

**A SPEECH BY THE CHANCELLOR, PROFESSOR GEORGE
MONDO KAGONYERA AT THE 61ST GRADUATION
CEREMONY (17th – 21st JANUARY 2011)**

I am extremely pleased and honoured to preside over this 61st Graduation ceremony of Makerere University, which runs from the 17th to 21st January, 2011.

Every year, Makerere University produces a mass of graduates who, through the years have been prepared to participate in the development of Uganda and beyond, but also for their self realization. As Chancellor, I congratulate the **13,296** graduands for this academic achievement. Out of these, **46** students are graduating with PhDs. This is a major milestone in your lives. Not many have been fortunate to make it this far for various reasons. It is therefore an event for you to cherish. Remember that the degrees you are being awarded are mere foundations on which to build your future.

As Chancellor, I am happy to announce that a total of **236** graduands have excelled with First Class Honours during this historic 61st graduation ceremony. I also warmly congratulate all those students who have attained Second-Class Upper degrees. I encourage you to progress further in your academic pursuits so as to gain new and advanced skills and be more competitive globally. I also congratulate all other graduands and wish you the best as you go out into the world to contribute to the welfare of your communities. You must realize that success in your future performance does not depend on the class of degree alone. Even those who obtained pass degrees should brace themselves to face the world with nothing but success in their minds.

I pay special tribute to the members of staff who have prepared our students during their stay here. I also thank the parents, sponsors and guardians for the sacrifices they have made over the years to educate their children.

In a special way, I also wish to congratulate members of staff who are graduating at this 61st Graduation ceremony and those who have recently completed their study programmes at other institutions around the world. You made the right choice to advance your careers. We know that the knowledge and skills that you have acquired will improve your service delivery for the betterment of this institution. I would also like to congratulate the members of staff whose children and spouses are graduating from the 17th to 21st January 2011.

Dear graduands, education is an investment. The Government together with your parents, sponsors and guardians have invested in you a great amount of resources to enable you scale this academic ladder. I appeal to you to utilize the knowledge you have acquired for the benefit of society and humanity in general, but of course to benefit yourselves.

In a special way, allow me to recognize the individuals and organizations that have worked hard to make the 61st graduation ceremony a reality.

I commend the Government of Uganda, under His Excellency, The President for maintaining peace and stability, which has created an enabling environment for the University to operate normally. Those of you who worked or studied at Makerere during certain times know the importance of what I am saying. The Government has also put in place policies such as the 'Affirmative Action,' which have led to an increase in the number of Ugandans accessing higher education.

The cost of university education is high. Consequently many young men and women have missed the opportunity to study through lack of the required funds. Funding university education is a problem all over the world, not just here in Uganda. You remember the recent riots in London where even the heir to the throne Prince Charles was harassed. It is the responsibility of everybody, not just government to be innovative about this problem. As part solution to this problem, we are optimistic that the Ministry of Education and Sports will operationalise the loan scheme as a measure to help needy students to access higher education.

I am greatly indebted to our development partners both national and international organisations/institutions that continue to devote enormous resources towards the institutional development of Makerere University. Indeed, with your generous support, we have been able to and commit to continue to train and produce quality graduates.

I salute the former University Council under the leadership of Hon. Matthew Rukikaire (Dec 2006- Dec 2010) for formulating policies that have guided the University Management, Senate and Appointments Board to undertake their respective mandates for the betterment of Makerere University.

I also congratulate the current University Council under the leadership of Eng. Dr. Charles Wana Etyem upon your appointment to the supreme governing body of this University. You have been entrusted with the crucial task of providing oversight and strategic direction for this University. I do not doubt your ability to deliver.

I thank the University Senate for continuously recommending to Council well-researched academic policies and reforms aimed at improving the quality of education at this august institution. You must know that more than any other organ, you are the pacemakers of academic excellence by being uncompromising in adherence to university rules, regulations and culture.

I thank the University Management headed by Professor Venansius Baryamureeba for courageously implementing Council's policies as well as the innovative strategies laid out in the business plans. This has resulted into improved service delivery as evidenced by the increased flow of information, academic, research, administrative as well as financial management reforms. Consequently, these deliberate efforts are enabling Makerere University to become increasingly accountable to the citizenry it exists to serve. Particularly I want to thank Prof. Baryamureeba and his team for the steadfast stand they have taken in protecting the university's assets including land.

I thank the Students' Guild leadership for choosing dialogue rather than confrontation and sometimes violence whenever there is any misunderstanding with the administration. This has led to a dramatic reduction in the number of would be strikes, which as a result, has enabled the University to continue with its activities with minimal interruptions. Management and the guild must always consider one another as partners rather than adversaries.

