SPEECH BY PROFESSOR BARNABAS NAWANGWE, VICE CHANCELLOR MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE CLEAN AIR AFRICA NETWORK AT THE SHERATON KAMPALA HOTEL ON 5TH APRIL 2023

Her Excellency, The Ambassador of the U.S Embassy Kampala, represented by the Cultural Affairs Officer Amy Petersen,

Your Worship The Lord Mayor, Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) Mr. Erias Lukwago,

Honourable Secretary on the Authority Executive for Kampala Capital City Authority Hon Namazzi Olive,

Right Honourable Speaker, Fort Portal City, Mr. Albert Aheebwa,

Hon Secretaries on the Division Councils for Kampala Capital City Authority,

The City Manager, Kisumu City County Government, Mr. Abala M.Wanga,

The Executive Director National Environment Management Authority, Dr. Akankwasa Barirega,

Representatives from the Private Sector,

Representatives from Cities and Universities across Africa,

Makerere University Staff present,

The AirQo Research Team,

The Media Fraternity,

Distinguished Guests,

All protocols observed.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my ultimate pleasure to be here today and to join you all as we launch the CLEAN AIR Africa Network and most importantly talk about a topic that affects the health and well-being of all of us - air pollution. Air pollution is a global problem that has adverse effects not only on our health but also on the environment and the economic

development of our countries and cities. The impacts of this global challenge are here with us today. Air pollution has also aggravated effects like climate change. These effects have equally threatened our economic sustainability.

I am glad to be part of such an esteemed gathering. It is such an honour to see communities of practice coming together to discuss air quality management in African Cities and collectively champion liveable urban environments through African networks.

At Makerere University, we are proud to be part of this network through the AirQo project from the College of Computing and Information Sciences. I wish to acknowledge the College leadership led by Professor Tonny Oyana and the AirQo project led by Engineer Bainomugisha and his team. This intervention is timely, as Makerere University seeks to consolidate her position as a research-led University and as the global knowledge hub at the heart of Africa. We are proud of the work that AirQo is doing across Africa, using advanced technology and research to address environmental challenges that affect our cities and people's health.

Technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things, and Cloud Computing have the potential to solve global development challenges. We are particularly proud of how AirQo and other researchers are leveraging these technologies to advance air quality research in Africa. Closing the air quality data gaps in African Cities by not only building low-cost air quality monitors but also taking a step further and providing AI-powered digital solutions to ensure that citizens and policymakers have access to timely air quality data and insights to take action against air pollution.

As we all know, research plays a critical role in understanding the causes and impacts of some of our social challenges. Closer to home, research on air pollution helps us understand the magnitude, scale, sources and composition of air pollution so that we can take action informed by evidence. Scientific evidence and data play an important role in informing public education and awareness about the causes and effects of air pollution. This knowledge can help to raise awareness and encourage policymakers and individuals to take action to improve air quality.

Makerere University is a model research-led University in Africa. We are committed to creating a supportive environment, to support research entities like AirQo, in order to spur high-quality multi-disciplinary research, innovations, capacity development, and

knowledge transfer partnerships for the socio-economic transformation of our nation and the continent.

Therefore, it is an honour to be part of such an esteemed gathering developing solutions by Africans for Africa. Taking matters into our own hands and developing solutions that are tailor-made specifically for our continent. We are not short of experts in our own fields as is evident in this gathering.

Tackling air pollution and climate change requires a multifaceted collaboration and coordinated approach, and the Clean Air Africa Network is the first step towards developing a holistic air quality management strategy for our African cities.

We believe that collaborations between academia, civil society, government, private sector, and development partners will help us to better understand how air quality can be managed so that we can create effective solutions based on evidence for a cleaner future. This can help make sure that we're getting the best practices for managing our environment.

In a special way, I would like to thank The U.S Mission Kampala, The U.S Department of State, Google.org and WEHUBIT for enabling AirQo and broadly Makerere University to advance air quality management in Africa and in a broad sense, deal with one of the most challenging issues of our times yet - Climate change.

Allow me to thank AirQo and partners - Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), University Pretoria, University of Lagos, World Resources Institute (WRI), Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), and Health Effects Institute (HEI), for leading the convening of this workshop and launch and bringing together all the partners and stakeholders here today, and for providing us with the space and opportunity to learn and share knowledge and technical skills that will influence and provide a better future for us and for the next generation.

As I conclude, It is my hope that the Clean Air Africa network is a springboard towards Africa's journey towards clean air.

I thank you all for listening and I wish you fruitful celebrations.

Makerere University - We Build for the Future!

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY!