

**SPEECH BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY AT THE LAUNCH OF THE
AFRICAN CENTER FOR CYBERLAW AND CYBERCRIME PREVENTION (ACCP)**

UNAFRI Secretariat, Naguru, Thursday 26th August 2010

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- The Chief Guest, delegates, ladies and gentlemen.
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Makerere University is pleased to be a part of the official launch of the African Center for Cyber law and Cyber crime prevention (ACCP). We are committed to spearheading the research and development of solutions to global challenges such as cyber crime. We are also committed to building capacity through training the relevant sectors on how to effectively utilize new innovations. We periodically review the curriculum so that the ever changing social dynamics and contemporary needs and demands are addressed as they arise.

Cyber crime is the fastest growing crime in the world today. It is not limited by geographical location, time, race, culture or age. In the cyberspace, anyone can publish anything at anytime. Cyber citizens can easily do things that they would not ordinarily do. For example, shy people suddenly become bold. People are sometimes possessed by a feeling of invisibility and invincibility. The Internet is a double edged sword. The freedom of ease that it provides while performing 'acceptable' acts also presents loopholes through which immoral or illegal acts are planned and committed.

When some people inhabit the cyber world, they fake identities, wear false masks and are shielded with semi or total anonymous status. One of the major challenges that we face today is where and when to draw the line between issues like privacy and networking/socialisation or freedom and security. To what extent should we limit these issues and others like speed, power and access?

Another challenge that we face is in the area of forensic investigations. How do we deal with situations that require identifying perpetrators who use public facilities like Internet cafes? How can we trace their identities after the point of 'public facility'?

We hope that together we can find solutions to these challenges. We hope that ACCP will address the specific issues that affect Africa. Innovations in Africa are negatively influenced by piracy or the illegal reproduction or distribution of software, especially music.

Many Africans and the under privileged are falling victims of online child exploitation where the Internet is used to co-ordinate, lure, persuade, deceive, threaten or coerce children and unsuspecting adults into performing acts that are against their rights. These can include child trafficking, child labour (armed conflict, begging, and prostitution), kidnapping, and early marriages.

In 2004, I was involved in a study on cyber crime in Uganda. The results shocked us. Over 90% of the respondents reported to having been a victim to at least one cyber crime incident. A quarter (25%) confessed to having planned and successfully implemented a cyber crime. These statistics are certainly worrying. Unfortunately, the majority of victims did not report anywhere, largely because they did not think that it would benefit them in anyway.

I wish that the African Center for cyber law and cyber crime prevention (ACCP) that is being launched today will fill in this vacuum. The public needs to know that when they report an incident, they will benefit either by partially or totally recovering what has been lost, or by receiving justice in one way or another. The legal framework should be clearly designed to bring justice to victims of cyber crime, quickly.

I would like to emphasize that Makerere University will provide the support and co-operation to the ACCP. We would like to contribute to the noble cause that the ACCP is set up to address through enabling a safe and secure virtual world, which includes the cyber space. Together, we can provide solutions to the challenges of the cyberspace.

We can help the cyber citizens to enjoy the benefits of the cyberspace while minimizing the side effects.

I thank you all for your attention.

Professor Venansius Baryamureeba

Acting Vice Chancellor, Makerere University