Improving Quality of Education

We have noted in the past that the quality of academic standards at Makerere could do with useful improvement. Of course Makerere University does not stand out as the only institution where standards could be better. Fortunately we know quite a lot about the factors affecting standards at Makerere and Uganda in general. I am pleased to note that the university has taken bold steps to address some of the issues and urge you to continue in the search for excellence as your vision states. Of California Institute of Technology (Caltec) Prof. Baltimore a Nobel prize Laureate said, "We are the best because we hire the best teachers and admit the best students". Emulate them.

At a recent World Innovation Summit on Education (WISE), held in Doha, Qatar, many interesting issues aimed at improving Education were addressed. One of them was an organization based in South Africa, called The African Institute of Mathematical Sciences founded by Prof. Neil Turok, a former professor of Mathematical Physics at Cambridge.

They have done fascinating work training students of all backgrounds to excellence levels.

The Relevance of higher Education

The globalised world as we know it today is undergoing tremendous changes at a very rapid speed. Our attempt to catch up, if ever, with the rest of the world must be made through high quality education. It is only education and not resources like oil that will bring about prosperity. The Arab world has recognized this and in spite of their oil riches they now spend huge amounts of money on creating centres of excellence. In the past under the infamous Structural Adjustment Programmes, the World Bank had to some extent misled the developing countries to stress primary education rather than tertiary education. This was wrong. The role played by tertiary education in the changing world cannot be over emphasized. We need these centres of excellence. We must establish ourselves on the cutting edge of knowledge.

Therefore governments in the developing world have an eminent role to play. In order for this role to be handled efficiently we must recognize the major factors that affect higher education. Among these are:-

Major factors that affect higher education are:

- The role of Government in higher education
- Population growth and population education
- Globalization, regionalization and sub-regionalization
- Rapid scientific progress
- Access and participation
- Increased cultural sensitivity and pressure for democracy and peace
- Need to cater for more diverse clienteles and changing labour market needs
- New instructional methods resulting from the application of new technology
- Funding constraints and privatization
- Reorganization of system and diversification in structures

It is very important to note that constructive partnership between government and university leadership is a critical element in the process of transformation of higher education.

The relationship between Lecture Theatre Approaches And Industrial Implementation practice

We all know that there is widespread dissatisfaction with what is taught at universities and what is needed in the workplace. Studies have been carried out and the weaknesses in our curricular have been identified. In other words there is a gap between academics and practice that must be narrowed or closed. Indeed I am aware that at Makerere a number of schools have attempted to address this issue. The faculties of Technology and Agriculture are examples.

In the rest of the world they have established Corporate Universities where students are trained in the exact needs of industry. Large amounts of money have been and continue to be spent on these universities. For example the Infosys Global Education Centre in Delhi is a \$ 120 million dollar complex and expansion works worth \$ 150 million are in progress.

What I am saying is that our government must stop treating knowledge as one more good in a totally open market to be bought where available. I want to hear of government's policy on improving the quality of education loud and clear.

Elevating the research function of the university

One of the determinants of a university is the volume and quality of its research output and innovations.

Allow me to therefore express my sincere gratitude to the academicians, scholars and researchers who have continued to conduct research, those who have managed to come up with innovations, as well as, those who have managed to publish their research in internationally recognised journals.

Through your great works and dedication, Makerere University has managed to improve in the Webometrics ranking of the top 100 universities in Africa, from once the 59th, to the 15th position in January 2010, and to the 13th position in July 2010.

I am therefore pleased to observe that the University Administration has decided to elevate the research function providing a policy direction for research, aimed at transforming Makerere into a research led university, as stipulated in our 10-year strategic plan. The strategic positioning of Makerere University as a research driven university will enable Makerere to focus more on knowledge production to support evidence based decision making and power the growth of Uganda's economy.

I also commend the university administration for undertaking administrative reforms that have led to the elevation of the School of

Graduate Studies into the Directorate of Research and Graduate Training. I am confident that the structures of the new Directorate will help to further improve on the university's scope and quality of research and innovations.

I encourage the academics to fully utilize these new research structures in order to propel the University to greater heights. I appeal to academics, to conduct research which will address problems in Africa. It is high time the academics focused on research aimed at providing solutions to development challenges in Africa.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, the date Sunday 12th December 2010 will remain historic in the academic records of Makerere University, but also very special in my life. After receiving the Honorary Doctorate of Laws, H. E President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni addressed the congregation where he challenged the scholarship in Africa to work to close the gap between us and the rest of the world in science. He further cautioned that Africa should not be too weak to tempt those countries that have advanced in science and technology to descend upon us with disastrous consequences. This was indeed a wonderful message from the Head of State!

However, I wish to request you to balance research with teaching. The statement "*Publish or Perish*" should not undermine the quality of education.

