

**SPEECH BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR, MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, PROF
VENANSIUS BARYAMUREEBA, AS CHIEF GUEST AT THE 'VOICES
FROM AFRICA IFIP 9 WORKSHOP' AT FCIT ON 22nd MARCH, 2010**

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the 1st International Federation for Information Processing Workshop on Research Voices from Africa ICT and Development Workshop in Uganda.

As the world continuously embraces the various forms of Information and Communication Technologies, the time is right for Africa as a continent to address the question, on how best ICTs can be used to enhance development and attainment of the stipulated millennium goals.

Pertinent to the growth of the continent is improvement in the areas of education, health, communication, security and agriculture, to better the standard of living across the continent.

I therefore wish to emphasize here and now, that there is no limit to how we can use ICT to better our lives, if only we pay close attention towards its implementation.

The role of academia is to carry out research on how best ICTs can be used to bring development to these key sections, and impart knowledge accordingly. Consequently, over the next 10 years, the University has decided to place more premium on research so as to focus on knowledge production and to replace the outreach paradigm with its patronage connotation and instead embrace knowledge transfer partnerships.

The research must be rich in guidelines and action points that can be used by both the public and private sectors, on how to implement ICTs. We should nevertheless applaud efforts that have been put in place towards narrowing the IT gap by both African governments and other international organisations like United Nations.

CIT, which has a total undergraduate student population standing at about 5000, is proud to be contributing to the development of ICT and its capacity within Uganda. CIT offers four undergraduate programs, from which students gain relevant skills that impact on the community in different ways. ICT applications such as using the GIS to map locations, designing mobile phone platforms for different purposes such as health data collection, use of computer vision for traffic control, ICT for teaching and learning, information system for agricultural have proved to be beneficial in giving solutions to the country.

The importance of good internet connectivity cannot be underestimated. As such, the advent of undersea fiber-optic cable on the East African coastline and plans for two more have buoyed hopes of economic benefits and better utilization of ICT for African development. These improved internet speeds are expected elicit a surge in internet use and hence boost economic growth in East Africa, which has been reliant on expensive and sometimes unreliable satellite technology.

As Makerere University, we plan to use high speed internet to boost our research, offer cheap and reliable education to all citizens; as illustrated by the opening up of our Jinja upcountry campus, and improve on the provision of health and agricultural services. We encourage and foster quality of research undertaken by members of staff at CIT and Makerere University in general, so as to raise the performance and excellence for Uganda. We are beginning to register remarkable progress in these areas through the numerous cutting edge research outputs, upcoming collaborations from international bodies and the many completing PhD students. The latest web rankings indicated that Makerere is the leading University in East and Central Africa, and we intend to continue pursuing our vision to be the leading institution for academic excellence and innovations in Africa.

CIT fosters dissemination of ICT related outputs through its Annual International Conference on Computing and ICT Research (ICCIR), The Journal of Computing and ICT Research (IJCIR) and has moved a step higher to collaborate with International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) to have their first workshop on ICT and Development in Uganda. It is my earnest wish that you come up with practical solutions on how we should advance ICT development, at the end of this IFIP Workshop. We should also consider having actual collaborative projects to help Africa as outputs from this ICT and Development Workshop. A follow up on the recommendations and action points should be pertinent issues for the organisers. Let us share lessons learnt else where with one another, in bridging the ICT divide on the continent.

On behalf of Management I take this opportunity once again to welcome you to Uganda and Makerere University in Particular. We wish you a pleasant stay and fruitful deliberations as we build for the Future.

I now declare this IFIP Workshop officially open.

Thank you for listening.