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Uganda: Country Embraces Digital Animation Technology

David Ssempijja 25 August 2010

Kampala — Uganda's quest to embrace new trends in modern information communication technology is moving up, as the country now moves to digital animation.

Makerere University and Digimation UK have entered a partnership under which has been mandated to conduct digital animation courses in the faculty of computing and information technology. The partnership agreement was signed recently by Josephine Nabukenya, the faculty's dean and Dilip Amdekar, a director at Digimation UK, during a brief function held at Protea Hotel in Kampala.

Animation involves the technique of using computers to ease communication through generating moving pictures. The art, for example, may involve the creation of one

image at a time which can be edited into a continuous sequence of other images. This innovative technology is widely used in blending creativity within the systems of industries like film, television, writing, publishing, dance, drama, fashion, marketing and the media.

Delivering his speech as the guest of honour, Patrick Bitature, the chairman of the Uganda Investment Authority, said the introduction of professional animation technology in East Africa presents the region with a rare opportunity of advancing the state of technology in communication.

"Blending animation within communication has done wonders for South Africa and Nigeria, it's impressive that we shall have it here soon, " Bitature said. "We cannot consider developing the country's information communication technology industry as an option because it has a direct bearing on the progress of all the sectors of the economy," he added.

After the signing, Professor Venancio Baryamureba, the university vice-chancellor, said, "This is a significant step towards the nation's realisation of the dream of creating a workforce which measures up to the technological requirements of the modern global employment industry."

Baryamureba added that the information technology faculty had produced brilliant and highly competitive graduates at both domestic and international fronts, and the integration of animation courses was a significant added advantage as the university seeks to consolidate itself among the best in the world.

Baryamureba said the animation course would bridge the communication gaps in the country's young film industry as well as the usage of images in advertising, a key component in delivering information during the marketing process. Amdekar said the courses target students from East Africa but Makerere University would serve as a focal point for the entire region's students.

"Makerere inspires a lot of confidence especially when it comes to computer-based facilities. The infrastructure offered by the faculty of computing will enable us administer the courses successfully," he said. According to Amdekar, Digimation's aim is to create graduates who are not only academically qualified but are also ready to be a part of the industry right from day one.

"It is our aim to create graduates who can choose to excel in any aspect of the animation industry and to empower our students with

advanced knowledge, sound business understanding and the appropriate accredited qualifications," he added. The two-year diploma course will tackle areas like pre-production, computer graphic design basics, advanced computer animation, character animation, post production and portfolio development. Amdekar said the lecturers would be flown in from countries with animation success stories like Europe and India.

Currently, there are over 200,000 students studying animation courses in India. The courses begin next year with 350 students. Individuals are required to have the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education, its equivalent or above. The curriculum has been designed by Digimation and accredited by the National Council for higher Education in the UK, in accordance with the current industry standards worldwide.

Frequent guest lectures by industry professionals, active participation in industry events and an exciting blend of teaching and research will empower students to examine and analyse the complex medium of animation. Animation graduates are currently one of the world's most outsourced human capital.