



**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**



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**REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF COUNCIL**

**MRS. LORNA MAGARA**

**AT THE UNIVERSITY OF DAR-ES-SALAAM ALUMNI VISIT  
TUESDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022.**

- The Deputy Chairperson of Council, Rt. Hon. Daniel Kidega
- Members of Council
- The Vice Chancellor University of Dar-es-Salaam, Prof. William Anangisye
- Members of Management and the Leadership of the University of Dar-es-Salaam
- Members of Staff
- Distinguished Panelists
- Members of the Makerere@100 Secretariat
- Alumni
- Ladies and Gentlemen

As Chairperson of Makerere University Council, it gives me great pleasure to deliver the closing remarks at this University of Dar-es-Salaam Alumni visit, in honor of one of our most distinguished and globally celebrated alumni, H.E. Benjamin Mkapa. I've listened intently and with great admiration as speaker after speaker paid tribute to this great alumnus, exemplary statesman and peacemaker of the East African region, whose great humility seemed to dwarf all his accolades.

H.E. Benjamin Mkapa, the third President of the United Republic of Tanzania, was the recipient of nine honorary degrees, the highest National awards of the Tanzanian and Kenyan Governments, and a host of other accolades, and yet he carried himself with such grace, dignity, and humility. This was a humble man whose influence transcended generations and political borders, commanding respect and yet always quick to downplay his own importance. No wonder, he had a presence that caused warring parties to take a step back from their hardline positions, lay down their choice weapons and take a seat at the table, to talk. He was listened to in Kenya after the post-election conflict of 2007 and in South Sudan during the 2011

referendum. These are rare and admirable qualities that we all need to emulate in our world today.

The outcome in both cases was similar; warring parties mended fences and agreed to work together, for the common good. Both these nations have since then made significant strides in affirming the truths that unite them, as opposed to the facts that keep them apart, thanks to the efforts of men such as H.E. Benjamin Mkapa.

It is for reasons such as the ones I have briefly highlighted that many institutions found it fitting to bestow their coveted honorary doctorates upon this great man. On one such occasion, on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2009 to be exact that his alma mater, Makerere University bestowed the Honorary Doctor of Laws upon this gallant alumnus. In his acceptance speech on that warm Friday afternoon, H.E. Mkapa referred to Paul Foster, the friendly Catholic Chaplain whose preaching he described as “unquestionably inspiring and mercifully short.” Yes, the great Benjamin Mkapa also had a great sense of humor.

However, it is not this great sense of humor that I wish to make the subject of my proceeding statements but rather, the other conversations he had with the friendly Catholic Chaplain.

On his honorary doctoral award ceremony, he is quoted to have said of Paul Foster.

**“I recall him for a long and contentious conversation we had about that University College motto. What kind of future were we building? How were we building it?”**

It is clear from this quote that the young Mkapa was already looking beyond the privilege of being educated at the great Makerere to what that education truly meant for the future of Africa. To put this in context, the Makerere of his day was the University College of East Africa, awarding University of London Degrees. There were only hundreds of students from East, Central, Western and Southern Africa and the faculty was predominantly British.

With these questions at the back of his mind, it is no wonder that even before graduating from Makerere University in 1962, he was already looking to the founding father of Tanzania and distinguished

alumni of Makerere University, whose Tanzania African National Union party went on to secure the nation's independence from Britain in 1961.

I would therefore like to thank the Management and Leadership of the University of Dar-es-Salaam for giving us the opportunity to celebrate the life and legacy of President Benjamin Mkapa as part of Makerere's centenary celebrations.

I especially want to thank you for the warm reception you have accorded my delegation since we arrived in Dar-es-Salaam yesterday, and the insightful itinerary that has marked our visit. I wish to pay tribute to the family of the late H.E. Benjamin Mkapa, whose father blazed a trail that we his alma mater are proud to identify with.

As I conclude, I wish to observe that we have been privileged to make precise reference to events in the life and legacy of the late H.E. Benjamin Mkapa thanks to documentation. Robert Penn Warren the famous American poet, novelist and literary critic is quoted to have said,

**“History cannot give us a program for the future, but it can give us a fuller understanding of ourselves, and of our common humanity, so that we can better face the future.”**

The University Council takes cognizance of the power of documentation and is therefore pleased that the Makerere@100 Organizing Committee will as part of its outputs publish an easy-to-read and well-documented book around six broad themes. These include:

- a) Providing skilled human resources for East African Society,
- b) Production of knowledge through research and innovation,
- c) Makerere’s contribution to democratic governance and the building of social institutions in East Africa,
- d) Makerere’s contribution to the economic development of East Africa,
- e) Makerere and Curriculum Development in East Africa and
- f) Challenges.

Furthermore, all our activities in the year-long celebration have been documented on a dedicated website <https://100.mak.ac.ug>. We invite you to not only visit this website and enjoy its rich content but also

make your own voice heard by sharing your story of Makerere. We look forward to receiving your contributions.

I thank you all for your kind attention and taking time off your respective schedules to join us this afternoon as we honored the legacy of H.E. Benjamin Mkapa. I wish you a great day as “We Build for the Future”.