Makerere participates in the search for Africa's genius

On the same day (12th December 2010), President Yoweri K. Museveni further challenged us as to why we in Africa were not engaging in advanced studies such as space exploration whilst other nations forge ahead. As Chancellor, I am delighted to report that Makerere University has forged a partnership with the African Gifted Foundation, and has responded to the President's call. I have been informed that last week, the Department of Mathematics through its outreach programme together with the African Gifted Foundation, trained 25 exceptionally gifted young African mathematicians from across the continent in space science and satellites right here at Makerere. This Project, which targets students aged 14-16, is aimed at building a mass of space scientists for Africa in the next ten (10) years.

The role of a university in the fight against corruption in Uganda

Corruption is one of the evils in our society. Corruption weakens institutions and therefore threatens the development of any country. With corruption, those entrusted with authority even reach an extent of

fearing to provide basic information on resources, finances, as well as projects and contracts signed on behalf of their citizens.

It is unfortunate that Uganda is one of the countries faced with this evil of corruption. The President of Uganda, His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has devised several programmes to fight against corruption, but he needs the support of each and every one of us in this battle.

I therefore challenge the administrators and academicians at Makerere University to prioritise the fight against corruption. Makerere University, which admits the highest number of students each year, should play a critical role in the fight against corruption.

I know that some academic units, individuals and experts have participated in the fight against corruption. However, we need to concretize these efforts, and devise a broader institutional approach if we are to effectively redeem ourselves from this deep rooted evil.

I have noted that Makerere University conducts a course in Ethics and Public Administration, which attracts approximately 300 students every year. This is a good step, but the University could think of integrating courses on corruption, ethics and integrity in all its academic curricula.

I encourage the academicians and students to undertake extensive research on the evil of corruption. What steps did the developed countries undertake to fight corruption? We need to have a thorough understanding of the evil of corruption to avoid treating symptoms. Through research, we shall be able to arm ourselves with the vital information needed to address the causes of corruption. I also appeal to the staff and students to actively participate in public debates on the fight against corruption.

Embracing entrepreneurship

Today, there is a growing need for opportunities of entrepreneurship to rid the nation's grappling problem of poverty and even more, the problem of unemployment affects many of the graduates we send into the world every year. There is therefore a need for Entrepreneurship Education.

Entrepreneurship is increasingly considered as a viable platform for economic growth and prosperity. There is a shift towards 'portfolio careers' calling for entrepreneurial skills, creativity and flexibility.

I say this well knowing that starting up a business is not an easy thing but being poor is even harder. As we restructure our academic programmes in the next few years, we are going to incorporate training

and internship in more courses so that youth can have the basic training that they might need to start their own businesses.

Increasing interest among universities all over the world, is leading to the promotion of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial ventures and continuously challenging entrepreneurship studies. Makerere University Business School therefore must ask itself this crucial question: can entrepreneurship be successfully taught, and if yes, then how?

Entrepreneurship education in Europe has been growing dramatically over the past five years and is expected to continue growing. We, as the premier university need to emulate this and make entrepreneurship a primary elective. Entrepreneurship still tends to be offered in standalone courses, rather than being integrated across the curriculum.

A greater critical mass of entrepreneurship faculty, research and course material is needed, as we also create networks between faculty teaching entrepreneurs across the world, as they have managed to consistently succeed in this.

In order to promote entrepreneurship successfully therefore, teachers should proactively seek more innovative, practical and hands-on methods for teaching entrepreneurship. There is need to experiment with a range of approaches to make the teaching of entrepreneurship as close to reality as possible.

As parents, we must start encouraging our children to venture into private businesses. Sometimes we think that these children are too young to handle. These children can shine more than you can imagine. If you can afford to help your daughters and sons to start up a business, then do not hold back for reasons that can be rectified.

An example of a student who has embraced entrepreneurship

At this moment, allow me to mention, Ms Orikiriza Rusia, a student who graduated during 61st graduation ceremony with a Bachelor of Library and Information Science of Makerere University.

While in the Second year of her study (in 2008), Orikiriza Rusia started a small organisation: “ *United Foundation of Entrepreneurial Skills for Development(UFED Uganda)*” to promote the spirit of entrepreneurship among youth and women. She later founded a small company *ORIBAGS INNOVATIONS LTD*, and in their small capacity, they have been engaged in the manufacture and production of hand made paper products from agricultural wastes like wheat and rice straws. Their key products

include eco packaging bags that have been recommended as good alternative for Kaveera for packaging purposes.

In November 2009, Orikiriza Rusia was awarded by ILO in collaboration with African Women Network and Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association Ltd[UWEAL] with the Rising star award as the Youngest woman Entrepreneur with a young businesses that have demonstrated a true point of difference in the market place.

