

Vice – Chancellor's speech
APEDIA conference 13- 15th December, 2009

Your Excellency the Vice president of Uganda
Honourable ministers,
Members of parliament,
H.E the ambassador of Federal Republic of Germany
Distinguished invited delegates of the conference,
Members of the Press,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is gratifying to see all of you gathered here this morning participating in the First International APEDIA conference on sustainable land-use in Africa, held in Uganda. Your presence is a manifestation of your interest in this partnership and we are very grateful for this interest.

Permit me also to acknowledge the presence of the following distinguished academics who traveled from Germany, Namibia, South Africa, Ethiopia and Kenya purposefully to share information, support and to strengthen the international collaboration between their respective Universities and this University. They are:

- Professor Thilo Maruhn, from ZEU, Justus-Liebig University of Giessen, Germany;
- Professor Willem Odendaal, from Namibia;
- Mr. Kobus Pienaar from South Africa;
- Prof. Charles Okidi, Institute for Development Studies (IDS) University of Nairobi.
- Dean Lameck Mwewa, from Namibia.
- Prof. Ernst August Nuppenau, from ZEU, Justus-Liebig University Giessen, Germany

On behalf of the University, and on my own behalf, I welcome all of you present here and I thank you for finding time, despite your heavy schedules of work, to come to participate in the 1st APEDIA conference.

Makerere University seeks to stimulate and bring together academic collaboration with other international Universities both in Africa and other parts of the world through active research and publication of research outcomes. As stated in the theme for this conference, land issues and associated conflicts are inevitable, mainly due to differences in ethnicity, environment and distribution of resources. This makes it world-wide problem. To achieve solutions to land problems, there must be enhanced research and collaboration between stakeholders.

A number of courses aiming at educating students on land use are offered in several faculties i.e.

- Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
- The institute of environment and natural resources
- Faculty of Forestry
- Faculty of Agriculture
- Faculty of law

At this point, I wish to mention that in Uganda Land means alot to the Veterinary Industry. Many people who rely on the diary or livestock industries for employment would be ruined if land is not properly managed. Livestock farming is not some unnecessary consumer indulgence, but is a vital part of the natural cycle of land. Therefore, the importance of this University in national development cannot be overemphasized.

Thus, if we are going to assume our place as one of the premier public institutions of higher education in the country, research activity is one of the standard measures of academic excellence to national prominence. If our

departments are to gain a higher profile against their peers, they must attain new and higher levels of published research and scholarship, as well as grant activity. In the areas in which we compete for grants from federal agencies, it is essential that we position ourselves appropriately. Especially important is the building of interdisciplinary research teams, and our ability to take advantage of campus resources, as well as resources in the network teams.

Sustainability of land use is a practical problem-solving oriented new science, which is based on the integration of natural and social sciences with ethics, economic sustainability, social sustainability and regulation. This has to be rooted in every country and practically on how eco-systems should be managed in a sustainable manner. Educational programmes have to be based on real life examples.

Since the APEDIA network programme for this conference involves academia, researchers, government bodies/institutions and representatives from the legal offices - the Uganda law society, I believe a lot has been shared through the proceedings. The information is going to help to improve ongoing and enhance further research especially in this era when the planet is faced with climate change and land degradation.

APPRECIATION

Makerere University greatly appreciates the support Germany exchange programme (DAAD) and Justus-Liebig University of Giessen, Germany towards the successful hosting of the 1st APEDIA Conference.