

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

SPEECH BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL

MRS. LORNA MAGARA

**AT THE CELEBRATION OF A LEGACY OF LEADERSHIP ON
17TH MARCH 2023, KATONGA HALL, KAMPALA SERENA**

- **The Chancellor of Makerere University, Prof. Ezra Suruma;**
- **Members of Council;**
- **The Deputy Vice Chancellors, Principals, and Members of Management;**
- **Our distinguished guests, The Former Chancellors, Former Vice Chancellors, Former Deputy-Vice Chancellors, your spouses, and members of your respective families;**
- **Invited Guests, Ladies, and Gentlemen.**

It gives me immense pleasure to join the Vice Chancellor to warmly welcome you all this morning as Makerere University celebrates a legacy of leadership. Thank you, our distinguished guests, your spouses, and members of your respective families, for sparing time to join us this morning.

I thank Hon. Rukikaire for a very insightful and passionate discourse. From the keynote address and the speeches, we listened to this morning, it is heartwarming to know that leaders who served this great institution over the years are still passionate and concerned for its growth, progress, and impact on our society. It validates this celebration and honoring of our former leaders.

This presentation of Certificates of Service and Souvenirs is premised on what we felt was our obligation as the leadership to honor the contribution of our Chancellors, Vice Chancellors, and Deputy Vice Chancellors who served this institution diligently and, I must add, continue to serve it either directly or indirectly through various undertakings.

Today's celebration is also meant to bring to remembrance the contributions of those who selflessly served Makerere but have since completed this earthly race. It is our humble gesture as the current leadership of this great institution to demonstrate that we remember and sincerely appreciate their respective contributions and influence long after



their departure.

Our recently concluded year-long centennial celebrations were full of commemorations of exemplary service. As we listened to the accounts by members of families and keynote speakers, we were challenged by the selflessness, some even to the point of death, with which our past leaders served Makerere.

As we embark on our second century at Makerere University, our ambitions, and plans for this institution must continue to reflect the selflessness and diligent service that characterized its founding. As rightly stated by our strategic plan for 2020 – 2030, our efforts should be aimed at consolidating Makerere’s position as the global knowledge hub at the heart of Africa.

What must we consolidate as Makerere University?

During Mr. Frank Kalimuzo’s brief tenure (1970-72), the disciplines of Commerce, Forestry, Law, and Technology were added to those already offered. Veterinary Medicine too was introduced at Makerere University, while Music, Dance, and Drama became diploma subjects. The Main Library and Albert Cook Medical Library were also extended in 1972.

Prof. Asavia Wandira’s first term (1973-75) was at the height of the economic war in Uganda, characterized by political abductions and mass departure of foreign and senior Ugandan academic staff. The above



notwithstanding, the Administration successfully withstood incessant demands to award its prestigious qualifications.

Prof. Joseph Lutwama's term (1975-77) was the same. The incessant demands for the award of Makerere's prestigious qualifications only intensified. His term, too, was short-lived.

Prof. William Senteza Kajubi's first term (1977-79) coincided with heightened efforts and the eventual capture of power by the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF). Prof. Y. K. Lule's appointment as President of Uganda, its 68-day duration, and the resulting angry protests by our students effectively ended his term. He was a fearless defender of his students.

Prof. Senteza Kajubi's departure ushered in Prof. Asavia Wandira's second term (1979-86), characterized by re-establishing good working relationships between the Government and development partners. As such, University Regulations governing Admissions, Awards, and Staff Appointments were enforced. The Australian Government supported staff development by offering the first 20 Fellowships for Teaching Assistants to take Masters and Doctoral Degrees.

Furthermore, Canadian and Australian Universities each offered 20 tons of up-to-date books to the University Library. The University rebuilt its image through increased visibility at International Conferences of the Association

of Commonwealth and African Universities.

Prof. George Kirya's term (1986-90) was characterized by continued implementation of staff development initiatives and participation in Government recovery programs. For example, USAID's Manpower for Agricultural Development project implemented by Ohio State University aimed to stimulate farmers' agricultural production. It run from 26th August 1983 to 26th August 1993.

The project rehabilitated infrastructure on and off-campus, trained staff at Master's and Doctoral levels, rejuvenated research, and forged strong ties between agricultural research and extension services.¹

The period from 1990-93 marked Prof. William Senteza Kajubi's return as Vice-Chancellor and, with it, several measures to adapt to the structural adjustment programs that resulted in cutting back of Government support to the University. Revenue-generating initiatives, mainly self-sponsorship, were introduced to help bridge the funding gap.

Prof. John Ssebuwufu's term (1993-2004) was characterized by increased academic programs and student population from 5,000 to 14,000. Under his leadership, the University undertook several infrastructure projects for academic and administrative purposes and established several income-generating initiatives.

¹ Final Report: Uganda Manpower for Agricultural Development Project. [Pdaccp643.pdf \(usaid.gov\)](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf/Pdaccp643.pdf)

Prof. Livingstone Luboobi's term (2004-09) continued from where Prof. Ssebuwufu had stopped by establishing mechanisms to mobilize resources to supplement funding, including reaching out to alumni.

He also established several collaborations with International Universities and organizations in various areas. He was a founder member of the Makerere University Private Sector Forum to help bridge the divide between academia and the public and private sectors. Infrastructure, such as the largest facility dedicated to computer science in sub-Saharan Africa, was commissioned in his term.

The first female to occupy this position from April to October 2009 was Prof. Lillian Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza. She also carried on from where Prof. Luboobi had left off by witnessing infrastructural growth, notably the 6,000 square meter extension of the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology to cater for laboratories, lecture rooms, utilities, and staff offices. Remarkably, her term witnessed Makerere honoring one of its most illustrious scholars, Prof. Ali Mazrui. Today, close to fourteen years later, we gather to return the favor.

Prof. Venasius Baryamureeba's term (2009-12) is best known for Makerere University's transition from a faculty-based to a collegiate system. We also witnessed the restructuring of academic programs, the institution of financial and administrative reforms that resulted in improved financial

performance, and the opening of two up-country university campuses in Jinja and Fort Portal. Improvement of research output, as well as the public image of the University, were also registered, mainly due to transcript issuance at graduation in the latter's case. His term also witnessed the year-long celebration of our 90 years of existence.

Prof. John Ddumba-Ssentamu's term (2012-17) realized several achievements in the areas of University visibility due to improved rankings, increased numbers of researchers with high citation indices as well as increased access to University education for academically bright but economically disadvantaged youth from Africa through initiatives like the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program.

Research and Innovations were further boosted through enhanced collaborations with partners in the Global North and the establishment of African Centres of Excellence that attracted substantial research funding to the University. Support Services were also boosted by the 8,000 square meter expansion of the University Library, internet bandwidth, optical fiber backbone, and wireless network coverage.

Physical Infrastructure equally received a boost through the construction of facilities both on and off-campus, as well as improvement of the on-campus road network and street lighting.

Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe's term is still ongoing, with numerous developments underway. As such, you will agree with me that it is still too early to take stock.

Nonetheless, Makerere's second century allows us to consolidate all the achievements mentioned above. In anticipation of how emerging technology breakthroughs are likely to disrupt various sectors, the Council remains committed to ensuring that the appropriate policy environment is in place to leverage our past gains to build a better future for this institution and Uganda as a whole.

I thank you all for your kind attention and sincerely appreciate you sparing the time to join us this morning.