

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

**ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR PROFESSOR BARNABAS NAWANGWE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 71ST GRADUATION CEREMONY
AT THE FREEDOM SQUARE ON TUESDAY 18TH MAY 2021**

- **The Chancellor of Makerere University, Prof. Ezra Suruma**
- **Honorable Ministers**
- **Representatives of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies**
- **The Chairperson of Makerere University Council, Mrs. Lorna Magara**
- **The Vice Chairperson of Council, Rt. Hon. Dan Fred Kidega**
- **The Chairperson of the Appointments Board, Mr. Kiwanuka Kiryowa**
- **Members of Council of Makerere University**
- **The Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Members of the University Management Team**
- **Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Principals of sister Universities and Institutions**
- **Members of the University Senate**
- **The Chairperson of Convocation**
- **Members of Staff of Makerere University**
- **Parents and Guardians**
- **Graduands**
- **The Media Fraternity**
- **Distinguished Visitors**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you all to the second session of the 71st graduation ceremony of Makerere University. This is a historical occasion being the first graduation to be held in the blended mode due to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic. I wish to assure all our graduands, parents and guardians, who are following us on TV and via the University's social medial platforms, that everything possible has been done to ensure that our graduands get a memorable experience of this special day in their lives. This arrangement has been made in order to ensure the safety of all our graduands and visitors.

Ladies and gentlemen, for this 71st graduation ceremony, a total of 12,550 students will be awarded degrees and diplomas of Makerere University in various disciplines. Of these, a record 108 will receive PhDs. Of these, 38 graduands are female, representing 35% of the total. A total of 1160 graduands will receive Masters Degrees. Of these, 434 are female, representing 37% of the total. Of all the 12,550 graduands, 51% are female and 49% are male. I am happy to see that all our policies to promote access to higher education for the girl child and to end historical imbalances in education are bearing fruit, as Makerere University strives to remain a leader in gender mainstreaming on the African Continent and globally. With effect from the admissions for the current academic year, the University started to implement a 40 percent enrolment quarter for females in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (otherwise called STEM disciplines). This will improve the University's production of female engineers, doctors, mathematicians, to mention but only a few.

Honorary Degrees

During this congregation today, Dr Adesina Akiwunwi, President of the African Development Bank, was scheduled to receive an Honorary Doctorate of Laws of Makerere University. Dr. Adesina was unable to travel today and he will be conferred on Friday.

I applaud all members of staff who will be awarded PhDs and Masters degrees in various disciplines. Your dedication to improving yourselves academically as well as our students is commendable. I am certain this will boost the Makerere University academic profile. I also take this opportunity to congratulate all members of staff who have been promoted to various academic levels in the last one year.

2. CELEBRATION OF 100 YEARS OF EXCELLENT SERVICE

In October we will launch the celebrations to mark 100 years of Makerere's excellent service to humanity. The year-long celebrations will be capped by the climax in October next year. Celebrations will be held in different parts of the Country to pay tribute to all the people of Uganda, who have helped build the University to its current prestigious position as one of the best universities in Africa and the World. I call upon all alumni and friends of Makerere to actively participate in these celebrations.

3. ACHIEVEMENTS 2019/20 ACADEMIC YEAR

Ladies and gentlemen, Makerere University has registered a number of achievements over the last one year.

Research and Innovation:

The two colleges, which are graduating students today, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and College of Education and External Studies have been active in research during the last academic year.

The College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences hosts one of two World Bank Centres of Excellence, the Makerere Regional Centre for Crop Improvement (MARCCI). This Centre is spearheading research and graduate training in crop improvement, giving special focus to

indigenous food crops. Today the Centre will graduate a total of 8 Masters students from nine African countries. Through the Government Research and Innovation Fund, the College produced many innovations towards the fight against COVID-19. These include the biodegradable facial shield, the solar powered hand-less bore hole and, the touch-less solar powered hand-washing kit. Other innovations include the potato-sorghum value addition project, which adds value to what would otherwise be waste from harvest of Kigezi potatoes, otherwise also known as Irish potatoes. When fully commercialized, this project has the potential to change the economy of the Kigezi Region.

The College of Education and External Studies is at the centre of the massive move to blended teaching and learning. Through the Institute of Online, Distance and e-Learning, which is currently based at the College, Makerere has made great strides in responding to the new normal occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic and we are considered leaders in ODEL in the entire Africa Region. The College has conducted research in early child education and has designed post-graduate programmes in early child education. The College also conducted research in COVID-19 and its implications for access to education.

I pay tribute to all these gallant Makerereans for the wonderful work they do for the advancement of Uganda, Africa and Humanity.

4. TIMELY PROCESSING OF MAKERERE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPTS:

Due to the effects of COVID-19, we were unable to process transcripts for our graduands before the graduation ceremony. However, I am happy to inform all our graduands, that we have now received all the materials required for the production of the transcripts and they should be able to collect them within a couple of weeks. The Academic Registrar will announce the schedule for collection of the transcripts.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I wish to assure all our stakeholders, that Makerere University, your University is in good form and vibrant. But Makerere can and will become even greater and more relevant to our Country. In order to achieve that, we must uphold our professional integrity as staff and the students must exercise maximum discipline. Uganda has made enormous sacrifices and invested in us. We must give back to our dear motherland in double measure. I wish to re-affirm our commitment to support the Government in her efforts to emancipate our people from poverty and marginalization. We will do this through continued diligent service to our motherland, like we have done over the last 100 years.

6. A WORD TO THE GRADUANDS

Finally, let me turn to you our dear graduands. I congratulate all of you and your parents, guardians and sponsors upon this noble achievement. The time and resources you have invested have paid off

and that is the cause for our celebration today. Allow me to specifically thank our dear parents, guardians and sponsors who have selflessly financed your studies to this level. They have sacrificed a lot to give you a good future and deserve to be appreciated. Please join me in expressing our gratitude for their enormous sacrifices.

Today, we are graduating students in two of the oldest and very important professions, Agriculture and Teaching. Agriculture remains the backbone of our economy and the opportunities are immense. The parish development model, coined by Prof. Ezra Suruma, our Chancellor presents unique opportunities to you and other professionals. Don't fear to make your hands dirty and you will surely succeed. That is what has made the farmers of Israel, from where many of our students return with thousands of dollars after working on their farms, millionaires. Think out of the box and you will surely succeed.

The teaching profession is among the noblest of professions. Teaching is a calling and only those with the passion to enlighten society choose this noble profession. Our joy is in seeing the many successful people who go through our hands. Money has never been the motivating force behind our passion, but the desire to serve and improve society. Serve with diligence and you will be hugely rewarded. Due to developments in the education sector, you will improve yourselves by getting masters degrees and our gates are open for you.

As you go through the gates of Makerere, hold your head high but with humility, and always hold your alma mater in high esteem. And please, do not forget the gates of Makerere. God Bless You All!

AS WE BUILD FOR THE FUTURE!



Signed: _____ **Date: 18th May 2021**

PROF. BARNABAS NAWANGWE, VICE-CHANCELLOR