

**Welcome Remarks By The Ag Deputy Director, MUBFS,**

**Dr. Jeremiah Ssali Lwanga,**

**To The Visiting Makerere University Management Team To MUBFS**

**(Thursday 29th July, 2010)**

The Vice Chancellor, Makerere University, Deputy Vice Chancellors, the University Secretary, all protocol observed.

On behalf of MUBFS Management, and on my own behalf, I warmly welcome you all to Makerere University Biological Field Station.

For many of you, this is the first time for MUBFS to host you. Allow me to first introduce to you the various members of staff with whom I manage this field station:

- |                               |   |                                     |
|-------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Dr. Jeremiah Ssali Lwanga  | - | Ag. Deputy Director.                |
| 2. Mr. Ddumba Charles William | - | Administrative Assistant/Accountant |
| 3. Mr. Mukiza Vianney         | - | Clerical Officer/Accounts.          |
| 4. Mr. Berunga Winifred       | - | Clerk of Works.                     |
| 5. Mr. Kato Innocent          | - | Assistant Domestic Bursar.          |

Allow me to give a brief history of the field station.

The original name of the field station was Kibale Forest Project. This was established way back in 1970 by Dr. Thomas Struhsaker, a renowned primatologist and scholar from Duke, University, USA. His aim was to study the behavioral ecology of the endangered Ugandan red colobus monkey (*Piliocolobus rufomitatus*). With eleven species of sympatric primate species, Dr. Struhsaker soon realized that Kibale Forest offered a great opportunity for comparative studies on the behavioral ecology of the various primate species in the area. The diversity of primate species attracted more researchers and this made Kibale a nationally and internationally important site for primatological research. As time went on, research expanded to include studies on rodents, insects and forest gap dynamics.

The objectives of Kibale Forest Project were Research, Education and Conservation. These are still upheld up to present. As research progressed, the researchers realized that they could not work in isolation from the neighboring communities and national institutions. An outreach program was initiated to teach conservation to the local communities through schools, workshops and other formal gatherings. They also helped in distributing tree seeds and seedlings in an effort to encourage people grow their own trees so as to alleviate pressure on the forest. On the conservation front, Kibale Forest Project helped the Forest Department in patrolling the forest and also lobbied government to elevate the

conservation status of Kibale Forest from a Forest Reserve to Forest Park. Later on, in 1993, the latter transformed into a National Park.

Dr Struhsaker ceased being an active researcher in Kibale in 1987, but before his departure he arranged to hand over the project to Makerere University for its long-term survival, hence the name Makerere University Biological Field Station (MUBFS).

By the time Dr. Struhsaker handed over the management to Makerere University, the research site had become widely known for its research in spite of its rudimentary infrastructure at the time. From the late 1980s through 1990s, this fame attracted a lot of funding from international funding agencies especially, WCS, EU and USAID. Almost all the infrastructure we have today was put in place using these funds.

Today, MUBFS is an all year-round field research station that can accommodate up to 85 researchers and trainees. The on-going research projects conducted by local and international scholars include:

- Ecological & Behavioral Studies of Various Animal Species in KNP.
- Studies of Forest Regeneration in Logged & Formerly Encroached Areas.
- Long-term Ecological Monitoring of Kibale National Park Eco-Systems.
- Socio-Economic & Ecological Studies Including Crop Raiding By Park Wildlife.

MUBFS has two main study sites – Kanyawara and Ngogo, with Kanyawara housing the station's main facilities.

The MOU between Uganda Wildlife Authority and Makerere University allows MUBFS researchers to conduct research outside these two designated sites. As such, our research activities have expanded to Sebitoli in the northern part of Kibale National Park. Plans are under way to establish a permanent research camp there.

