

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY

**ADDRESS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR PROFESSOR BARNABAS NAWANGWE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 71ST GRADUATION CEREMONY
AT THE FREEDOM SQUARE ON MONDAY 17TH MAY 2021**

- **Our Guest of Honour, The First Lady and Honourable Minister of Education and Sports, Mama Janet Kataaha Museveni**
- **The Chancellor of Makerere University, Prof. Ezra Suruma**
- **Honorable Ministers**
- **Honorable Members of Parliament**
- **Members of the Diplomatic Corps**
- **Your Lordships the Judges of the Judicature**
- **Religious Leaders**
- **The Leadership of Kampala Capital City Authority**
- **Representatives of Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies**
- **The Chairperson of Makerere University Council, Mrs. Lorna Magara**
- **The Vice Chairperson of Council, Rt. Hon. Dan Fred Kidega**
- **The Chairperson of the Appointments Board, Mr. Kiwanuka Kiryowa**
- **Members of Council of Makerere University**
- **The Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Members of the University Management Team**
- **Vice Chancellors, Rectors and Principals of sister Universities and Institutions**
- **Members of the University Senate**
- **The Chairperson of Convocation**
- **The Chairpersons of Staff Associations**
- **Members of Staff of Makerere University**
- **Parents and Guardians**
- **Graduands**
- **The Media Fraternity**
- **Distinguished Visitors**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

It is my honour and privilege to welcome you all to the 71st graduation ceremony of Makerere University. This is a historical occasion being the first graduation to be held in the blended mode due to the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 Pandemic. I wish to assure all our graduands, parents and guardians, who are following us on TV and via the University's social medial platforms, that everything possible has been done to ensure that our graduands get a memorable experience of this special day in their lives. This arrangement has been made in order to ensure the safety of all our graduands and visitors.

I would like to thank the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni, for honouring this ceremony with her presence. I also take this opportunity to congratulate H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Tibuhaburwa Museveni, who is also Visitor to Makerere University and Mama Janet Kataaha Museveni upon his re-election and inauguration as President of the Republic of Uganda for the sixth term. This indeed shows the confidence the people of Uganda have in your determination to steer our dear motherland to prosperity. Congratulations!

Ladies and gentlemen, for this 71st graduation ceremony, a total of 12,550 students will be awarded degrees and diplomas of Makerere University in various disciplines. Of these, a record 108 will receive PhDs. Of these, 38 graduands are female, representing 35% of the total. A total of 1160 graduands will receive Masters Degrees. Of these, 434 are female, representing 37% of the total. Of all the 12,550 graduands, 51% are female and 49% are male. I am happy to see that all our policies to promote access to higher education for the girl child and to end historical imbalances in education are bearing fruit, as Makerere University strives to remain a leader in gender mainstreaming on the African Continent and globally. With effect from the admissions for the current academic year, the University started to implement a 40 percent enrolment quarter for females in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (otherwise called STEM disciplines). This will improve the University's production of female engineers, doctors, mathematicians, to mention but only a few.

Honorary Degrees

During this congregation today, Prof. Hannah Akuffo and Dr. Seth Berkley, two wonderful people who have distinguished themselves in the service of Makerere University and humanity, will receive Honorary Doctorates of Science of Makerere University. I warmly congratulate the two awardees upon this achievement and welcome them to Makerere University Convocation. Due to travel challenges, Prof. Hannah is unable to receive the award in person.

I applaud all members of staff who will be awarded PhDs and Masters degrees in various disciplines. Your dedication to improving yourselves academically as well as our students is commendable. I am certain this will boost the Makerere University academic profile. I also take this opportunity to congratulate all members of staff who have been promoted to various academic levels in the last one year.

I would like to thank the Government of Uganda and our development partners who have supported us through the years. Our distinguished guests, I have the pleasure to inform you that the first year of the implementation of our new Strategic Plan (2020-2030) has already borne great fruits. Out of the UGX 30 billion allocated by the Government for Research and Innovation, we have recorded very many innovations. Our contribution to the fight against COVID-19 has particularly made Makerere stand out nationally and internationally. We thank the Government and development partners for the continued support and we welcome more development partners to support us in further strengthening teaching and learning as well as research and innovation.

2. TRAGEDY

In the night of 19th September 2020, tragedy befell Makerere University. Our iconic Main Administration Building, the symbol of higher education in the entire east and central African region, was gutted by a fire. The Police investigation suspected the cause of the fire to be an electrical fault due to the old age of the building. The building was destroyed beyond repair. I thank the Government and the University Council for the support given to Management since this tragic incident. In the same vein, I thank Mastercard Foundation, Stanbic Bank and the students and members of staff who have already contributed generously towards the restoration of the building and return of normalcy in University operations. The University Council resolved that the building will be restored to its former architectural look due to its immense historical significance. Very soon, we will launch a fundraising campaign to raise money for its restoration. Our plan is to restore the building in time for the celebration of 100 years of the University due in October next year. I call upon all alumni and well-wishers to support the fundraising campaign by donating generously towards this noble cause. The estimated cost of the restoration of the building is UGX 15 billion and Government support in raising this money is crucial.

3. CELEBRATION OF 100 YEARS OF EXCELLENT SERVICE

In October we will launch the celebrations to mark 100 years of Makerere's excellent service to humanity. The year-long celebrations will be capped by the climax in October next year. Celebrations will be held in different parts of the Country to pay tribute to all the people of Uganda, who have helped build the University to its current prestigious position as one of the best universities in Africa and the World. I call upon all alumni and friends of Makerere to actively participate in these celebrations.

