

THE VICE CHANCELLOR'S SPEECH AT THE H.E. BENJAMIN MKAPA PUBLIC LECTURE, MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, 27TH NOVEMBER 2009

The Guest of Honour, H.E. Benjamin Mkapa, Former President of Tanzania

The Rt. Hon. Prime Minister Representing H.E. President Yoweri Museveni

The Deputy Speaker of Parliament

The Chancellor Makerere University

Cabinet Ministers and Ministers of State

The Chairperson, Makerere University Council

Members of Parliament

The Country Representative of Conrad, Ardenauer Stiftung

Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

.....

I wish to extend a warm welcome to our Guest of Honor H.E. Benjamin Mkapa and all alumni and friends of Makerere University present at this event, organized by Makerere University Convocation.

Makerere University which started as a constituent college of the University of London is 87 years old today. Over the years many distinguished alumni have gone through the gates of Makerere. Your excellence, you are one of those distinguished and prominent alumni.

Your Excellency, Makerere University stakeholders include government, continuing students, alumni, staff (employees of Makerere University), the private sector, the public sector and civil society. Makerere University alumni have made tremendous contributions in government i.e. in the executive, legislature and judiciary), private sector, public sector, politics, and media. Your Excellency, your longtime service cuts across most of these sectors. You have inspired many and led by example and your being here as Guest of Honor for the 1st ever grand re-union in 87 years is a clear testimony of the confidence and trust the alumni of Makerere University have in you.

Your Excellency, Makerere University has given and is still giving back to society by focusing on three strategic areas, namely teaching and learning, research and innovations and knowledge transfer partnerships and networking. Therefore, the rest of my remarks are going to focus on why the alumni, the government, the private sector and the public sector among others should give back to Makerere University.

Your Excellency, for any country to experience economic growth there must be skilled labour, technological innovations and sound managers to manage the economy. There can never be technological innovations unless the country makes deliberate efforts to support training and research in science and technology. All developed countries have put and are still putting more than 5% of the GDP in research. In Sub-Saharan Africa it is only South Africa that has taken lead by putting 1% of the GDP in research. Your Excellency, for economic growth to be meaningful it must translate into human development. In order to have meaningful human development any country must ensure that every citizen has access to health and education services in addition to employment opportunities. Furthermore, the country should promote democratic governance and protect the environment.

Therefore Makerere University as premier institution of higher learning in Africa has a key role to play in the area of economic growth and human development. For example there is a lot of foreign direct investment into India and China as a result of the massive human capital and technological innovations from science and technology institutions in these countries. East Africa should follow suit.

To the alumni of Makerere University, one of the hidden treasures you have is the name "Makerere University". When its place on the global University rankings goes down you go down with it; when it rises you rise with it. It does not matter when you graduated from Makerere University. All that matters is to do all that is necessary to have Makerere University of tomorrow better than Makerere University of today. This reminds of scholars who emphasize one week certificates from Harvard or Cambridge more than a degree from a University such as Makerere.

To the government and the private sector, I would like to remind you that the growth of the economy and businesses is dependent on the products i.e. human capital, research and innovations) that come out of institutions like Makerere University. That is why the government and the private sector should make deliberate efforts to provide sufficient funding to higher institutions of learning in this country.

I like the philosophy of churches that require their congregation to give 10% of their monthly salary to the church every month. So as alumni, as government or as private sector how much will give you back to Makerere University annually?

Your Excellency, as we come together to rebuild Makerere University to its former status of the Harvard of Africa, we should be mindful of the negative forces that don't wish Makerere University well. As in Psalm 23, our consolation lies in believing that "even when we walk through the dark valley of death, we shall not be afraid for the Lord God is close besides us and his rod and staff shall protect and comfort us all the days of our lives".

Let me thank Makerere University Convocation headed Mr. Bruce Balaba Kabaasa and the organizing committee for a job well done.

With these remarks, it is for me a singular honor and privilege to invite H.E. Benjamin Mkapa to come and give a public lecture on: **"The Role of the Alumni/ Academia in Governance and Institution Development "**.

I thank you.

Professor Venansius Baryamureeba
VICE CHANCELLOR