



REMARKS BY

PROFESSOR GEORGE MONDO KAGONYERA, CHANCELLOR  
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE  
LAUNCH OF THE YEAR-LONG CELEBRATIONS TO  
COMMEMORATE 90 YEARS OF THE EXISTENCE OF  
MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, FREEDOM SQUARE, MAKERERE  
UNIVERSITY

ON

SATURDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2012

- H.E. Dr. Gen Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda
- H.E. The Vice President
- Rt. Hon Speaker
- Rt. Hon Prime Minister
- Honorable Ministers
- Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and High Commissioners
- Your Lordships the Judges of the Judicature
- The Vice Chancellor Makerere University
- Honorable Members of Parliament
- Your Worship the Lord Mayor of Kampala City
- The Chairperson and Members of Makerere University Council
- Religious Leaders
- The Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors of Sister Universities
- The Chairman Makerere University Convocation
- Representatives of our development partners
- Representatives of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies
- Representatives of the private sector and business community
- Members of Makerere University Management
- Members of Makerere University Senate
- Members of Staff of Makerere University
- Members of the Alumni
- The Media
- Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen:

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On behalf of Makerere University and on my own behalf, I warmly welcome your excellences and all our guests to this historic day, a day when we begin to commemorate 90 years of the existence of this great institution, Makerere University.

Your Excellency, Makerere University is a symbol of academic excellence and innovation in the East African region and on the African continent as a whole.

The institution which started as Uganda Technical College in January 1922 with only 14 students soon began offering various other courses in Medical Care, Agriculture, Veterinary Sciences and Teacher Training. This name was to later change to Makerere College on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1922 and by 1925 there were seventy-six students enrolled in Makerere to receive vocational training. Makerere expanded over the years and on 1st July 2011, the University transitioned from the Faculty-based to the collegiate system. On Friday 30<sup>th</sup> December 2011, Makerere University officially transformed into a Collegiate University with 9 Constituent Colleges and one School, operating as semi-autonomous units of the University.

Throughout her existence, Makerere University has made tremendous contributions to National Development through the nurturing of world-class graduates across all professional fields. Your Excellency, it is often the exception to the rule not to find a Makerere University Graduate in any Government or Private agency associated with the development of this nation. As a University, we are greatly privileged to have made this humble contribution. It is our foremost priority to continue building a highly skilled human resource force that can fully utilize the natural resources of this nation to propel Ugandans to economic prosperity.

None of this would have been possible without the prevailing peace and continued support of the NRM Government. As noted by Your Excellency during the State of the Nation address on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2012, support from the Presidential Initiative for Science and Technology has facilitated the development and processing of a variety of products. We would like to thank the Government for this. It is our humble appeal that the government continues to accord this university all the support required to boost academic excellence.

### **Celebrating 90 years of excellence at Makerere University**

Today you are launching yearlong celebrations. This history of Makerere University is known to all of us.

The Main Administration building that overlooks this Freedom Square also commonly known as the “Ivory Tower” is easily the most recognizable symbol of Makerere University. In 1939, His Royal Highness The Duke of Gloucester cut the first sod; today’s equivalent of a ground-breaking ceremony, for the construction of this Main Administration Building. The message he read to all those present at the function on behalf of His Majesty King George VI was

***“The College will afford splendid opportunities for service and advancement especially for African men and women of which I am sure they will eagerly avail themselves”***

Your Excellency, from this point forward Makerere University’s reputation as a distinguished institution in sub-Saharan Africa spread. In 1940, enrollment rose to 181, including 28 Kenyans, 31 Tanganyikans and 9 Zanzibaris. The first persons to graduate with University of London degrees included five Ugandans: the late Birirwenkye, the late Barlow and Ms. E. Bisamunyu, Hon. Mayanja Nkangi and Hon. Alfred Mubanda. In 1945 six women were admitted and in 1955, Ms Eunice Lubega became the first Makerere woman to receive a University of London degree. Mrs. Sara Ntiro had earlier completed her studies at Oxford University in 1954.

The College of Health Sciences today started out as the Makerere University School of Medicine in 1924. The School managed to distinguish itself as a centre of excellence and in 1957; the Makerere Medical degree was recognized as fully equivalent to British Medical qualification. Two years later in 1959 Prof. Josephine M. Namboze graduated as the first woman to obtain a medical degree in East and Central Africa.

The first African Writers’ Conference as hosted by Makerere University in 1962 soon after Uganda gained independence from Great Britain brought together great African writers like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka and spread the Institution’s reputation.

In 1963, Makerere University became a Constituent College of the then University of East Africa and in 1970 she became a separate and independent university.

In the year 2000, Makerere University began to strategically look at her future and announced her strategic plan 2000/1 – 2006/7, as a follow up to the 1996/7 – 1998/99 plan. On expiry, this plan was succeeded by the ten-year strategic plan 2008/9 – 2018/19. In these plans the university prioritized evolution of

faculties into colleges as one of the strategic goals to improve university management, and consolidate the restructuring process into decentralized units, and sought to reposition herself to meet emerging development challenges in Uganda. I am pleased to report that these plans have been instrumental in guiding our transition from the faculty-based to the collegiate system and improving our administrative efficiency and effectiveness.

### **Focusing on the future of Makerere University**

As you are all aware, Makerere University has had its ups and downs. In Amin's days it was dangerous to identify one as belonging to Makerere University. In Obote II, Professor Mamdani was stripped of his citizenship because of a simple statement. Situations like these have allowed Makerere University to be an institution where intellectual pursuit was not allowed, hence the tendency to what I call intellectual dwarfism.

Indeed the vote of a university in the development of our country is clear, but the manner in which this is achieved remains debatable. For example; should Makerere University be a Centre for ... products of graduates or a Centre for academic excellence where a few persons are schooled to the highest level of comparability to any other in the world, can we achieve both? It is a healthy thing to continuously debate these subjects, it happens all over the world, even in the most mature institutions.

I would like to thank Your Excellency, for standing with us as we embrace the future, by extending budgetary support through the Presidential initiative for Science and Technology, as well as the Government of Uganda's advocating for support from African Development Bank (ADB) under ADB-V, and securing a concessional loan from the Chinese Government for targeted Infrastructure development at Makerere University including transferring the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences to Kabanyolo.

### **Equipping the Youth to Become Entrepreneurs**

#### **Background**

Makerere University College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES) is partnering with Uganda Police to facilitate the youth (in Kampala, Masaka and Mbarara) through mindset changing and to make them entrepreneurs. This initiative will be rolled over to other parts of the country.

As of now CAES has received proposals from different Youth Groups, read through them and will recommend them for funding. The Youth visited our Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute Kabanyolo (MUARIK) on the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2012 and were shown what can be offered at MUARIK. This was an open day where students of CAES were demonstrating to the public what they had learnt and put into practice the 10 weeks of recess term.

CAES plans to train the Youth on mindset changing at MUARIK. After this training they should be able to improve on their proposals and make them sustainable investments/enterprises. Thereafter CEAS will closely work with the YOUTH and will continuously provide them with necessary skills. Others will be trained at our Incubation Business Centre at the School of Food Technology, Nutrition and Bioengineering.

Your Excellency, you had promised to visit us. We still would like to request you to find time and see what we are able to do

At Makerere University we believe that all of us have potentials, the difference lies in how these potentials are exploited. At this juncture, I wish to invite the youth to stand up for recognition.

I thank you all for joining us on this historic launch as **We Build for the Future, FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY.**