



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



**REMARKS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR PROFESSOR BARNABAS NAWANGWE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE ALUMNI HOMECOMING DINNER
AT THE FREEDOM SQUARE ON FRIDAY 22ND JULY 2022**

- **Your Excellencies the High Commissioners, Ambassadors and Diplomats here present**
- **The Chairperson of Council, Mrs. Lorna Magara**
- **The Deputy Chairperson Council, Rt. Hon. Daniel Kidega**
- **Members of Council**
- **Members of the University Management**
- **The Chairperson Makerere University Endowment Fund**
- **Our Keynote Speaker,**
- **Our Partners, and sponsors for the Makerere @100 celebrations**
- **Gallant Alumni**
- **Our Students**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Good evening and a warm welcome to your alma mater and beloved institution for our alumni and partners respectively.

Thank you for taking time off to attend The Dinner of the Century!

Yes, this is indeed the dinner of Makerere University's century and I congratulate all of you upon choosing to honour your beloved University.

Makerere has over the century of its existence been a place of many firsts that have gone on to transform societies. When we opened doors to the first 14 students in January 1922, the fee was 60 shillings, for day scholars. There were no resident students.

One year later on 13th December 1923, Sir Geoffrey Archer, then Governor of Uganda laid the foundation stone for the first permanent building in Makerere. This building still stands today at the School of Education, College of Education and External Studies (CEES).

In 1924, the Medical School opened as a grass thatched structure on the Western slopes of Mulago Hill. Dr. Bamundaga and Dr. Baziwane are two of the first lot of students admitted by the Medical School in 1924 who later graduated in 1928. Dr. Wilbert Chagula another graduate would later leave Makerere to become the Principal of the University College of Dar-es-Salaam after the dissolution of the University College of East Africa in 1970.

In his book *Makerere Medical School: 50th Anniversary*, W.D. Foster describes the Medical School and Mulago Teaching Hospital as, and I quote

“...among the best medical schools in the world. The facilities, the patients, and the research opportunities were almost unrivaled.”

These graduates have gone on to save thousands of lives.

At this point, Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to give all artists and art lovers in the congregation a few questions to ponder upon. Did you know that our School of Industrial and Fine Arts had its humble beginnings on the verandah of Mrs. Margaret Trowell and her husband Dr. Hugh Trowell's residence in Mulago in 1937?

Did you know that Margaret Trowell had to endure the bureaucratic hurdles of the Colonial Administration and the meager resources allocated to successfully get the Art School up and running?

Had it not been for her selflessness and sacrifice, the talents of artists like Gregory Maloba, Sam Ntiro, and Elimo Njau would never have been nurtured. While Gregory Maloba went on to design Uganda's famous Independence Monument, Sam Ntiro, later on, became a Lecturer at the Art School and High Commissioner for Tanganyika in London (1963-64). Elimo Njau and his wife Rebecca; a leading playwright and 1962 English Literature graduate of Makerere, later on, helped found Paa-ya-paa, an art center in Nairobi. It is examples such as these that enrich our celebration as Makerere marks a century of existence.

Continuing on our trip down memory lane, on 3rd November 1938, the Duke of Gloucester laid the foundation stones for several Makerere buildings, including the Main Building, in a ceremony described as the cutting of the first sod. The late Prof. William Senteza Kajubi, then a P.5 pupil of Mackay Memorial School in Nateete was privileged to bear witness to the ceremony together with his schoolmates. This single encounter motivated him to press on until he only joined but also served as Makerere's two-time Vice-Chancellor!

Following the laying of foundations, the 1940s marked a time of great infrastructural development at Makerere. 1941 marked the year when the Main Administration Building as well as both St. Francis and St. Augustine Chapels were officially completed.

Additionally, many of us present here today may not be aware that Makerere University was at one time home to the Uganda Museum. Although it was first founded in 1908 and housed at Fort

Lugard in Old Kampala, it was later moved into an old classroom block at Makerere University, where it was officially opened in July 1942 by the Governor of Uganda, Sir Charles Dundas.

Mrs. Margaret Trowell offered her services as part-time honorary curator and helped to expand the museum collection to incorporate objects from all parts of the country until it was relocated to its current home at Kitante in 1951.

In 1945, Makerere opened her doors to the first female students. This was marked by a change in motto from *Let us be men* to *We Build for the Future*. Catherine Senkatuka and Sarah Nyendwoha Ntiro, the first female to get a degree in East and Central Africa were some of the first female students admitted to Makerere University College. This groundbreaking change ushered in a new era of advancement for our mothers and sisters.

1948 marked the year when the Makerere Mosque was officially opened by Crown Prince Abdulla of Zanzibar. The Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR) was established in the same year as the East African Institute of Social Research (EAISR). Prof. Ali Mazrui and Prof. Apolo Nsibambi are some of this reputable research Institute's former Directors.