#### **MUBFS Mission Statement:**

MUBFS Mission Statement was agreed upon in a stakeholders meeting that took place at Kanyawara 5-7 February 1998 and it is as follows:

*Makerere University Biological Field Station is committed to undertaking and providing opportunities for high quality, multi-disciplinary research and education in tropical ecosystems, with the underlying objective of contributing to the conservation and development needs of Kibale National Park and its surrounding ecological and human communities.*

Our Mission hence fits well in the Makerere University's Strategic Plan, which endeavors to be a "Research Driven University emphasizing Knowledge Transfer Partnerships and Networking". Results from research conducted at MUBFS

benefit a wide community ranging from Uganda Wildlife Authority, teaching universities, the local community and of recent, the film industry.

### **MUBFS Achievements over the Years**

**Training:** A good number of Uganda's finest tropical forest ecologists have been trained at MUBFS at both M. Sc. and Ph. D. levels. Many of these are serving as lecturers at local universities; others are working in governmental and non-governmental conservation organizations. MUBFS is proud of having produced at least 50 PhDs and 25 M Scs, These include both national and international scholars.

**Publications:** Over 260 research papers and book chapters have been published from research conducted at Kibale. These are all available in our library, courtesy of Professors Lauren and Colin Chapman of McGill University, Canada. Each year, the two professors compile all the work published from MUBFS and bind it in one book, a copy of which is deposited in the MUBFS library. Additionally, a good number of books have been written by MUBFS researchers.

**Conservation:** In addition to generating information that is useful in conservation, MUBFS works hand in hand with UWA authorities to promote conservation in and around Kibale National Park. It is well established that the presence of researchers in conservation areas helps to deter would-be poachers. MUBFS researchers cover large areas of the forest in the course of doing their work and report illegal activities to the relevant authorities.

**Services to the Communities:** From the very beginning, the Kibale Forest Project and later MUBFS have worked with the local communities in the areas of conservation and education. In the field of education, there have been several spin-offs of MUBFS that have helped foster education in the vicinity of Kibale National Park. The most notable of these is the American Friends Of Kasiisi Primary School (AFROKAPS). This organization has helped build classrooms, staff houses, toilets etc in a few selected primary schools around Kibale National Park. Additionally, they help to fund well-performing and needy students in secondary schools and tertiary institutions.

Another off-shoot of MUBFS that has benefited the local and national economy is the Kanyanchu Tourism Center, in Kibale National Park, near Bigodi Parish, in Kamwenge District. During the mid-1980s, people, mostly from Europe and USA who learnt about Kibale Forest through research publications, started frequenting Kanyawara research camp to have a tourism experience. Much as the researchers were hospitable to them, it was found to be inconveniencing to have tourism and research activities at the same site. The researchers by then looked for an accessible and convenient site in the south-east of Kibale, and hence the birth of Kanyanchu Tourism Center.

Kanyanchu is one of the busiest tourist destinations in the country today; contributing to the national budget, in addition to offering employment opportunities to the local, national and international communities. It must also be emphasized that the information generated from research on Chimpanzees and forest ecology conducted at MUBFS was vital in tourism development at Kanyanchu.

In addition to Kanyanchu, MUBFS helped to establish Kibale Association For Rural and Environmental Development (KAFRED) in Bigodi Parish, Kamwenge District. This local NGO uses eco-tourism as a tool to promote conservation and enhance community development in the area.

Another notable contribution by MUBFS to the local community is the **Kibale Health and Conservation Centre (KHCC)**. This health centre was officially opened in February 2009. MUBFS management is greatly indebted to Professors Colin and Lauren Chapman and their trainees from McGill University, Canada for this great donation to the community. KHCC provides primary health care and health education to a community that suffers from many of the same diseases and sicknesses seen across the developing world, particularly AIDS. The health centre is manned by two nurses supervised by a doctor from Fort Portal Referral Hospital. This service has gone a long way in improving people's health.

#### **MUBFS Relationship With Makerere University:**

MUBFS is a research unit under the Institute of Environment and Natural Resources (MUIENR). MUBFS, hence, directly reports to MUIENR.

