

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

**ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR PROFESSOR BARNABAS NAWANGWE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 71ST GRADUATION CEREMONY
AT THE FREEDOM SQUARE ON WEDNESDAY 19TH 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 third 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.

Graduation Statistics

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.

Congratulations to Staff

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 three colleges, which are graduating students today, College of Veterinary Medicine Animal Resources and Biosecurity, the College of Business and Management Sciences and the College of Computing and Information Sciences have been active in research during the last academic year.

COVAB is positioning itself for the 21st century, by developing for the market vaccines, diagnostic tools and drugs to reduce the country's import bill. The COVAB team is also working to integrate digital and Artificial Intelligence in their line of work. Researchers at the embarked on developing alternative methods of tick and tick-borne disease control. The Principal Investigator, Dr. Mbulaiteye-Saimo-Kahwa, together with other scientists from COVAB started the anti-tick vaccine development research initiative to develop an "anti-tick vaccine" that would work on the local ticks

and be integrated into the control strategy of ticks and tick-borne disease. The team has already developed the vaccine and arrangements have been finalised for mass production of the vaccine by the private sector. With some of the most modern research labs on the Continent, the College is conducting research on many other issues.

COBAMS is home to the centre of excellence in Public Investment Management supported by the World Bank and a regional centre for Environment and Development (EfD) supported by Sida.

The EfD Centre at Makerere University is one of the 15 such centres worldwide. It works with relevant government departments, the private sector, development partners and civil society to drive research and policy action. The research and policy are underpinned by issues regarding environmental management and sustainable development. The college has for the last five years supported research and publication through its small grants programme. This intervention has increased the number of publications from under 40 in 2017/18 to over 160 in 2019/2020. The college has established three new flagship activities, one at each of its three schools. These are the Data Analysis and Management Unit, based at the School of Statistics and Planning. The other is the Macroeconomic Modelling, Analysis and Forecasting Unit at the School of Economics. The Makerere University Entrepreneurship and Innovation Center is at the School of Business. This centre has organised five successful entrepreneurship expos, which have revealed the huge potential for innovation and business incubation at Makerere. It is proposed that this centre is elevated to a university-wide Entrepreneurship and Innovation Support Centre to support innovators and start-ups across the University, as well as start-ups by innovators beyond the University, who need support. This is a priority in the implementation of our new strategic plan.

The following projects have been rolled out at COCIS with funding from the research and Innovation Fund:

- i. Crane Cloud: An open source multi-service layer for highly available cloud-based services in Africa;
- ii. Strengthening Science, Technology Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) using Gamification in primary schools;
- iii. A Mobile E-Governance Service Adviser (AMESA): A Citizen Centric Process Alignment to Public Service Delivery;
- iv. A Mobile Health Individualized Dietary Plan and Behavioural lifestyle tracker for Diabetics in Uganda; and
- v. The Makerere University's e-Human Resources Management System (e-HRMS).

The e-HRMS is already revolutionising the Human resource function at Makerere and I would strongly encourage Government to adopt it. I would urge the Government to take advantage of the enormous potential at COCIS to implement its e-Government policy at minimal cost, while giving the opportunity to our faculty and students to gain practical experience. The resource we have at the College is superior to the many vendors roaming the world, particularly in Africa and fleecing our governments of hard-earned foreign exchange. 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. 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.

As graduates of Veterinary Medicine, Business and Management and Computing, you go out at a time when the Country needs you most. The Parish Development Model designed by our Chancellor, Prof. Ezra Suruma presents unique opportunities for you to go and help to develop our Country right from the grassroots.

With a degree from one of the best universities in the world, there is no reason for not succeeding. As you struggle to find your place in society, you might stumble and fall, but always have the courage to stand up and try again with dignity. Your success is our pride. Avoid vain ambitions and keep away from corruption. Love and respect your parents and fear God so that doors will be opened 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. Remember, learning never ends and we will welcome you back whenever you wish to improve your academic career. To those graduating with PhDs, I say: you are now a certified researcher and truly a global citizen. That puts you in the position to understand our society with wider lenses and to find solutions for Africa's development. Fare thee well. And please, do not forget the gates of Makerere. God Bless You All!

AS WE BUILD FOR THE FUTURE!



Signed: _____ Date: 19th May 2021

PROF. BARNABAS NAWANGWE, VICE-CHANCELLOR