

**Remarks by the Ambassador of Norway H.E. Susan Eckey on the occasion of the laying of the Foundation Stone of Performing Arts Centre at Makerere University**

**Kampala, 31 March 2017**

Excellencies, Dignitaries from Makerere University, Dear Ann Kristin, Distinguished Guests, Dear Friends of the Arts,

What transcends language, ethnicity, religion, politics and tradition? What makes people really get to understand each other? What is the best way to communicate? Maybe you will agree that it would be through ART. ART expresses human dignity, art expresses what is in our hearts, art is universal. Ugandans are proud of their Ndere Troupe and what they represent, Norwegians are proud of artists such as the young shooting star, singer songwriter Sigrid Raabe. And we all appreciate the work of director Mira Nair and love her latest movie "The Queen of Katwe". They represent many who enrich our life, make us feel, reflect and bring us to another level of consciousness.

A cultural highlight during my stay in Uganda has been the exchange and performances by Ugandan and Norwegian dancers, made possible by the Norwegian College of Dance, Makerere University and the Norwegian Embassy. For the last five years the joint training of Ugandan and Norwegian dancers has translated into friendships and amazing dance performances in Kampala. My art form of choice is dance, I could watch it all day and all night. I must admit to quite a few long nights in the company of YouTube. I also like to dance myself, something altogether different from what we will see at the Dance Festival today and tomorrow. As a tip to those not yet sure about dancing themselves, I can only refer to the magical Gene Kelly (a dancer known to the grey-haired movie going audience) who said: "I got started dancing because I knew it was one way to meet girls".

Dear friends,

The foundation stone that we are laying today is for a Centre that will enable Makerere University and Uganda to raise to the next level in the training and

