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Uganda: Makerere Starts Gender Aware Master's Degree

Harriette Onyalla 15 June 2010

Kampala — Makerere University has launched a master of arts in gender aware economics degree, the first of its kind in an African university. The gender-focused programme was launched at the Kampala Sheraton Hotel on Thursday. Similar programmes are being run by universities in the US and Europe.

According to Prof. John Ddumba Ssentamu, the dean of the faculty of economics and management, the existing postgraduate programmes in economics do not incorporate gender as a key component of policy making and analysis.

"This has not only resulted in policies which are blind to gender issues but also inadequate academic research and publications which incorporate gender

perspectives," Ddumba said.

He added that the programme will also help meet increasing demand from local and international organisations to make gender part of the planning and implementation of their emergency response and development programmes.

Dr. Gabriel Opio, the minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development said the programme would produce a new generation of economists, planners and policy makers who will work towards reducing the high cost of gender inequalities to national development.

Prof. Venansius Baryamureeba, Makerere University's vice chancellor noted that the programme which begins in October will be run by the university's faculty of economics and management in collaboration with the department of Women and Gender Studies.

He said UNDP will sponsor 20 students from English-speaking countries to pursue the course. Theopane Nikyema, UNDP's country resident representative, said the new programme will increase the effectiveness of poverty reduction strategies.

"Studies have shown that improvements to women's access to education, health care, jobs and credit can spur

economic growth and poverty reduction. Despite this evidence, gender equality considerations are rarely included in economic policy making and planning," Nikyema said.

He said the programme will increase the effectiveness of economic policies and poverty reduction strategies in Africa by making them deliver more equitably to women and men, girls and boys.

Makerere University developed the degree together with American University, Essex University, Sussex University, Central Bank of Kenya and the Nigerian Institute of Social Economic Research with support from UNDP.

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