4. ACHIEVEMENTS 2019/20 ACADEMIC YEAR

Ladies and gentlemen, Makerere University has registered a number of achievements over the last one year.

Research and Innovation:

All the three colleges, which are graduating students today, College of Health Sciences, College of Natural Sciences and School of Law, have been active in research during the last academic year. The College of Health Sciences in particular stood out when COVID-19 hit our Country. The staff of the College constituted the bulk of the National Task Force, Scientific Advisory Committee who played a leading role in advisory services to Government; they were on the frontline, actively

engaged in research and innovations to help contain the pandemic. The College of Health Sciences has produced cutting edge innovations, including the Bulamu Medical Ventilator, implemented jointly with engineers from Kiira Motors. The College, which is currently ranked number two on the African continent, and among the top 100 schools of Medicine globally, is also set to commence manufacturing diagnostics for COVID-19 and other diseases. The production of these diagnostics will save Uganda billions of shillings in foreign exchange, as these have been imported at a very high cost. These innovations will contribute to making Uganda self-sustaining in the provision of health solutions.

The College of Natural Sciences has not remained behind in the fight against COVID-19. The College worked on the mathematical modelling of COVID-19 in Uganda and the recommendations have played a major role in the management of the pandemic in Uganda. The College continues to conduct world class research in natural products, including use of herbal medicines in the treatment of malaria, Africa's biggest killer. The College has commenced work on the establishment of a Forensic Institute, which will be the second such institute in Africa.

The School of Law, one of the best on the African continent, has excelled in the provision of legal services to the under-privileged members of our society through its Public Interest Law Clinic (PILAC), the Refugee Law Project and the Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPEC). PILAC seeks to promote hands-on experiential learning as well as exposing students to 'live' cases of individuals who have been confronted by the law in its varied manifestations. Uganda is the second largest recipient of refugees globally. The refugee Law Project provides legal support to refugees and also conducts research on the refugee issues. HURIPEC seeks and has consistently engaged in events geared at promoting the understanding and respect for human rights, democratic governance and sustainable peace in the East Africa sub-region specifically and Africa generally through teaching, research, policy and advocacy.

I pay tribute to all these gallant Makerereans for the wonderful work they do for the advancement of Uganda, Africa and Humanity.

Infrastructure Development remains a major area of concern for our University. We completed phase one of the expansion of the Makerere University Dental Hospital, equipped with modern dental equipment, making it the biggest dental hospital in the region. We also completed phase one of our indoor games facility, the Makerere Arena. When this facility is finally completed, which is very soon, it will be the largest and most modern indoor games facility in the region. We continue with the programme of renovating and modernizing all our infrastructure in order to create an atmosphere befitting a global 21st century university and we look forward to continued support from all our stakeholders. We have embarked on construction of a new lecture and administration building for the School of Law, which we expect to be complete in 2022/ 2023

Innovative Teaching & Learning: COVID-19 presented an opportunity for the University to fast-track the Open, Distance and E-learning (ODEL), where we have been able to upgrade our E-learning infrastructure, curricula, technical and human resource capacity to deliver quality teaching and learning. Many innovative students' internship and field projects have been registered under

the blended approach, bearing huge potential for knowledge transfer and practice. We were able to complete the academic year in December 2020, and started on the new academic year 2020/2021 whose first Semester Exams begin next week. We continue to receive enormous support from Government and various local and international partners to further improve the online teaching and learning services to our clients.

5. Timely Processing of Makerere University Academic Transcripts:

Due to the effects of COVID-19, we were unable to process transcripts for our graduands before the graduation ceremony. However, I am happy to inform all our graduands, that we have now received all the materials required for the production of the transcripts and they should be able to collect them within a couple of weeks. The Academic Registrar will announce the schedule for collection of the transcripts.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I wish to assure all our stakeholders, that Makerere University, your University is in good form and vibrant. But Makerere can and will become even greater and more relevant to our Country. In order to achieve that, we must uphold our professional integrity as staff and the students must exercise maximum discipline. Uganda has made enormous sacrifices and invested in us. We must give back to our dear motherland in double measure. I wish to re-affirm our commitment to support the Government in her efforts to emancipate our people from poverty and marginalization. We will do this through continued diligent service to our motherland, like we have done over the last 100 years.

7. A WORD TO THE GRADUANDS

Finally I turn to you our dear graduands. I congratulate all of you and your parents, guardians and sponsors upon this noble achievement. The time and resources you have invested have paid off and that is the cause for our celebration today. Allow me to specifically thank our dear parents, guardians and sponsors who have selflessly financed your studies to this level. They have sacrificed a lot to give you a good future and deserve to be appreciated. Please join me in expressing our gratitude for their enormous sacrifices.

You are going out to the world, which expects a lot from you. You will face challenges, including those brought by COVID-19, but be faithful to your cause. We have trained you to be critical thinkers, ready to face the job market, but also resilient entrepreneurs. Go out and create the jobs the Country is yearning for. With a degree from one of the best universities in the world, there is no reason for not succeeding. As you struggle to find your place in society, you might stumble and fall, but always have the courage to stand up and try again with dignity. Your success is our pride. Avoid vain ambitions and keep away from corruption. Love and respect your parents and fear God so that doors will be opened for you. As you go through the

gates of Makerere, hold your head high but with humility, and always hold your alma mater in high esteem. And please, do not forget the gates of Makerere. God Bless You All!

AS WE BUILD FOR THE FUTURE!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Nawangwe', written in a cursive style.

Signed: _____

Date: 17th May 2021

PROF. BARNABAS NAWANGWE, VICE-CHANCELLOR