



REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

BY

RT HON PROFESSOR APOLO NSIBAMBI
PRIME MINISTER, REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

AT
THE FAREWELL DINNER FOR OUTGOING COUNCIL,
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

VENUE: SERENA HOTEL, KAMPALA
DATE: TUESDAY, 11TH JANUARY 2011
At
6.30 p m

Honorable Minister of Education & Sports
The Chancellor of Makerere University
The Outgoing Chairman of Council, Makerere University
The Incoming Chairman of Council, Makerere University
The Vice Chancellor and Members of the University
Management
University Staff
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am pleased to be Guest of Honor tonight as we bid farewell to the Outgoing Council and to welcome the new Council.

According to Section 40 of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, the University Council is the supreme organ of the Public University and as such it is responsible for the overall administration of the University and it ensures the due implementation of the objects and functions of the University.

Its functions include the following:

- (a) It is responsible for the direction of the administrative, financial and academic affairs of the University;
- (b) It formulates the general policy of the Public University;

- (c) It gives general guidelines to the Administration and Academic Staff of the University on matters relating to the operations of the University;
- (d) It does any other thing and take all necessary decisions conducive to the fulfillment of the objects and functions of the University.

Has the outgoing Council fulfilled these functions? As a former Chancellor of Makerere University, I worked closely with Hon Rukikaire and Mrs Kiganda and I wish to assure you that they spearheaded the Council well and that the Council fulfilled their functions ably.

I therefore, wish to take this opportunity to congratulate Hon Matthew Rukikaire, my friend and classmate at Makerere, for having been a very successful Chairperson. Like an experienced pilot, Hon Rukikaire has steered the Council through some challenging storms and brought the “Makerere ship” safely on the other side, where it is now bright and clear.

Your outgoing Council has registered many achievements as we have heard tonight. These achievements demonstrate no more than the vision, collective work and focused leadership of the Rukikaire-Kiganda led Council.

I wish to congratulate Mrs. Christine Kiganda, the outgoing Vice Chairperson, in a special way. She has been a distinguished and complementary Vice-Chairperson, but she has also served two-terms as Vice Chairperson.

The Council has had to grapple with the following persistent challenges:

First, inadequate funding

Makerere has been operating under financial constraints as a result of the fact that the funding from Government and from privately sponsored students has not tallied with the actual unit cost for training a student. According to a study carried out by Makerere in 2004, the unit cost per student in the Sciences was Shs 6.2 million while for the Humanities it was Shs 3.6 million. It is on this basis that Makerere's Council attempted to raise tuition in 2005. This led to student unrest and Government intervened by prevailing upon Makerere not to implement the Council's decision.

Government put in a place the Visitation Committee on Public Universities led by Professor Gordon MacGregor which, *inter alia*, dealt with the issue of the unit cost. On page 61 of the report, the Visitation Committee takes note of the inadequate funding of Public Universities. It

is stated that the Tertiary Sector gets only 15% of the Ministry of Education Budget while the Primary Sector obtains over 60% of the Ministry Budget. The Visitation Committee recommended on page 70 of its report that Universities should be free to set fees that are in line with unit costs. It recommended further that Government should invest in a loan scheme to assist poor students borrow money to cover tuition and other education components and that stringent criteria should be put in place to identify those who qualify for student loans. Friendly loan repayment mechanisms would be put in place. I am glad to point out that the Loan Scheme has been addressed.

- **Funding**

The perennial problems of limited Government funding have limited implementation of University programmes in the past. Council and Management have worked amicably with the line Ministries and Government funding is beginning to come more consistently. Several revenue mobilization measures were devised including the following:

- Lobbying Government to scale-up its subvention and increasing tuition by 40% and accommodation fees by UGX 240,000;
- Earning Government's consent to start recovering unit costs in the future, subject to Government approval and only limiting this to recovery of deficits. Prospects

to improve services offered to students are now assured.

- Introduction, with Government consent, of technology and library fees. These fees have resulted in the expansion and improvement of the quality library facilities and services. The improvement of ICT services stimulates innovation at technology-based faculties. We are beginning to realize the benefits of ICT in areas like on-line registration and swift transcript processing.

- **Retirement Benefits**

Council has struggled with the problem of recovering staff retirement funds from the National Insurance Corporation (NIC) for the past 5 years. Government has thrown its weight behind the University demands and assisted it to recover UGX 10bn of the 16bn that is held by NIC. Council has streamlined the retirement benefits system by putting in place a new integrated Retirement Benefits Scheme for all its employees. It inaugurated a Board of Trustees whose membership is predominantly staff, to run the scheme.

- **Land**

The previous Council (2003 – 2006) launched an investment policy to enable the University to develop its land which has been lying idle for years. This outgoing Council has approved the Build-Operate-Transfer mode of investment to partner with reputable property developers. The University

is ready to award contracts for developing the land in Makindye, Katanga and Kololo.

- **The second challenge has been the poor image of the University:**

I was informed that at its inauguration, Council was confronted with a very negative institutional image which extensively discredited the University in the eyes of the public locally and tainted its credibility with its partners abroad. Council working hand-in-hand with the new Management team has repaired this negative image through the following interventions:

- Monthly Management media briefings to inform the public about on-going issues and highlight the University's achievements;
- Bi-annual stakeholders conferences that show-case achievements, share challenges and account for partners' resources.
- Regular appearances before Statutory Parliamentary Committees (e.g. PAC and Social Services) to account to the Government and public;
- Initiation of a Public Relations and Communications Board to advise the Vice Chancellor;
- Closer cooperation with and support for the Convocation which ably convened the Alumni re-union Conference that hosted H.E Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania as Chief Guest.

- **The third challenge has been the indiscipline of some Students**

For a long time Makerere University Councils struggled with the problem of student and staff unrest, often resulting in strikes and the destruction of University property and private property in the environs of the campuses. This Council has managed to earn the good will of students albeit led by students of many different political affiliations. It used reconciliatory, transparent dialogue to reduce discontent among both staff and students to a bare minimum.

The fourth challenge has been the quality of education

Council has worked closely with Senate and Management to take steps to address this problem. I know that the problem of quality requires more attention but I was delighted to learn that improvements in both the delivery of academic services and communication systems has spurred improvements in the Web metric rankings from the 59th position in Africa in 2006 to the 13th position in 2010.

At this juncture, I would like to welcome the new Council led by Dr Charles Wana -Etyem as Chairperson with Dr. Catherine D. Namuddu as Vice Chairperson. Both bring

with them outstanding and multidisciplinary leadership experience and professionalism to Makerere University. Both are alumni and have also been staff members at one time or another.

I am confident that the incoming Wana Etyem-Namuddu University Council will take Makerere University to even greater heights from where the Rukikaire-Kiganda Council have brought it.