In December 2010, Orikiriza Rusia was honoured with the Young Achievers award being the overall winner of the Business and Trade category from the young Achievers awards for the National Chamber of commerce and Industry and Tetea Uganda.

Orikiriza Rusia has been recognised with the **SEED International award** from UNEP, UNDP and IUCN for running a promising social and environmental enterprise. The award ceremony is due February 2011.

Dear graduands, Orikiriza Rusia is a Ugandan, who has been studying at Makerere University, and is a living testimony that entrepreneurship, even from humble beginnings can earn you International recognition.

Taking advantage of upcoming opportunities

I am happy to learn that the projections by global research firm, International Data Corporation (IDC) predict that the IT market in Africa, the Middle East and Turkey will surpass **USD 60billion** this year, up by 12.8% from last year. IDC further reported that spending in Africa will increase by 10% to **USD 25billion** this year.

I also congratulate the Government of Uganda on launching the National Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) training project at the Faculty of Computing and IT here at Makerere University. This project is expected to create 130,000 jobs in the ICT sector for new graduates every year.

According to the Minister of ICT Hon. Aggrey Awori, through the BPO, young graduates will take charge of front office outsourcing, which includes customer-related services such as contact center services, and internal business functions such as human resource, research, and accounting outsourcing. Graduates will then be able to earn at least **USD 5** per day, while doing work at their convenience, including working at home.

I therefore challenge and also appeal to you our graduands to take very keen interest in the opportunities being presented by the BPO. You should not be left out.

The application of critical thinking

To Graduands in the Faculty of Social Sciences, the knowledge you have acquired through studying sociology, social administration, political science, among other disciplines, is a stepping stone to positioning yourselves in arenas of critical thinking: by participating in public dialogue on the fight against corruption; sensitizing people on poverty eradication; as well as other socio-economic issues affecting Ugandans and humanity in general.

The role of the legal profession

The legal profession can play a very critical role in shaping the destiny of a country.

It is required of you to practice your profession with utmost diligence. Nobody is better positioned to fight corruption and promote the rule of law than yourselves.

When faced with cases that threaten the very existence of the society in which you live such as those on corruption, homosexuality, rape and defilement, domestic violence and the evil of child sacrifice, always be reminded of your moral obligations.

May I borrow a few words of wisdom from our very own Professor William Senteza Kajubi and I quote.

“Important as money is, economic security and personal happiness cannot be attained merely by possession of money alone. They are attained by the service one renders to society, for useful service can be converted into all forms of human needs, with or without money”

Extracted from a Speech by Prof. Senteza Kajubi at the ceremony to unveil a bust in his honour, School of Education, Makerere University, 20th December 2010.

Sustaining the Vision of the Carnegie Corporation of New York

Makerere University established the Female Scholarship Initiative in 2001 with financial support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York with the aim of offering scholarships to female applicants from disadvantaged backgrounds to access education. This ten year project ended in 2010 and a total of 691 female students were supported with full scholarships.

To sustain the vision of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Makerere University launched a Female Scholarship Foundation in November 2010 with ten (10) pioneer beneficiaries, and our hope is to further expand this figure.

Gender mainstreaming in university operations

I have the pleasure to inform you that Makerere University has continued to undertake administrative reforms and also provided policy directions to mainstream gender in all the core functions of the University. I am happy to note that the Gender Mainstreaming Division in the Academic Registrar's Department has been elevated into a full Directorate. In addition, the Makerere University Gender Equality Policy, 2010, will further provide a policy direction to not only engender the academic curricula, but also streamline gender in all University operations.

Special Appeal to Government for Girls in Northern Uganda

Following the successful launch of the Makerere University Female Scholarship Foundation, the University Council together with Management requested the Government through the Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. Apolo Nsibambi to put in place **Affirmative Opportunity Scholarships** at Makerere University, for female students from Greater Northern Uganda (Acholi, Lango, Karamoja, Teso and West Nile sub-regions). Estimated to cost **UGX 1.5billion**, the Scholarships will make it possible for at least **150 young ladies** from Greater Northern Uganda to access quality education at Makerere.

Special appeal to graduands

With the knowledge you have acquired, I believe that you can cause a positive change in your communities. You have been empowered to be part of the privileged that should participate in guiding policy formulation and implementation. With the ever changing socio-economic environment, seek out the opportunities presented by globalization, the information and communication technology revolution, the East African community, the discovery of petroleum and oil among others. I appeal to you to claim your position in providing solutions to the development challenges facing us in Africa.

Finally, my special appreciation goes to the Ceremonies Committee for organising this historic 61st graduation ceremony.

Thank you very much.

As We Build for the Future.

Professor George Mondo Kagonyera
Chancellor, Makerere University