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OFFICE OF THE VICE-CHANCELLOR PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE

5th October 2010

To: Members of Staff

THE 10TH VICE-CHANCELLOR'S MONTHLY PRESS BRIEFING, HELD ON MONDAY 4TH OCTOBER 2010

Introduction:

The Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Venansius Baryamureeba welcomed the University Management, Members of staff and the media to the tenth monthly media briefing. Professor Baryamureeba then introduced the participating units namely the Faculty of Science and the School of Medicine, College of Health Sciences.

In attendance were:

- i. Professor Venansius Baryamureeba – Ag. Vice Chancellor
- ii. Mr. Alfred Masikye Namoah – Academic Registrar
- iii. Mr. David Kahundha Muhwezi – University Secretary
- iv. Mr. Cyriaco Kabagambe – Dean of Students
- v. Professor J.Y.T. Mugisha – Dean, Faculty of Science
- vi. Dr. Stephen C. Kijjambu – Dean, School of Medicine-College of Health Sciences
- vii. Dr. Maud Kamatenesi Mugisha – Deputy Dean (Research), Faculty of Science
- viii. Dr. John Mango- Deputy Dean, Faculty of Science
- ix. Dr. E. Kiguli Malwadde- Head, Department of Radiology
- x. Dr. Joseph Kyambadde – Head, Department of Biochemistry
- xi. Dr. Florence Mutonyi D'ujanga – Head, Department of Physics
- xii. Dr. Juma Kasozi – Head, Department of Mathematics

- xiii. Dr. Andrew Mwanika – Coordinator, COBES, College of Health Sciences
- xiv. Dr. Ameden Faith – Lecturer, College of Health Science
- xv. Dr. Monica Chibita – PR and Communications Board
- xvi. Ms. Rosemary Nakalanzi – PR and Communications Board
- xvii. Ritah Namisango – Public Relations Office
- xviii. Mark Wamai – Public Relations Office
- xix. Maureen Mayanja – Public Relations Office

1. Vice-Chancellor's presentation

Makerere University has partnered with the private sector to acquire high quality ICT services at affordable rates.

a) Makerere University Laptop Initiative Excites Staff and Students

The Makerere University staff and students can now get Lenovo S10-3 Netbook at only UGX 708,500/= and a Lenovo B550 Laptop at only UGX 967,500/=. In order for one to purchase a laptop, he/she will need a valid Identity card, proof of payment and a reference number.

b) Orange (U) Ltd provides cheap internet to University students and staff

At a subsidized cost of UGX 99,000 you get a USB Modem + 3G Internet Capacity for 3Month [Total 9G]. This enables students and staff to have internet access beyond the university campus.

c) Rehabilitation, Expansion and Equipping of Public Universities and other Selected Tertiary Institutions

The President of the Republic of Uganda, H.E Yoweri K. Museveni made a pledge that the government shall look into the funding of public universities. In the current budget, UGX 18billion was put in the budget for 2010/11 Financial Year, despite the fact that educational institutions have not yet received the 30% salary increment. This Financial Year again, a feasibility study (ref. advert in New Vision 30th September 2010) is being undertaken to pave way for **Rehabilitation, Expansion and Equipping of Public Universities and other Selected Tertiary Institutions.**

In 1997, the Government of Uganda introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) programme that caused the rise in enrolment in primary schools from 3.0million to over 7.4million by 2004 of which 51% were boys while 49% were girls. The UPE bulge from pupils that successfully completed primary level exerted pressure on infrastructure in secondary education making Government to introduce Universal Secondary Education (USE).Therefore, the Government's current Universal Secondary Education (USE) policy has led to higher transition rates to universities causing capacity constraints in the universities in terms of facilities (lecture rooms, laboratories, ICT facilities) and academic staffing levels.

The objective of the Government of Uganda is to develop an economically-productive knowledgeable population, with advanced skills that will lead to economic growth to benefit all sectors of society. It's against this background that Higher Education should no longer be seen as a luxury, but a critical element of national development. Therefore, the need to rehabilitate, expand and equip the existing Public Universities and selected tertiary institutions/colleges.

