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Makerere University 'overtakes' Dar es Salaam

By Samuel Kamndaya

Uganda's Makerere University has dislodged the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) from its position as East Africa's highest-ranked institution of higher in terms of research publications and Internet visibility.

UDSM plunged six places in the latest survey, which considered factors such as the visibility of a university on the Internet, the volume of its publications, and the general impact of the information published on its Web pages.

Tanzania's oldest public university clinched the top position in the region in the past two rankings. And in Africa, UDSM took the 13th and 18th places in those two surveys.

However, in the current Webometrics Survey, UDSM is 24th in Africa, leapfrogged by Makerere. East Africa's first university came 15th, a great improvement from its 59th position last year, while the University of Nairobi was in the 28th position.

But contacted for comment yesterday, the UDSM deputy vice-chancellor (planning, finance and administration), Prof Yunus Mgaya, said the rankings had nothing to do with the quality of the university's graduates and its research.

"It has nothing to do with either the quality of graduates or the quantity of the university's research...it only deals with the visibility on the Web," Prof Mgaya told The Citizen by phone.

He attributed the slip-up to problems associated with updating the institution's website in order to make its research visible.

"We have seen that problem and we are working on it. I can assure you that in the next survey, to be released in July, we shall definitely go up," he asserted. None of Tanzania's private universities seems to be doing enough to boost its visibility on the Internet, and as far as the volume of publications, and the general impact of the information published on web pages are concerned.

A total of eight universities stood out in East Africa. Apart from Makerere, UDSM and Nairobi, the National University of Rwanda, Kenya's Egerton, Moi and Kenyatta, as well as Sokoine University of Agriculture are in Africa's top 100 institutions.

About 20 of Africa's top 100 universities are in South Africa, while 17 are in Egypt. Africa's best, the University of Cape Town, is in position 317 out of the world's top 8,000 universities. The UDSM is ranked on 3,750th in the world. Of the world's top 100 universities, about 70 are in the United States.

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