

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

WELCOME REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL

MRS. LORNA MAGARA

AT THE YOUTH & INNOVATION EXPO PRESS BRIEFING

25TH APRIL 2023, FRANK KALIMUZO CENTRAL TEACHING

FACILITY, MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

- **The Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Ms. Elsie Attafuah;**
- **The CEO of MTN Uganda, Ms. Sylvia Wairimu Mulinge;**
- **Members of Council;**
- **The Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Members of Management;**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good morning to you all.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to the launch of Makerere University's most comprehensive effort to showcase outstanding youth innovations and enterprise under the theme, "**Fostering Innovations for Uganda's Transformational Development.**" In a special way, I welcome our partners, UNDP and MTN Uganda, and thank them for accepting to lend their wealth of expertise to our cause to showcase our great strides in innovation and entrepreneurship over our first 100 years.

Indeed, it would take all day to highlight the various innovations made by Makerere over the last 100 years, not to mention their various impacts. Our partners, too, have made great strides in nurturing innovation, creating jobs, and fostering entrepreneurship. Furthermore, whereas it is tempting to sit back and congratulate ourselves upon a job well done, we ought to be mindful that unless we keep innovating, the myriad of challenges we face can easily wipe out all the gains we have made to date.

Hon. Matthew Rukikaire, a distinguished alumnus, renowned author, and respected elder, recently painted a vivid picture of what has come to be called "the greatest demographic upheaval in history."

That vivid picture, according to researchers, showed that by 2050, Africa

would constitute 25% or 2.5 billion of the world's population, expected to be about 10 billion. Twelve countries, including Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the East African Community, are growing at the highest rate and will double their populations between now and 2050.¹

Furthermore, the 7th edition of the National Intelligence Council's Global Trends report predicts that this population explosion will be paralleled by rapid urbanization, which will most likely overwhelm the capacity to provide the infrastructure and education systems necessary to harness our economic growth potential fully.² It is, therefore, imperative that we must take immediate action to mitigate the effects of this alarming prediction as well as many other undocumented ones.

Our ten-year strategic plan, currently in its third year of implementation, sets out to respond to present and emerging challenges through four overarching goals, namely: A research-led university responding to national, regional, and global development challenges; Innovations in teaching and learning that respond to the changing environment; An engaged university with enhanced partnerships with industry, the

¹ A Legacy of Leadership: Keynote Address by Matthew Rukikaire <https://news.mak.ac.ug/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Makerere-at-100-Legacy-of-Leadership-17thMar2023-Keynote-Address-Hon-Matthew-Rukikaire.pdf>

² Global Trends 2040: A more contested world [GlobalTrends_2040.pdf \(dni.gov\)](#)

community, and international institutions; and A professionally governed, equitable, inclusive and gender mainstreamed institution.

In this regard, we are committed to creating think tanks and gradually increasing our engagement with industry, business, and other research users, developing a framework for packaging and marketing research outputs for appropriate adoption and adaptation, and using new products and technologies to influence policy and address emerging social needs positively.

At the heart of all these aspirations are our students. We take cognizance of the fact that our youth are desirous and willing to make a meaningful contribution to shaping the century ahead.

They are more technologically savvy than older generations. They can make the most of the affordances that various innovations offer to leapfrog Uganda and Africa into the future.

In a nutshell, **The Youth and Innovation Expo 2023** we are launching today is a platform to cause meaningful engagement between the youth and various actors to tap into their expertise and experience. In so doing, we aim to initiate viable forward and backward linkages that will facilitate the creation of jobs and foster entrepreneurship.

Together, we are committed to establishing and supporting an ecosystem that will equip our youth with the necessary knowledge, skills, and entrepreneurial mindset to help them achieve their full potential and, in so doing, reap the demographic dividend.

Thank you all for joining us here this morning, and I wish you a productive day.

Lorna Magara