The project shall focus on;

- (a) Staff Development and Capacity Building;
- (b) Infrastructure Development;
- (c) Research, Innovations and Development;
- (d) Supply of Equipment and Text books; and
- (e) Improving Institutional Management and ICT infrastructure and equipment.

The total cost is estimated at 1.5trillion shillings (this will be established after the feasibility study has been conducted) of which UA 150 Million (Aprox.US\$220 m) is expected from African Development Bank under ADB V.

The project covers the five public universities namely, Makerere University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Busitema University and its constituent colleges, Kyambogo University, West Nile University and Gulu University plus the newly created constituent college in Lira. It also

covers Makerere University Business School, Uganda Management Institute as well as the Petroleum College in Kigumba.

2. Presentation from the Dean, School of Medicine

2.1 Ugandan Health Workers to benefit from Makerere-Sheffield conference on Diagnostic Imaging

The Makerere University's Department of Radiology together with a team from Sheffield University led by Prof. Sameh Marcos, a renown radiologist, and the Uganda Society for Advancement of Radiology and Imaging (USOFARI), have organized the 10th Sheffield International Conference on Diagnostic Imaging scheduled 9th -10th October 2010.

USOFARI encompasses Ugandan Scientists in Imaging including radiologists, radiographers, radiotherapists, sonographers and medical physicists. 180 scientists are therefore expected to participate in this conference; 150 from Uganda and the rest from Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, Nigeria, UK and the USA. The conference will be preceded by a refresher course on Ultrasound on 8th October 2010, to be jointly conducted by the Makerere University and Sheffield University teams.

Guided by its theme "*Diagnostic Imaging*," the main objective of this conference is to equip the medical personnel with knowledge, skills and recent advances in diagnostic imaging. "During the conference, participants will not only be exposed to state of the art imaging techniques, but they will also be helped to familiarize with the planned Health Insurance (HI) scheme of the Government of Uganda" remarked Associate Professor Elsie Kiguli-Malwadde, Department of Radiology and President, Uganda Radiological Society.

With the conference in place, it is hoped that standards of Radiology and Imaging in Uganda will be promoted and that there will be eventual provision of continuous professional development for Makerere alumni and other health professions.

This type of conference is held every year and members get an opportunity to present their scientific work and also learn what is happening on the international scene.

With the main beneficiaries being health workers, especially those in Imaging from all over the country; it hoped that through this, there will be improvement in health care delivery and thus better health for all Ugandans.

2.2 Makerere University Medical Students rescue disadvantaged communities with COBES

The Makerere University College of Health Sciences has changed its mode of instruction from a Teacher- Centered to a Student- Centered.

This followed an in-depth analysis of feedback from interviews and Focus Group Discussions with stakeholders ranging from alumni, employees, professional bodies, visiting institutions where student-centered learning was being practiced, literature review, expert panel witnessing and participatory workshops.

The Makerere University College of Health Sciences adopted Student-Centered Learning in a bid to empower students to be in charge of their own learning. “Once students are self driven, they can become Life Long Learners,” said Dr. Stephen Kijjambu, the Dean, School of Medicine, College of Health Sciences.

Community Based Education and Service (COBES) avails to the students an opportunity to learn in a Primary Health Care context setting. It is a Service Learning method where Students learn as they render service in line with their level of instruction. Under the supervision of trained site supervisors, students carry out site activities like giving Health Education to clients, take part in immunization schedules, attend and actively take part in Ante-Natal activities and surgical activities as may be possible at the Health Centre.

Still, under the supervision of the site tutor, students make community visits to homes, schools, prisons and the District Health Headquarters where their learning activities range from drug supply,

administering the vaccine cold chain, the Health Management Information System(HMIS) and how the Health Sector Strategic Plan is being implemented at the District.

During Community Based Education and Service (COBES) attachment, students make formal contact with the community leaders and in partnership with the community, participatory and relevant community based research is carried out. The results of this collaborative research are communicated to the community first before the institution itself because it primarily belongs to the community.

“A healthy community is a wealthy community. Curative health services at a tertiary institution like Mulago is very expensive. On the other hand, Promotive and Preventive Health services out in the community are more affordable. It has actually been realized that client attendance doubles during COBES.” Dr. Stephen Kijjambu further explained.

