

CHUSS Holds the Japan Week to Celebrate Mak @100

The College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS) together with the Embassy of Japan and JICA are holding a Japan week in commemoration of the centennial anniversary.

This occasion dubbed, “ JICA Chair and Japan week” has a number of activities aimed at creating a deeper understanding of Japanese culture and strengthening collaboration between Uganda and Japan.

Topics to be shared include the Japanese history, economy, arts and students’ life in Japan. Different thematic areas were lined up for presentation including a special lecture by Dr. Pressello on Toyota’s manufacturing system and information sessions on study opportunities in Japan. A selection of books made by the library team at Makerere university contains ones on Japanese modernization history and, more books will be added to the library.

The four days event (22nd-25th March 2022) was officially opened by the Ambassador of Japan to Uganda H.E Fukuzawa Hidemoto at the Auditorium in the Central Teaching Facility 2 at Makerere university.

The function was also graced by the Senior Representative Japan Internal Cooperation Agency, Uganda Mr. Fukuhara Ichiro. Makerere university Vice Chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe delivered a welcome address.

The Principal CHUSS Associate Prof. Josephine Ahikire, the Dean School of Liberal and Performing Arts and Film and the Head Department of History, Archeology and Heritage Studies Dr. Charlotte Karungi Mafumbo also participated.

Ambassador Fukuzawa Hidemoto congratulated Makerere university for its 100 years of Excellence in building a transformed society adding that the weeklong celebrations symbolize the friendship between Uganda and Japan.

“Japan is proud to share a rich history of collaboration with Makerere University through infrastructure support, partnerships between Makerere and Japanese universities, annual sponsorship by the government of Japan of Ugandan students to study in Japanese universities majority of whom are graduates from Makerere”, the ambassador said.

Ambassador Fukuzawa said 12 universities have signed an agreement with Makerere university on student and faculty exchanges, joint research opportunities and natural exemption of tuitions for exchange students as well as short-term studies and internships.

He added that the History Department at the College of Humanities and social sciences is in Communication with Kyoto university, one of the prestigious top universities in Japan to start collaboration through a program initiated by the Ministry of Education, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan called, “Innovative Africa; Educational Networking Programs for Human Resource Development in Africa’s SDGs (IAfP Innovative Africa program”.

The ambassador said, people-to-people exchanges are essential in enhancing knowledge and advancing academic activities. SAYING, this Kyoto Makerere university program will kick start the next 100 years of Makerere university in international exchange.

The Senior Representative of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Uganda Office Mr. Fukuhara Ichiro said, JICA as Japan's International Cooperation Agency, has worked in various projects in various fields of cooperation with Uganda for long.

Fukuhara said they have been able to support the infrastructure of the university like the science JICA building that was constructed 30 years ago under the Grant Aid project. And, JICA was engaged in human resource development for poverty reduction by dispatching Japanese experts to the university and establishing the African Institute for Capacity Development (AICAD).

“As JICA's new initiative, JICA launched the JICA Development Studies Program (JICA-DSP) in 2018, in cooperation with various universities in Japan to explore Japan's modernization and development cooperation experiences of its historical and cultural background.

JICA started the JICA CHAIR (JICA program for Japanese studies) in collaboration with leading universities in Africa with Makerere university as the first engagement among the 40 countries. We hope the JICA Chair will contribute to create Makerere's new history, see a greater growth and lead the world with knowledge”, said Fukuhara.

The Vice Chancellor Makerere university, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe thanked the JICA and Japanese embassy for joining Makerere university in celebrating the 100 years.

“Japan is one of the countries from which Makerere university and Uganda should learn. It provides a lot of lessons because it was devastated by the second world war but they managed to come out it yet they do not have the kind of natural resources we have here in Uganda but due to their hard work and innovation, they managed to bring their country out of the ruins to become one of the powerful economic countries in the world”. Prof. Nawangwe said.

The Vice Chancellor said the study of Japanese history and culture and technology is important if Uganda is to be transformed to become a middle income and a modern developed country.

Prof. Nawangwe reported that the first collaboration with JICA begun in the 1990's with the support to the department of Geology which involved mapping Uganda's minerals and a donation of the JICA building.

The Vice Chancellor said most of the collaborations with Japanese universities involve collaboration in research on development issues, harnessing natural resources and building the human capacity.

Nawangwe said the Department of History, Archeology and Heritage Studies, JICA Chair was launched in 2018 with the aim of developing Africa's future leaders.

He also highlighted a number of MoUs that were signed with Japanese universities to cement the collaboration including the 2016 MoU with Okayama university and the 2015 with Kyoto university to collaborate in a number of areas of primatology research.

The Principal CHUSS Associate Prof. Josephine Ahikire welcomed participants to Makerere university acknowledging JICA and the Japanese embassy for the financial support and co-creation of the ideas to celebrate and honor Makerere university.

Prof. Ahikire described the Japanese week as a celebration of History, Archaeology and Heritage Studies as important combinations.

“History is the mother of all disciplines. You start with History and then go into Technology, Geography or Social sciences. So, in essence we are celebrating the cradle of knowledge.

I would like to thank the Japan embassy for these very co-creating kind of process that we have gone through as a college. All these officers at JICA, at the embassy would come to the Department of History and they co-created and collectively addressed the idea how to celebrate and finance this activity”, The Principal reported.

Prof. Ahikire thanked the team in School of Liberal and Performing Arts, the Department History and JICA for working together and successfully organising the event.

The Dean School of Liberal and Performing Arts Dr. Patrick Mangeni described the event as gratifying not only as a Makerere University celebration of 100 years of existence, but, also to engage in an interaction with one of the university’s and Uganda’s biggest supporters in the area of education and infrastructure.

Dr. Mangeni extended appreciation to Japanese government for the support accorded to Makerere university.

“JICA has done a lot for this university... and now we are having a conversation to celebrate 100 years of Makerere’s existence but a conversation that has been partly put together by the Department of History, Archaeology and Heritage Studies and I take this with a lot of gratitude.

This is an important cultural interaction and in the manner that we are going to learn and be able to share the way the Japanese experiences in a number of areas. I also take it from the conversations that we have had, that this cooperation is going to build the History Department within this framework to play an important role in linking various units of Makerere in conversation around this area of culture”, Mangeni said.

The head Department of History, Archaeology and Heritage Studies Dr. Charlotte Mafumbo acknowledge support rendered from Japan, JICA and the Japanese embassy for putting the activity together

“When we were approached in 2020 , it was like a dream. We talked about the Japan Chair and all the possible collaborations and today I am happy to say this is one of those days that we start to harmonise all the activities we were talking about and also welcome the biggest initiative of the Japan Chair today.”