

Speech

By

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The Vice Chancellor, Makerere University

**Delivered at the opening of the Alcohol
Epidemiology and Policy Conference.**

15th November 2010

At Speke Resort, Munyonyo

Kampala, Uganda

- The Right Honourable Prime Minister, Republic of Uganda
- The Principal College of Health Sciences
- The Dean School of Public Health
- The President of the Kettil Brunn Society (KBS)
- Participants and organizers of this conference
- All invited Dignitaries in your respective capacities

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On behalf of the Makerere University fraternity, I am happy to be a part of the people attending the opening ceremony of the first ever African Kettil Brunn Society (KBS) thematic meeting on Alcohol Epidemiology and Policy 2010.

This meeting comes at a time when Uganda is faced with alcohol related problems and many families have subsequently been affected. You may realize that the younger generation at universities and other institutions of higher learning is gradually taking to drinking during parties, festivities, especially at the beginning of the academic years during bazaars where alcohol is sold cheaply at discounted prices.

Available evidence shows a strong association between alcohol use and prevalence of HIV and other STDs. Risky and unruly behavior at institutions of higher learning is often characterized by alcohol abuse. We hope this meeting will promote sharing of research work and best practices in prevention of alcohol abuse, and regulating alcohol sale and consumption through dialogue among researchers, policy makers and program implementers from other countries and regions.

I believe that this meeting will also serve as a platform to identify factors associated with harmful use of alcohol and create more awareness of the dangers and situations of uncontrolled alcohol consumption in the region.

May I challenge any upcoming researchers interested in the topic of alcohol, to use this meeting as a springboard for future collaborative research with the experienced researchers within our midst. I know the participants gathered here today are ready to share their experiences, knowledge and skills with their Ugandan counterparts so that our levels of conducting scientific research are enhanced.

In a special way, I would like to appreciate the Kettil Brunn Society (KBS) for the timeliness of this meeting. One of our core objectives as a university is to promote and strengthen scientific research and publications among the academic staff and students. This we believe will not only open up our research for more critical acclamation, but also help improve the University rankings, and make the university more competitive the world over.

Ladies and gentlemen, you will agree with me that the more information we have available to us, the more informed our decision making processes hence our problem solving abilities will be. Research requires time, effort, and sometimes money to have the evidence you need, and this always impacts on the future of a nation's programs. However research ought to and should be followed up with action.

I would like to thank the Makerere University School of Public Health and the organizing committee for a job well done. I am sure the skills exhibited in organizing this meeting shall be noted, and bear fruit by giving Uganda another chance to organize the bigger annual Kettil Brunn Society (KBS) conference.

“We Build for the Future”

Sincerely: Professor Venansius Baryamureeba, Acting Vice Chancellor