Working in an obviously familiar environment therefore, the graduates from Makerere College of Health Sciences have always held their own when posted upcountry as Medical Officers.

3. Presentation from the Dean Faculty of Science

3.1 Makerere University acquires modern physics laboratories

The Department of Physics in the Faculty of Science-Makerere University, has acquired renovated and modernized laboratories, an upgraded curriculum and an increase in number of academic staff. This was after the Department of Physics won a competitive grant worth US \$ 1.2million, from the Uganda National Council for Science & Technology (UNCST) which was co-financed by the World Bank under the Millennium Science Initiative (MSI) in 2007.

The grant also covered purchase of laboratory equipment for the newly renovated undergraduate laboratories, a fact that will greatly enhance teaching of the newly upgraded curriculum for the BSc in Physics programme. Changes to the curriculum witnessed embedding of practicals into course units, which will greatly improve the quality of graduates. Previously, practicals were taught as a separate course unit. The grant also catered for an outreach program, where the Department of

Physics held workshops with stakeholders and Secondary School Physics Teachers across four regions in Uganda to discuss problems facing teaching of Physics in schools.

The Department has the following research groups: (a) Materials Science Group (Clays and other local materials; Solar Energy/ Thin Films) (b) Solar Radiation / UV radiation Group (c) Space Science Group (d) Low-Dose Nuclear radiation Group.

As part of the Low-Dose Nuclear radiation Group, the Department of Physics hosts the National Nuclear Radiation Laboratory, headed by Dr. Kisolo Akisophel. The National laboratory receives support from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), which previously donated the lab equipment as well.

The Space Science Group is a new graduate research group in the Department. “This group monitors physical conditions in space such as the sun’s radiation and their effects on technological systems like satellites and communication and navigation systems” remarked Dr. Florence Mutonyi D’ujanga, the Group head, as well as Head, Department of Physics.

The Space Science Group collaborates with other established groups like the Planetary Atmospheres and Space Sciences Group (PASS), Boston University and the Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL), US, which donated the GPS receiver, used by the department to monitor satellites.

3.2 Makerere University’s Faculty of Science partners with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to develop methods for controlling African sleeping sickness

The Biochemistry Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation project is a 5year US \$ 8,691,707.00 project (November 2008 – December 2013), under Associate Professor John C.K. Enyaru, Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Science as Principal Investigator. The aim of this collaboration with Makerere University is to train PhD and Master of Science students in molecular techniques.

Previously, a short training course on molecular techniques was organized at Makerere University from 11th – 14th April 2010. Some of the participating institutions such as Makerere University; International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology (ICIPE), Kenya; Kenya Agricultural Research Organization (KARI)-Trypanosomiasis Research Institute (TRC) Kenya; and the Tsetse and

Trypanosomiasis Research Institute (TTRI), Tanzania; greatly gained from the course through development of Standard Operating procedures (SOPs) for use in the analysis of DNA samples from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

The aim of the course was to acquaint personnel involved in the research in the use of technologies and also to test some molecular reagents in order to select one reagent for use by all consortium members. **All participating institutions resolved to use the Phusion Taq DNA as the universal diagnostic reagent.**

So far, Monitoring and Evaluation trips have been carried out covering the Democratic Republic of Congo and Congo-Brazzaville, and Dokolo and Kaberamaido districts in Eastern Uganda. **The Ugandan trip has so far witnessed a reduction in average tsetse fly counts from 2.6 per day in March 2009 to 1.6 in March 2010.**

This Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation project has greatly benefited Makerere University as the institution received laboratory equipment, liquid nitrogen storage tanks, molecular reagents, 1 PCR machine (used for forensic analysis of DNA) and two (2) vehicles for transport. The project has also helped to strengthen the skills of Technicians, Field staff as well as students in detecting trypanosomes in tsetse flies both in laboratories and the field through technology transfer from collaborating partners.

In other important developments, The Faculty of Science has secured a 7.2million SEK (Sweden Kroner), approximately US \$1.07million Sida research grant under Phase III of Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) support, with research work in: Medicinal plants, Pesticides, Environmental Monitoring, Green Chemistry and Mathematical Modelling.

.....We build for the future.....

Sincerely: Ritah Namisango, Makerere University Public Relations Office.