In 1954 the Students' Guild was established and then only a young international student from Malawi, Professor James David Rubadiri became Makerere's first Guild President. He would, later on, become a Malawian diplomat and world-class academic and poet, playwright, and novelist.

By December of 1958, Professor Josephine Namboze had completed her Medical Degree at Makerere and was awaiting the outcome of her final exams at a secret location off-campus.

She passed and had to hastily return to Makerere as everyone on campus was looking for her. On 20th February 1959 at a ceremony presided over by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother and the Chancellor of the University of London to which Makerere College was affiliated, Professor Namboze graduated as East Africa's first woman doctor. She has since gone on to influence countless numbers of young girls and women to pursue a career in medicine and STEM disciplines.

On 20th February 1959, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother officially opened the new 33,000-square foot Library Building at Makerere College. The Library started in a small room in the Main Administration building in 1949. Today, the library has a total space of 12,000 square meters or 129,166 square feet and serves as an academic library, the National Reference Library, National Legal Depository for all works in Uganda, and a UN Depository.

In June 1962, Makerere University hosted its first significant international gathering, the first African Writers Conference. The conference was a milestone in African literature dealing directly with the legacy of colonialism. It attracted several African writers such as Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka who would eventually become internationally famous. Other prominent African writers who attended include Ezekiel Mphahlele, Lewis Nkosi, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (then known as James Ngugi), and Rajat Neogy (founder of Transition Magazine).

The Conference also helped spread Makerere's reputation beyond East Africa. By the mid-1960s Makerere University was the largest and most distinguished university in Sub-Saharan Africa.

On 1st July 1970, Makerere became an independent National University of the Republic of Uganda and on 8th October 1970, it

was officially inaugurated as an autonomous university from the University of East Africa (UEA). H.E. Dr. Apollo Milton Obote organized a grand ceremony in Freedom Square to which Presidents Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania, and Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia were invited. H.E. Prof. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o who was the Out-going Guild President served as Mace Bearer of the day.

On the eve of Uganda's thirteenth Independence Celebrations on 8th October 1975, Professor Timothy Wangusa became the first Ph.D. Graduate in the Department of Literature after Makerere became the independent National University of Uganda. He went on to become a critically acclaimed Ugandan poet, novelist, and literary critic. He is equally acclaimed as part of the famous Makerere "Class 1964" that bore great writers including John Ruganda, Okello Oculi, Rose Mbowa, and Micere Mugo.

Fast forward to 1993 and on 29th January, the President of the Republic of Uganda and Chancellor of Makerere University H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni conferred the Honorary Doctorate of Laws upon H.E. Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere in recognition of his excellent leadership over the Nation of Tanzania. Mwalimu Nyerere who served as the first President of Tanzania graduated from Makerere University in 1947 with a Diploma in Education. His legacy has given birth to the Julius Nyerere Leadership Centre, an initiative that provides a platform for distinguished African intellectuals, scholars, and other accomplished Africans to share, nurture, mentor, challenge, and account for the next generation of African leaders.

And on 27th November 2009, former Tanzanian President and Makerere Alumni H.E. Benjamin Mkapa were awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Laws of Makerere University. Staying with

the awards, on 12th December 2010, Makerere University conferred her Honorary Doctorates of Laws upon H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and H.E. Mzee Rashid Mfaume Kawawa. This was followed by the award of the Honorary Doctor of Laws to H.E. Mwai Kibaki of Kenya on 24th January 2012.

And finally, on the research front, Makerere has been at the forefront of groundbreaking developments such as the discovery of Burkitt's lymphoma, the use of nevirapine to prevent HIV transmission in childbirth, the development of rapid diagnostic kits for ebola, and more recently for COVID-19. These discoveries among other innovations such as the development of drought-resistant varieties of crops have improved the quality of life on the whole.

We thank the Government for initiating the UGX 30 Billion per year Makerere University Research and Innovations Fund (Mak-RIF), currently in its fourth financial year 2022/23. And whereas this fund has greatly enhanced our research output, only 774 grants out of 1,978 applications; a rate of 39.1% have been awarded. The limited resource envelope means that a lot of wonderful would-be impactful projects have to be left out.

Furthermore, 172 of these projects have so far submitted their closeout reports. 52 (29%) of the projects ended at the start-up level, while the majority (111 or 62%) ended at the point of transition to scale. The least (15 or 9%) ended while already undergoing scale.

I, therefore, call upon you our alumni and partners to join us in not only increasing our resource envelope to fund more research but also collaborating with us to facilitate more projects to end while already undergoing scale to create job openings for our youth. We look forward to your positive response in this regard.

I thank you all for your kind attention and wish you an enjoyable evening.