



Our Guest of Honour;
The Hon. Minister of Education and Sport and The Hon. Minister
of Science Technology and Innovation
Invited guests, ladies, and Gentlemen
All protocol observed

First of all, you are all warmly welcome to the celebration of more than two decades of Swedish-Ugandan bilateral research cooperation.

With the emergence of 'knowledge economies', nations and regions are responding to new challenges in new ways that affect choices in the development of higher education, research and innovation systems.

The production, accumulation, transfer, and application of knowledge are central factors in socio-economic development and are increasingly more essential to national and regional development strategies.

While access to local and international scientifically based knowledge is crucial to development in all countries, it is even more critical to the growth and development of developing countries.

It is for this reason that the Swedish Government has identified support to higher education and research as an important area for Swedish development cooperation.

As many of you know - in 1999 Sida decided to initiate bilateral research cooperation with Uganda. Until then, Sweden had only supported research in the country through thematic regional programs. The overriding rationale was that Uganda needed at

least one research university that is able to produce graduates with qualified analytical skills for the country.

Against this background, it was decided to focus the Swedish contribution towards strengthening the capacity for research and research training at the country's biggest university, Makerere.

Since then, the Swedish research cooperation in Uganda has included components of institutional support that is organically linked to graduate training. Institution-building, postgraduate training, and the existence of an environment that is conducive for research and research training are all part of one single effort.

It is for this reason that we have supported the University Library, laboratories, ICT infrastructure, GIS, gender mainstreaming, and cross-cutting PhD courses, to name a few examples. From 2010, four other public universities entered the cooperation: Kyambogo University; Busitema University, Gulu University and Mbarara University of Science and Technology.

Capacity-strengthening - at the level of individuals as well as institutions - and networking with Swedish Universities and Institutes has always been at the centre of our work and long-term commitment from the partners and scientific cooperation on equal footing have been important cornerstones.

In monetary terms, the total Swedish support amounts to 120 million USD.

From the start, our support was built on establishing a partnership between Ugandan Universities and Swedish Universities and over the years, it has developed into a partnership between more than 17 Swedish universities and institutions and 5 Ugandan public

universities that are linked to several regional and international networks.

Apart from this partnership, it's also obvious that relations have been built between researchers and universities that will continue even after the end of the formal collaboration.

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As you know, Sweden is phasing out the bilateral research cooperation with Uganda and we now celebrate more than two decades of our cooperation to showcase all the great achievements that you and others before you have contributed to during the years.

The cooperation has been successful in terms of developing capacity both at the institutional and individual levels and it has also contributed to both University and national policies in different sectors.

This morning Dr. Tusu who has evaluated our cooperation will highlight the impact and some of the results of our support, and during these two days you will present some of the scientific achievements.

But let me highlight some of the achievements in short: a total of 803 staff from 5 public universities in Uganda have gone through different levels of training - 263 Masters, 327 PhDs and 85 at post-doctoral level as well as 98 small grants to researchers.

The five Ugandan public universities have developed quality assurance policies and structures for research and graduate

training as well as established thematic multidisciplinary networks that attract new collaborators and funds outside of this program.

Sweden has been the largest funder to research capacity strengthening in Uganda. We have consistently raised the issue of institutional and financial sustainability of our collaboration with public Universities in Uganda. One aspect of this is the viability of the educational and research collaborations that have been established between the partner universities.

I think we can all agree that a society that does not produce its own intellectuals cannot be independent. In the emerging reality of Knowledge based societies analytical capacity has to be continuously upgraded. Students need to be taught to examine, critically engage, and seek multiple answers. A critical question is therefore: how knowledge production is organized and defined, and who provides the resources.

I am glad to note that the Government of Uganda has now committed funding to research through the Research and Innovation Fund, managed by Makerere University. We hope that this will continue to build on the capacities of Universities in Uganda and raise the quality of Uganda's research output with the hope of catalysing the country's social economic transformation.

We are very glad to note that Uganda is investing in science to with the hope of reducing the high levels of “brain drain”. The have noted the government has earmarked Sh 358 billion (USD 100 million) to support scientists to further research and product development in the 2021/2022 budget. This reflects the importance attributed to home-grown research in Uganda’s National Development Plan and Vision 2040.

Ladies and gentlemen

To conclude, Uganda’s prosperity is important to all of us, both as a source of global growth and to promote inclusive and sustainable globalization. Effective and balanced international partnerships between Ugandan universities and their Swedish and regional counterparts are essential for continuing to tackle the global challenges laid out in the SDGs.

Finally

I would like to congratulate you on what you have achieved during our cooperation. I know that Makerere University is highly esteemed academically and that this is reflected in international rankings. I’d like to think that our cooperation has played a part in this.

Good quality research and robust research systems drives development and innovations. It also is key for our understanding of challenges and for identifying solutions.

Strong institutional, professional and personal bonds have been established between the participating universities and

institutions. These are very good signs that cooperation will continue beyond the phasing out-period. This is evidenced by the 5 years agreement between Karolinska Institute and Makerere University under the Center of Excellence for sustainable health, the regional Mathematics network, the cooperation in ICT for development with Gothenburg University and many other regional and international networks that Ugandan universities are involved in.

Allow me to convey our appreciation to all of you who have made it possible to reach where we are today.

Once again, you are warmly welcome and I now look forward to listening to your presentations during these two days.