

WELCOME REMARKS

BY

**PROFESSOR VENANSIUS BARYAMUREEBA VICE-CHANCELLOR, MAKERERE
UNIVERSITY ON THE OCCASION OF THE OPENING OF THE MINISTERIAL
CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA, 17TH
NOVEMBER 2010**

COMMONWEALTH SPEKE RESORT, MUNYONYO

WEDNESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2010

8:30AM

**The Right Honourable Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda Professor
Apolo Nsibambi**

**The Minister of Education and Sports, Hon. Geraldine Namirembe
Bitamazire**

Honourable Ministers from Uganda and our sister countries,

Honourable Members of Parliament from Uganda and sister countries

The Chancellor Makerere University Professor Mondo Kagonyera

My fellow Vice Chancellors

The RUFORUM Executive Secretary

Distinguished Colleagues from our various Universities

Ladies and Gentlemen

.....
On behalf of the RUFORUM Board and Makerere University, I warmly welcome all the delegates to this Ministerial Conference on Higher Education in Agriculture in Africa.

Allow me to sincerely thank you Honourable Minister for committing your time to this conference. To us, it is a sign of high policy commitment that you and your Ministry attach to Higher Education in this country.

I am pleased to see all of you, and believe it will be a productive conference. As the Hosts, Makerere University and RUFORUM have been preparing tirelessly for this conference.

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a consortium of universities in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa established in

2004. Honorable Minister and distinguished participants, let me take this opportunity to highlight some of the major milestones that RUFORUM has achieved since 2004.

- We have expanded our geographical coverage from the initial 10 Universities to 25 Universities in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa.
- RUFORUM has trained 560 Masters degree holders and is currently training 80 PhD students for our region. By 2013, we will have trained close to 1,000 MSc graduates, and 150 PhD students to support the development process in our region.
- RUFORUM is partnering with regional organizations such as Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), African Forum on Agricultural Advisory Services (AFAS), and COMESA to increase engagement of African Universities in development practices and processes.

Honorable Minister and Distinguished Delegates, we at Makerere believe that there is need to train the continent's next generation of scientists, professionals and technicians to restore the quality of graduate and postgraduate agricultural education in Africa. This is in response to the human resource crisis: We must urgently strengthen and coordinate investments in Higher Education, especially Agricultural Tertiary Education.

This is why we have organized the ministerial meeting. It is our hope that this meeting will call for national governments to pay more attention to the crisis in professional education, increase investments and mobilize support and resources for Higher Education in science and agriculture.

Honourable Ministers, it is urgent and critical that African governments and their partners, find ways of strengthening higher education in agriculture so that African universities can contribute more effectively to Africa's development process especially the Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP).

This will help speed up development processes in the continent while at the same time re-engineering African Higher Education in Agriculture and science.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our partners who have enabled us sustain activities in our respective universities and development processes in the continent. I also thank all the various partners who have supported the organization of this conference.

I wish all the participants at this Ministerial Conference a lively exchange of ideas on how best to stimulate science and technology for the growth of the African agriculture. The knowledge shared and generated from this conference will become the basis for synthesizing key policy issues that will serve as a useful reference material for policymakers and students of development in our countries and region. I wish you all a fruitful discussion.

It is now my honour to invite the Honourable Minister of Education and Sports to address us.