



**The Vice Chancellor's Remarks at the International Conference on Reintegration of Formerly Recruited Girls in Northern Uganda  
Faculty of Economics and Management Conference Hall – 20<sup>th</sup> October, 2010**

- Your Excellency the Ambassador
- Members of Management present
- The Rector School of Mission and Theology
- Deans, Directors and Heads of Department
- Staff and students
- Ladies and Gentlemen

I welcome you to Makerere University and to this International Conference under the theme: ***Culture, Religion and the Reintegration of Formerly Recruited Girls in Northern Uganda.***

This conference is aimed at disseminating information gathered from a NUFU funded project; ***The Reintegration of Female Child Soldiers in Northern Uganda.*** This project comes at the right time in the history of our region which has suffered from many wars with the most recent being the war in Northern Uganda.

Many young girls were abducted by the Lords Resistance Army to serve as soldiers. Many of these girls were forced to kill, were raped, forcibly married off and some became mothers at very young ages.

The case of Northern Uganda is similar to that of Congo, Rwanda and many other parts of Africa where child soldiers have been used. I believe we all still remember the first abductions by the LRA in 1987 from the Sacred Heart Girls Boarding School in Aboke, Gulu.

The war in Northern Uganda has now ended, but has left us with tremendous moral and social challenges. Reintegration of female ex-child soldiers whose background and experience prove particularly difficult for society to handle is therefore vital. It is our hope that this project will

provide us with concrete recommendation on how the process of reintegration of these female ex-child soldiers should be handled.

With the end of the war in Northern Uganda, the process of reconstruction has now started and I believe that there is need to begin with reconstructing the most important resource (the human being).

Through this project, I wish to see even more of these girls reintegrated back into their families, villages, and communities, so as to become key players in society.

I am glad to note that this project is also aimed at developing staff capacity in our institutions. At the end of this project, two (2) Assistant Lecturers namely Helen Nkabala and Christine Mpyangu (from Makerere University) and Emeline Ndosu from Tumaini University in Tanzania will attain their Ph.Ds, while Aemba Bwimana and Kizaliwa Irumbo from the Democratic Republic of Congo will attain their Masters degrees. These will go a long way in boosting staff capacities in the three (3) countries.

Tomorrow, Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2010, a book written by the researchers and supervisors on the project will be launched and this also will add a lot of knowledge on the processes of reintegration of ex-combatants in this region.

Your Excellency, allow me to express through you, our sincere thanks and gratitude to the Government and the people in Norway for the support they have rendered over time to Uganda and to Makerere University in particular. We would also wish to applaud further, the generous support of the Norwegian Government in supporting Gender Mainstreaming, Forestry as well Technology and Computing & Informatics Technology.

I also wish to extend our sincere thanks to the Norwegian Programme for Development, Research and Education (NUFU) for financing this project and many others at Makerere University.

To the School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger, Norway, thank you for the excellent collaboration you have with the Department of Religious Studies which has resulted into two

(2) NUFU funded projects and the student exchanges programmes which have enabled many of our students attain their Masters' degrees at your institution.

Finally, I thank the student researchers and their supervisors on this project for a job well done so far. I pray that you pursue this project to a successful completion.

It is now my honour and privilege to invite you, **Your Excellency**, to come and make your remarks and then declare this International Conference open.

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

**Sincerely: Professor Venansius Baryamureeba, Acting Vice Chancellor, Makerere University**