; we run an internship program targeting undergraduate students, among others.

The EPRC serves as a forum for policy dialogue by organizing public/guest lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences for intellectual dialogue on development policy issues. The launching of the UDIC at EPRC will therefore increase the Centre's visibility and interaction with a large number of researchers, scholars and the general public.

Needless to say, information, knowledge and communication play crucial role in the democratic governance and development of any country. Once again, we are most grateful to the World Bank to partner with us in the fulfilment of our motto "Towards Sustainable Development".

Lastly but not least, I would like to thank the EPRC staff for their valuable time in making this launch a success. May God bless you all

Thank you very much for your attention