



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY
THE RT HON ROBINAH NABBANJA
PRIME MINISTER
ON THE OCASSION OF MAKERERE UNIVERISTY ANNUAL Ph.D
CONVENTION
HELD ON TUESDAY FEB 28, 2023
AT THE PROF. YUSUF LULE CTF2 AUDITORIUM
STARTING AT 9 AM

The Vice Chancellor

The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic affairs

The Director DRGT

College Principals,

The President of the Makerere University PhD Fellows

Gallant Scholars of Makerere University,

Ladies and Gentlemen!

I am privileged to have been invited to give the keynote address at this very important Ph.D. Convention at this great National University.

I am honoured to address you during a time when Makerere has successfully celebrated 100 years of impactful service to Uganda, the region and the globe at large.

I am particularly excited to address a gathering of distinguished scholars at a time, when the university has just recently graduated 120 Ph.Ds and hundreds of other graduates just a week back. Those have now joined the world of work to compliment Government efforts in improving the lives of our people. The University is indeed growing in its mission of gradually transforming into a research-led university in Uganda and in the region. For this, I congratulate Vice Chancellor, his team and the students upon this achievement.

The Uganda Government under the Makerere University Research and Innovation Fund Support, will continue to create many avenues for funding practical research projects that seek solutions to our challenges as a nation. This Financial Year, 2022/23 UGX 30 BN was earmarked for this purpose.

The National Development Plan III underscores the role of research in informing policy and practice. We are ready to continue supporting such research initiatives that address human needs of the day. Government has identified strategic sectors to catapult the people into middle income. Sectors like Agriculture; Tourism; Minerals, Oil and Gas; Infrastructure; ICT and Human Capital Development must be supported.

I pledge that as Government, we will continue to support bankable research projects and, we shall keep increasing the fund as our resource envelope grows. This is because President Yoweri Museveni is very keen on supporting pragmatic projects that create value addition to our products which is grounded in research and innovations.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the Vice Chancellor and his team, for a well-organized event. World Over, Universities worth their names leverage on research to impact on their communities. I understand the University New Strategic Plan (2020- 2030) is focused

on research and innovations. This is what President Museveni has been urging you to concentrate on. Recent global pandemics of COVID-19 and the Ebola problem have taught us many lessons. We have to be ahead of times in providing solutions to the challenges in our communities. Challenges such as Diseases, Domestic Violence, Hunger, Conflicts, Mindset Change, Appropriate Curriculum in our schools, Value addition to our agro-produce, climate change, environmental restoration, natural resource governance and many others.

Are you ready? Let me hear you!

Turning to today's theme: **"Positioning Research for National Development,"** I want to submit that it has come at the right time.

The Government of Uganda is implementing a number of programmes that are aligned with solution-based interventions and evidence from research is very critical.

As Government, we have laid much emphasis on value addition, import substitution, manufacturing, the Parish Development Model, Agriculture, Primary Healthcare, infrastructure, oil and gas, science and technology, ICT among others.

I have perused through your various research projects under these four important sub themes:

1. Governance, Economic and Social Change for a prosperous region
2. Natural Resources Management, Climate Smart Development and Food Security
3. Science, Innovation and Technological Advancement for Bio-safety and Wellbeing.
4. Health and Health Systems that address Contemporary Global Threats.

When you look at these sub themes, we are happy that finally, the academia are starting to align their research with our national objectives.

For example, during COVID, we relied heavily on our home grown solutions backed by our research from our scientists to reverse the pandemic and performed very well. We managed the crisis so well that we outperformed many sophisticated nations with high end healthcare systems. This was testimony that we are developing sufficient capacity to tackle global health challenges. I should mention that our very own researchers supported by Government were able to produce a COVID therapy- COVIDEX which saved hundreds of thousands of infected persons.

Coming to science and innovation, you very well know that our own scientists from this university have bequeathed the nation with electric

vehicles under Kiira Motors, electric motorcycles and other mobility solutions. This is in line with our goal of building smart cities that are motorable in a smart way and protective of the environment as we battle the climate crisis.

Researchers from this very University community have contributed immensely to our country and region in the areas of food security, governance and community welfare, mind set change, among others. Go to NARO (National Agricultural Research Organization) and see the new crop varieties. Go to Uganda Coffee Development Authority and see the progress. Visit our Uganda Virus Research Institute. Makerere's Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI). We welcome more resource persons with the appropriate skill sets to carry the mantle.

I have seen from the abstracts book, several ongoing studies by yourselves which cover health, governance, technology, innovations, environment, food security, bio-safety, etc. I commend you all for undertaking these research projects and as Government we are very much interested in tracking them and taking note of your findings to improve our policy and practice.

We know that our people need solutions to their pressing challenges. But we are aware that we cannot provide these solutions without

looking at the evidence, the findings and policy alternatives emerging from studies such as yours.

I assure you that Government is willing to engage all stakeholders who have policy proposals to ensure that we serve our people diligently and efficiently. Your research work is therefore very critical to this goal and we will leave our doors open for any form of engagement. All you need is to ensure that at the end of your studies, make policy proposals from your work and through the right channels here at Makerere, we will be able to engage with you better. I am sure, this is your ultimate goal. You all want to see your work make impact on the communities and also influence Government policy. We are therefore, in this together!

I would like to inform you all that as Government, we need evidence based solutions. We need more research on diseases afflicting our people and how to combat them. We need research on how best to engage our people and improve service delivery, governance, policy implementation and feedback. We definitely need more research in the extractives such as minerals and the oil and gas sector. We have many challenges such as environmental degradation, climate change effects, problems on how to improve our tourism, education, rural development, transport and communications. We have challenges that require robust ICT solutions, value addition, to mention

a few. All these need vigorous research and we shall always support you to ensure that we have solid solutions in order to guarantee the wellbeing of our people.

Finally, I want to thank the University administration led by the Vice Chancellor. The enormous work you are doing in this University to address contemporary local and global challenges is commendable. Continue improving the learning environment for researchers so that Makerere University continues to shine and build more for the future. Be rest assured of continuous Government Support.

I now have the pleasure to declare this Annual Ph.D Convention open and thank you once again for inviting me.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

Nabbanja Robinah (MP)
PRIME MINISTER