

## **SPEECH BY DR ERIA OLOWO ONYANGO – COORDINATOR, BORDERLAND DYNAMICS IN EAST AFRICA PROJECT**

The Vice Chancellor, Makerere University  
The Rector, University of Bergen in Norway  
The Vice Rector, University of Bergen  
The Principal CHUSS, Makerere University  
Protocol observed

I begin by thanking you warmly for honouring our invitation to this ceremony.

It is truly a great honour to speak before such a distinguished audience of our great Universities managers. I am driven in part by my own background as an alumnus of UiB to identify with my distinguished Rector whose illustrious service to Bergen enabled me graduate with a doctorate to be able to stand before you today. I am also delighted in part because of the presence of my own Vice Chancellor the distinguished Professor Ddumba Ssentamu whose good and wise leadership enabled us to be here today; and I cannot let pass without acknowledging the renowned scholar and Professor who taught me, guided me and mentored me to be what I am today, Prof. Kirumira the Principal of CHUSS.

Mr Vice Chancellor and Rector Sir, I am delighted that, in this context at least, my Norwegian connection has become an important factor that enables me link this collaboration between Makerere and University of Bergen with a fine appreciation of the tremendous benefits I received from your (Norwegian) nurturing, socialization as well as friendship while I lived in Bergen.

Indeed, the essence of this workshop was to bring together African young scholars at Masters Level to share their experiences and knowledge about their countries with our colleagues from the North. This initiative is in line with our project goals that seek to enhance regional collaboration, internationalisation, capacity building for our institutions and gender mainstreaming.

Mr Vice Chancellor and Rector Sir, the overall aim of our project is to strengthen the capacity of the 3 universities (Makerere, Khartoum and Addis Ababa) to play a role in governance and policy fields by addressing borderland issues; advocating and increasing competence on the specific aspects of borderland situations, such as human rights, women rights, the rights of marginal borderland groups, environmental concerns as well as human health and general human development concerns.

### **Objectives**

1. To challenge the current state centred focus on borderland processes and offer more "soft" issues into the debate through building capacities of higher education institutions.
2. To strengthen the university-based capacities within research and teaching relevant to borderland issues.
3. To strengthen the link between universities and various processes of public policy formulation around borderland issues.

## **Ugandans benefit**

Sir, the program is increasing the capacities within Makerere University for instance, further strengthening of lecturers' capacity in teaching and research, it currently makes available to them

materials, equipment and resources for fieldwork. Furthermore, it has created new and specialized competence by offering Ph.D and Master students an opportunity to undertake research on issues of relevance to the borderland situations. It has started training:

- Four staff (one woman and three men) from Makerere have enrolled for PhD Programs in Social Anthropology at Makerere University which we now want to take a notch higher by offering the PhD degree jointly with University of Bergen
- Five M.A students fully sponsored for 2014/15

A specific value added by the project is that apart from the internal competence building in the departments in all three countries, also through this project provided important support for larger institutional processes already underway at the respective universities: by strengthening our collaboration with other universities in the south; but most importantly our valued collaboration with the University of Bergen.

Sir, I also wish to note that the Makerere - University of Bergen collaboration sought to showcase research and provide a forum for interaction and collaboration amongst the Academia, their students as well as the public sector. I trust that the kind of training this workshop has been engaged in speeds up that process.

Sir, I believe that in order to survive the emerging social, political and economic challenges that the world faces today, all stakeholders the world over and particularly the academia need to sharpen their skills through embracing all the changing aspects of the social world in respect to our ways of doing research. Sir, it is also laudable to note that a lot of ground in that respect has been covered in this workshop with enormous support from University of Bergen that has not only supplied us with the latest literature in borderlands study but also facilitated several of their staffs to physically come and steer the workshop. We thank University of Bergen, NORAD and the Royal Kingdom of Norway for both the technical and financial support that enabled this workshop succeeds.