

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

**ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR PROFESSOR BARNABAS NAWANGWE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 71ST GRADUATION CEREMONY
AT THE FREEDOM SQUARE ON FRIDAY 21ST MAY 2021**

- The Chancellor of Makerere University, Prof. Ezra Suruma
 - Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank
 - The Chief of Defence Forces, General David Muhoozi and your Delegation
 - 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
 - Representatives of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies
 - 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
 - The Commandant of Senior Officers College, Kimaka, Lt. Gen. Gutti
 - Members of the University Senate
 - Members of Staff of Makerere University
 - Parents and Guardians
 - Graduands
 - The Media Fraternity
 - Distinguished Guests
 - Ladies and Gentlemen:
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1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you all to the fifth and final session of the 71st graduation ceremony of Makerere University. In a very special way, I welcome Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President of the African Development Bank Group, who will receive the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters of Makerere University. Makerere University is proud to honour you, Dr. Adesina for your illustrious service to Africa. Makerere University has benefitted from your visionary leadership at the African Development Bank through the Bank's support to infrastructure development, graduate training and research and innovation. The bank has tremendously contributed to our strategy to be a research-led university. Congratulations!

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.

Congratulations to Staff

I applaud all members of staff who will be awarded PhDs and Masters degrees in various disciplines. Your hard work is a demonstration of your determination to be part of our journey to becoming a research university. Congratulations!

2. ACHIEVEMENTS DURING 2019/20 ACADEMIC YEAR

Mr. Chancellor Sir, The College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences have excelled in teaching and research during the last academic year. The College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology produced several innovations, including innovations to help fight the spread of the coronavirus. The solar powered hands-free hand-washing kit, with provision for recycling water is a great innovation, which will be pertinent even beyond COVID-19, especially in health and educational facilities, which use a lot of water as well as in areas with acute scarcity of water. The World Bank African Center of Excellence in Materials, Product Development and Nano-Technology (MAPRONANO), in collaboration with colleagues from the College of Health Sciences, is researching on production of medicines from indigenous plants. On top of that, MAPRONANO has produced a diesel engine. You will recall that the Kiira EV electric car is also a product of this college. With the development of the diesel engine, the stage is set for production of all types of vehicles. This is very exciting indeed. Furthermore, the College has started development of a COVID-19 diagnostic rapid test kit for detection of the coronavirus in saliva in partnership with the Makerere University College of Health Sciences and Uganda Virus Research Institute. It is expected that the rapid testing kit will be cheap, safe, non-invasive, and with rapid turnaround time for detection of active Covid-19 including individual self-collection of the sample. This intervention is expected to minimize transmission risk faced by health care practitioners and offers effective diagnosis, efficient contact tracing and community surveillance. These innovations will be commercialized through our new Intellectual Property Management Office and the Entrepreneurship Support Centre which we are working on. With these and many more innovations coming out of this and the other colleges, the need to establish a Science and Technology business incubation centre is very urgent. It is my conviction that the Centre will produce many spin-off companies and create employment for our youth. I believe universities have a critical role to play in efforts to avert a looming catastrophe as a result of our high population growth.

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences has undergone a major transformation. With 22 PhD graduands at this ceremony, the highest number from any college, the College is indeed

celebrating a bumper harvest. The College is now one of the leading research units in the University. With support from the Research and Innovation Fund, Researchers from the College have contributed to the fight against COVID-19. Researchers from the Department of African Languages, in collaboration with public health officials, translated COVID-19 sensitisation messages into six major languages in Uganda — Luganda, Runyankore-Rukiga, Ateso, Luo, Lugbarati and Kiswahili, including Braille for the visually impaired. Another team of researchers from Makerere, in partnership with several institutions, transformed Ugandan folktales into animated films for educational and leisure purposes. The Makerere Institute of Social Research is one of the two internationally recognised think tanks. The Institute continues to produce critical researchers for Africa through its special PhD programme. The College is home to the first Rotary Peace Centre on the African Continent. And the first cohort of 20 peace scholars from 13 countries from all the five continents completed their onsite studies earlier this month. Peace is a necessary ingredient of development and Makerere University is proud to be associated with Rotary in this noble cause. Through CHUSS Makerere University is proud to collaborate with our security forces in training highly qualified officers for the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces and for the Uganda Police. I thank the security forces for this collaboration and salute them for maintaining peace in our Country and the Region.

I believe we have made tremendous progress in research over the past years, but we must do more. Africa currently accounts for only 2% of knowledge generation while we contribute 20% of the population. Africa needs to produce hundreds of thousands of PhDs. Sadly all our universities in Africa put together produce only 1000 PhDs per year, while China with the same population as Africa produces more than 50,000 PhDs per year, 50 times more than Africa. At this rate, it is going to be very hard to transform our economies. Africa must strategise to produce at least 10,000 PhDs annually and not 10,000 PhDs in ten years as a recent World Bank report suggests. That is why at Makerere, we have resolved to become research-led in order to produce more Masters and PhDs for Africa. I thank the Government and our development partners for the support we continue to receive on this journey.

3. 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.

4. 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, as well as in other capitals and cities of the World, where our more than 300,000 living alumni live and work. Makerere currently hosts students from 38 African countries, making ours a truly pan-African international university. I call upon all alumni and friends of Makerere to actively participate in these celebrations.

Soon we will launch the fundraising campaign to raise funds for the restoration of our iconic Main Administration Building, the icon of higher education in the entire east and central Africa Region, which was destroyed by a fire in September last year. Our plan is to restore the building in time for celebration of 100 years in October next year. I call upon all our alumni and friends of Makerere to contribute generously when called upon. We must raise UGX 15 billion, which is required to restore the building.

5. A WORD TO THE GRADUANDS

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.

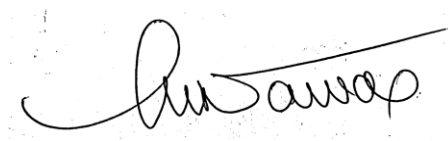
We have trained you to be critical thinkers, ready to face the job market, but also to be resilient entrepreneurs. Go out and create the jobs the Country is yearning for. Those of you graduating with PhDs are now certified researchers. You are now truly global citizens. You must help change the situation in Africa.

The task ahead of you is enormous, but it is honourable. Go out there and make the difference Africa is yearning for. 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. And as our anthem goes, do not forget the gates of Makerere.

A VOTE OF THANKS

I would like to thank all the members of staff, who have made this a successful ceremony. I thank the professors and lecturers, the administrative and support staff, the ceremonies committee, the contracts committee, the Security Department, the Estates Department, the Office of the Academic Registrar, the Department of Performing Arts and Film, The Police Band, NTV, UBC and other media houses, and Fotogenix among others. I thank the Chairperson, Mrs. Lorna Magara and the Commissioner for higher education Mrs. Jolly Uzamukunda and all members of Council for staying with us through the five days. I wish to most sincerely thank you, Prof. Suruma, our Chancellor for successfully presiding over the 71st Graduation Ceremony during the five days very efficiently. You have done a wonderful job. Finally, I thank and give praise to the Good Lord, who has enabled us to prepare and successfully conclude this ceremony. God gave us good weather throughout the ceremony, including a light rain when we were graduating students from the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. He was sending a message. Thank you and God bless you all.

AS WE BUILD FOR THE FUTURE!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Nawangwe', is positioned above the printed name.

Signed: _____ **Date:** 21st May 2021
PROF. BARNABAS NAWANGWE, VICE-CHANCELLOR