



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



**REMARKS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR PROFESSOR BARNABAS NAWANGWE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE SARAH NYENDWOHA NTIRO MEMORIAL LECTURE,
AT THE YUSUF LULE CENTRAL TEACHING FACILITY AUDITORIUM
ON THURSDAY 1ST DECEMBER, 2022**

- **Our Distinguished Speaker, Hon. Joyce Mpanga**
- **The Chairperson of Makerere University Council**
- **Members of Makerere University Council and Senate**
- **Members of Makerere University Management**
- **Country Representative Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Ms. Anna Reismann and Distinguished panelists**
- **The Dean, School of Women and Gender Studies**
- **All Members of staff present**
- **Makerere University Alumni**
- **Our dear students**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Good afternoon to you all.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to today's public lecture, the celebration of a gallant alumna and selfless advocate for human rights, particularly those of the girl child, the late Mrs. Sarah Nyendwoha Ntiro.

This is the ninth of our Makerere@100 Lecture Series, the first having been held on 9th February 2022.

I thank the family of the late Sarah Nyendwoha Ntiro for graciously accepting our invitation to be part of this celebration of a gallant alumna, whose trailblazing legacy we are very proud of.

In a special way, I welcome Hon. Joyce Mpanga back home and sincerely thank God for granting you good health, strength and amazing mental clarity, especially as we hold this event in line with our commemoration of 100 years of impactful existence.

Thank you Hon. Joyce Mpanga for accepting to deliver this public lecture. Your alma mater is honoured to have you here today and looks forward to listening to your address.

Ladies and gentlemen, the need for system support for bold ideas may best be appreciated when you consider the struggle that our forefathers had to go through to obtain higher education.

The bold ideas back then were prompted by the observation that the protectorate government was rather reluctant to admit more Africans into civil service.

Thus, our forefathers felt that it was about time that the colonial government either accorded more Africans the opportunity to attain higher education or lifted the shackles that had firmly linked the Makerere syllabus to subordinate government employment. Had it not been for the remarkable governorship of Philip Mitchell in Uganda between 1935 and 1940, the much-needed reforms in education and civil service would never have been undertaken.

In May 1938, Governor Mitchell convened the Inter-Territorial Conference on Higher Education, which finalized plans for the site, name and constitution of a Higher College at Makerere.

That same year, funds for the Higher College were either contributed or pledged by Imperial and East African Governments, supported by some of the Native Governments and private organisations.¹

This system support by the colonial government paved way for many other voices to come forth. For example, Church Missionary Society Medical doctor Sir Albert Cook in his memoirs recognized that the education of girls was equally as important as that of boys. The chiefs too were keen on getting their daughters into University and by 1938, the Buganda Lukiiko had voted on a grant of 3,000 British Pounds for a women's hall at Makerere College.

Despite this good will, the protectorate government continued to drag its feet until 1945 when the first six women were eventually admitted to Makerere College. This admission was thanks to tireless efforts by gallant women, especially Mary Stuart, Margaret Graham and Joan Cox who convinced the colonial government that female scholars too deserved their place at Makerere.

Mary Stuart would continue to be at the forefront of advocating for education of the girl child through her fundraising activities. Once again, in 1949 as the protectorate government continued to drag its feet about funding education of the girl child at Makerere, it was the Kabaka of Buganda who personally came forward as the first donor to Mary Stuart's fundraising cause.²

Ladies and gentlemen, the above series of events in part laid the groundwork for the admission of more African students and later women such as Sarah Ntiro to Makerere University. The efforts by Philip Mitchell clearly show that bold ideas can only thrive

¹ [Makerere College 1922--1940: A Study in Colonial Rule and Educational Retardation \(jstor.org\)](#)

² [A New Look at Colonial Women: British Teachers and Activists in Uganda, 1898-1962 on JSTOR](#)

under system support firmly established and owned by the government.

Furthermore, the efforts by Mary Stuart and her colleagues show that despite Government systems, there is need for well-placed champions to continuously advocate for implementation of good policies that favour the disadvantaged or marginalised.

This advocacy is also a good way of attracting additional support, as was the case with the Kabaka and Buganda Lukiiko with respect to creating an environment conducive to the education of female scholars at Makerere University.

With these few remarks, I once again welcome you to Makerere University for the Sarah Nyendwoha Ntiro Memorial Lecture and wish you a wonderful afternoon.