

THE VICE CHANCELLOR'S REMARKS AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE BAMBOO DEMONSTRATION BUILDING ON 25TH NOVEMBER 2010

- **Members of management, Deans and Directors present**
 - **Representatives of the International Development Research Centre present**
 - **Representatives of the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan present**
 - **Members of Staff**
 - **Students**
 - **Ladies and Gentlemen**
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I take this opportunity to warmly welcome you to the official opening of the Bamboo House, an event that is deeply significant to Makerere. The Makerere University Strategic Plan seeks to position this university as the leading institution of higher learning and research in Africa. The inauguration of this conference facility therefore, whose structural system is more than 80% mountain bamboo, is a manifestation of the determination by Makerere University to achieve our strategic goals.

In the scientific world today, issues of climate change and climate adaptability are high on the research agenda. This building, which is part of a research programme in the use of bamboo in different economic activities, particularly for building construction, could not have come at a more appropriate time.

Uganda's population is fast growing and there are enormous pressures on our natural resources to sustain this population. It is therefore important that Makerere University takes the lead in searching for solutions that will sustain not only the livelihood of our people, but also catalyze our socio-economic growth.

This project, which seeks to make efficient use of bamboo, a fast growing and sustainable non-wood material, is a big step in the right direction. If properly studied and adopted, bamboo could contribute immensely to the alleviation of the problem of poor housing for our people by significantly reducing the cost of building houses.

I am aware that bamboo is also used for very many other purposes around the globe, including manufacture of paper and textiles, and production of furniture and pre-fabricated panels for housed construction, among other uses. I therefore wish to encourage Makerere researchers in different disciplinary orientations, to take interest in the promotion of bamboo farming and use. That way, Makerere will indeed lead the example.

This building will today be handed over to Makerere University Guesthouse for use as a conference facility. It is a unique building in many aspects and I believe many people will book it for conferences. Please make good use of the facility and maintain it well.

Let me now take this opportunity to thank the funders of the project, IDRC-Canada and the International network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) for facilitating its implementation. IDRC provided a total of \$35,000 for construction and another \$26,000 for research and training of students. The total cost of the building is \$75,000. INBAR coordinated the project and provided international expertise. Thank you very much for your support towards innovation. We look forward to an even more fruitful working relationship.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank the Dean Faculty of Technology and the Lead Investigator for this initiative and encourage you to continue with your research in bamboo and other indigenous materials. This we believe will not only save our environment but also provide more sustainable solutions to our budding construction sector and housing shortages.

It is now my pleasure to declare the building inaugurated. Thank you, as ***We Build Bamboo Houses for the Future!***