#### **MUBFS Current Staff Structure:**

<b>Position(s)</b>	<b>No.</b>
Deputy Director	1
Administrative Assistant/Accountant	1
Clerical Officer/Accounts	1
Assistant Domestic Bursar	1
Clerk of Works	1
Stores Assistant	1
Office Messenger	1
Head man	1
Trail cutters	14
Security Guards	4

However, some of the positions above are not yet on the Makerere University Payroll, and are entirely catered for by MUBFS.

These include:

- 1) Assistant Domestic Bursar
- 2) Stores Assistant.
- 3) Office Messenger.

- 4) 3 Trail Cutters
- 5) 1 Security Guard.

In addition to the above, the positions below, though necessary for the normal running of the field station, are not yet filled:

- 1) 2 Research Fellows.
- 2) 1 Assistant Librarian.
- 3) 1 Lab Technician
- 4) 1 Assistant Cook.
- 5) 1 Grounds man.
- 6) 1 Driver.

As the field station continues to intensify the marketing of its facilities, there will be need to add the positions of 1 Chef and 2 Field Assistants.

For MUBFS to realize its full potential, therefore, there is an immediate need to fill these positions.

### **MUBFS Current Challenges**

#### **Old infrastructure:**

The infrastructure of MUBFS expanded rapidly using foreign funding but with minimum supervision by the key stakeholders. As a result the infrastructure has deteriorated rapidly, hence calling for high maintenance costs.

Given the field station's meager resources, this is a big challenge.

#### **Funding**

Apart from Makerere University's subvention in form of salaries to MUBFS employees on the payroll, MUBFS does not have any other external funding, other than the revenue generated from national and international field courses, workshops and researchers.

We, at this juncture, wish to express great indebtedness to the following institutions and individuals for their contributions to MUBFS:

1. Makerere University, Kampala.
2. Tropical Biology Association (TBA), United Kingdom.
3. Professors Lauren & Colin Chapman, McGill University, Canada.
4. Professor Richard Wrangham, Harvard University, USA.
5. Professor John Mitani, Michigan University, USA.
6. Professor David Watts, Yale University, USA.
7. Professors Lauren & Colin Chapman, University of Florida, USA.
8. Professor Tom Gillespie University of Illinois, USA.
9. Professor Tony Goldberg, University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA.
10. Professor Martin Muller, University of New Mexico, USA.
11. Professor Joanna Lambert, University of Texas, USA

#### **Inadequate Housing:**

Of recent, MUBFS has attracted many researchers, and other users, but has limited housing facilities. There is need therefore to increase capacity to accommodate more users.

MUBFS management suggests that future construction should be done on its own land. However, this land isn't yet surveyed. Management hence kindly requests the University to support the surveying of this land and construction of additional houses.

### **Weak MoU with UWA**

The current MoU between Makerere University and UWA gives MUBFS possessory, and, hence limited user rights. The duration of the MoU is only five years. This has a negative bearing to MUBFS future expansion and plans.

Additionally, since a big percentage of MUBFS revenue is derived from training courses and workshops, the park entry fees charged by UWA are too high and hence a deterrent factor to the users. This is a threat to the existence of the field station.

### **Need For A Supervisory Board:**

The field station does not have a management board to plan and oversee its operations. MUBFS management therefore wishes to propose that the University establishes a board to direct its operations.

### **Way Forward**

- Management suggests that the University moves expeditiously to fill the vacant positions at MUBFS.
- The University should plan to survey MUBFS land in the near future.
- The University revisits its MoU with UWA as regards MUBFS future use.
- The University supports MUBFS in its endeavours to increase accommodation capacity, transport, scientific and non-scientific equipment to enable it operate efficiently.

Finally, may I take this opportunity, on my own behalf, and on behalf of the entire MUBFS Management to thank you for your time to pay this historical visit to the field station.

It is my prayer and hope that this visit will create increased relationship with the University Administration for the betterment of MUBFS future.

As **We Build For The Future**, I wish all of you a safe journey back home.