



**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE TRAINING**

OPENING REMARKS

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**DIRECTOR, DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE TRAINING
THE ANNUAL REVIEW MEETING, MONDAY 10th OCTOBER 2016**

Theme “**Investing in Research and Innovating for Society**”

- Your Excellency, Ambassador of Sweden to Uganda
- The Vice-Chancellor and member of management, Makerere University
- Members of Swedish Embassy in Kampala
- The Vice-Chancellor, Makerere University
- Vice-Chancellors of the partner public universities
- Deputy Vice-Chancellor(s), Makerere University
- Our partners from collaborating Swedish Universities
- Representatives from Government Agencies
- Representatives from Our Development Partners
- My Colleagues in the University Administration
- Makerere University Staff and Students
- Researchers and Mentors and Research Managers
- The Media Fraternity
- Ladies and Gentlemen

A very good morning to you all.

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A warm welcome to the Makerere University Annual Research and Innovations Review Meeting 2016. In a special way, I warmly welcome the Ambassador of the Royal Swedish

Embassy to Uganda, H.E. Per Lindgarde, and the Vice-Chancellor and all delegates. I also recognize the presence of each and every one of you in your various distinguished capacities.

We thank you for your dedicated support to Makerere University and are honoured to have you at this year's Annual Review Meeting, an event organised to discuss and appraise the research undertakings, share information and learn about developments in the field of Research, Technologies, and Innovation. It is also an opportunity for Makerere University to measure its strength and contribution to solve the societal problems in the 21st century.

This year's theme “**Investing in Research and Innovating for Society**” is in tune with our research agenda because we are convinced that the challenges to society today are increasingly becoming more complex in a world that is witnessing emerging and re-emerging health-related epidemics and pandemics, climate change, energy concerns, natural disasters, food insecurity, human rights abuses and conflict and insecurity among others.

Local challenges require local responses. And for this, each country needs its own experts, its own problem formulations, and its own knowledge production – an intellectual autonomy.

With the support of the Royal Government of Sweden, Makerere University continues to address these challenges through impact oriented research. The annual conference, just like the previous ones provides an opportunity for sharing the research findings arising from research conducted at Makerere University and that continue to engage with policy and transform society.

We are here today because the Government of Sweden recognizes our efforts and supports our work. The Swedish research cooperation with Uganda was initiated in the year 2000. The research collaboration currently includes **Makerere University, Kyambogo, Busitema, Gulu and Mbarara University of Science and Technology** with shared responsibilities but with an overarching goal of building their staff research capacity. Support to the four regional public universities is channeled via Makerere University.

Your Excellency Ambassador, Makerere University and Uganda in general continue to enjoyed the generosity of the Royal Government and people of Sweden. Our work through the Uganda-

Sweden research cooperation has contributed to the enhancement of Makerere University's visibility, ranking (*needless to re-assert that we are 3rd in Africa*) and performance, thereby positioning Makerere University at the forefront of the global knowledge economy.

It is heartwarming to report that over the 15 years of collaboration, the Swedish government has invested 515 million SEK (USD\$ 73 million) into Uganda's graduate training and scientific environments in these universities – the main recipient being Makerere University.

Tremendous achievements have been made including the creation of an environment conducive to high quality relevant research through investment in human resource development, ICT, library resources, laboratory and field site infrastructure.

In the current cooperation agreement alone, with a total grant of about 275 million SEK, has been approved to support 17 research teams from the Uganda public universities to improve the environment for research and training. The new agreement includes 125 PhD students, 147 MA students, and 65 post-doc fellows, divided between the five public universities mentioned earlier. This graduate training, including institutional support, brings the Swedish contribution to 32 million USD over five years. Over 240 students have been recruited and inducted in the programme.

Two important shifts have taken place in the new collaboration period.

Firstly, whilst the program previously was only based on sandwich students, 105 PhD students are now *locally* trained. Only 20 PhDs are going on sandwich, based on capacity need. This is far from where we started in the year 2000. This is also testimony that over the 15 years of collaboration, we have strengthened our research capacity.

Secondly, local training will take place in multi-disciplinary teams, based on multi-disciplinary themes. The previous model of primarily singular PhD projects has thus been shifted, as per Mak's research policy. And as mentioned before, the research content coincides with Mak's research agenda.

Your Excellence the Ambassador, in order to illustrate the scale and breadth of the contribution of the various research endeavors implemented under the Uga-Sweden research cooperation, I am

proud to report our contribution to policy formulation at different levels including: The Energy Policy for Uganda; The policy on use of energy-saving bulbs; land amendment bill; various policies in health, such as policies on HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB treatment and control, National Gender Policy; policies on peace and conflict management and good governance and, National Compensation Policy for Avian Influenza. The Sida research programme has supported most of these initiatives.

Despite these successes, we continue to face several challenges, particularly the lack of adequate financing. I feel shy to report here that at Makerere and other public regional universities in Uganda, there is a comparatively low level of support for basic research and as a result the research-industrial-economic growth nexus is being impeded if not compromised. This is a serious issue because as you well know the quality of basic research often determines the future of S&T and economic growth in general. Around the world, we are witnessing a shorter time span in product development--that is, from scientific discovery to economic application. In Uganda, it is more important than ever before to ensure that the latest research is readily accessible to and in harmony with industry.

Lessons learned: research uptake and funding of universities

Directly transferring and applying methods and research results from other contexts is most often *not* successful. However, having local knowledge rooted in the specific context, international research can be accessed, adapted, and applied - to be useful for local conditions.

We may not have any blue print for investing in research, however, one thing is certain - There is a need for greater investment in scientific research in the region.

To ensure that the Uganda can exploit all that its excellent research and innovation base has to offer and remain an intellectual powerhouse, it must keep investing in and building an environment in which research will prosper and ideas will flourish.

In the past, Universities had to contend with their traditional mandate as being institutions for the generation of knowledge, teaching and occasional service to community. However, there is now widespread consensus that knowledge production triggers economic growth. However,

there are perennial challenges. Communicating innovations, ensuring their adoption, as well as communicating the significance of the work of the scientist to other stakeholders in national development, I think, are two very important dimension of the work of scientists that have not been given proper attention. **Often times scientist are not good at telling their own success stories. The challenge of our time is how to translate scientific findings into the language that key stakeholders like policy makers understand.**

As I conclude, I would like to appreciate the good work undertaken by the different researchers both at Mak and in Sweden, supervisors, administrators and stakeholders in implementation of the Sida programme at Makerere University.

On behalf of Makerere University, I extend our sincere appreciation to Your Excellence the Ambassador, the Head of Development Corporation, Senior Research Advisor and all pour Swedish collaborating scientists for the support that has seen a tremendous growth in the research and innovations function at Makerere University.

I wish to thank the VC, University management for their patronage and guidance received on our way to building a nation where home-grown innovations provide the vehicle for transformation.

We are committed to “*Building a Stronger Future though Generating Knowledge, Influencing Policy and enhancing Practice*”.

Ladies and Gentlemen, at this juncture, I would like to welcome the Vice-Chancellor, **Professor John Ddumba-Ssentamu** to make his remarks as ‘**WE BUILD FOR THE FUTURE**’.

Thank you.