



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



CLOSING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COUNCIL

MRS. LORNA MAGARA

AT THE NELSON MANDELA ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

MAKERERE@100 PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES,

YUSUF LULE CENTRAL TEACHING FACILITY AUDITORIUM,

MONDAY 18TH JULY, 2022.

- **Our Guest of Honour, Your Excellency Lulama Mary-Theresa Xingwana, the South African High Commissioner to Uganda,**
- **Members of the University Council present,**
- **The Vice-Chancellor, Makerere University, Professor Barnabas Nawangwe, and Members of the University Management,**
- **Our Keynote Speaker, Professor Augustus Nuwagaba**
- **The Principal and Leadership of the College Humanities and Social Sciences**
- **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

As Makerere University celebrates 100 years of dedicated and distinguished service to humanity, I am profoundly humbled, and indeed sincerely grateful to you, Your Excellency and the South African Community, for choosing "The Hill," as we often fondly refer to it, to host the icon, Madiba's 104th Birthday Commemoration.

Indeed, what an honor, what a privilege, that this gallant son of the Madiba clan and valiant warrior of the African struggle for independence should be mentioned in the same breath as Makerere, an institution established four years after his birth. No wonder his larger-than-life image, forming the backdrop of this stage, smiles down upon us, as any loving bigger brother, father and mentor would.

Our keynote address has helped shed light on some of these larger-than-life attributes. Thank you, Professor Nuwagaba, for expertly weaving the golden thread that has knit the legacy of this colossus of a man to our mandate as the premier higher education institution in the region through the lens of the African Union Agenda 2063. As excellently outlined, the Higher Education sector is not where it used to be in contributing to growth and transformation in Africa. Be that as it may, we are still a far cry from the sector that Madiba envisaged.

“The power of education extends beyond the development of skills we need for economic success. It can contribute to nation-building and reconciliation.”

Coming from one who had triumphed over the limitations imposed by the Apartheid Government's Bantu Education Act of 1952 and gone on to co-establish the first black law firm in South Africa, this quote from Madiba is a timely reminder of the true power of education.

Furthermore, there is no better time than the present to pause and reflect. What is the place of nation-building and reconciliation in today's relentless pursuit of skills necessary for economic success? Furthermore, do any of today's graduates know their true position in the grand scheme of nation-building beyond the well-deserved graduation with honors?

As you ponder upon these questions, ladies and gentlemen, it becomes clear that Madiba, the reason why we are gathered here today, had realized that nation-building and reconciliation in its purest form could only be achieved when we start to put our talents, academic accolades and brilliant research to work for the good of our community, nation, and continent.

In an age where we are faced with mounting commodity prices, thinning job opportunities, and a host of other challenges, the greatest temptation is to stop caring about everyone else and revert to self-preservation. "Each man for himself" is the idiom that best describes this relapse.

Unfortunately, at the point of choosing to preserve self, we lose sight of the merits of pursuing the greater good.

If Nelson Mandela had put his own freedom before those suffering under the tight grip of apartheid, we would not be here today.

Had Nelson Mandela accepted a pardon in exchange for abandoning his struggle against the injustices of his day, we would not be here today.

Had Nelson Mandela, upon release from prison, opted for revenge against the apartheid white supremacists instead of racial reconciliation, we would not be here today.

Finally, had Nelson Mandela, upon assuming office, not set about dismantling the policies and systems that kept denying his people equitable access to education, we would not be here today.

Nelson Mandela's life and legacy are a shining example of what the refusal to revert to self-preservation in the face of grueling oppression yields; greater public good. Therefore, as we commemorate his 104th Birthday at this Fifth of the Makerere@100 Lecture Series, I again thank you, Your Excellency, for giving us the privilege of hosting this celebration.

I equally thank the Vice Chancellor, Members of Management, faculty, and staff, particularly in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, for your excellent work in planning and coordinating this annual commemorative lecture.

I thank our distinguished panelists, Professor Eriabu Lugujjo, Professor Anthony Mugagga Muwagga, and Dr. Fred Muhumuza, for enriching today's debate through your contributions, and Dr. Nansozi Muwanga for ably moderating the discussion.

Finally, I thank our audience in this auditorium and online for your kind attention. I wish you all a wonderful afternoon, and may God bless you.

Lorna Magara (Mrs.)

Chairperson, Makerere University Council