

## **Mak Celebrates 10 Years of the Confucius Institute with Launch of Three Associations**

Makerere University marked a decade of cultural and academic partnership with China by celebrating the 10th anniversary of its Confucius Institute and the 20th anniversary of the global Confucius Institutes network. Established in 2014, the Confucius Institute has grown into a key pillar in fostering relations between Uganda and China, language education, cultural exchange, and academic collaboration.

The event, held at the University Main Hall, featured the launch of three associations: the Confucius Institute Alumni Association, the Uganda Native Chinese Language Teachers Association, and the Uganda Secondary School Chinese Students Association.

The colorful ceremony was presided over by Mr. Mulindwa Israel, Director of Basic and Secondary Education, representing Uganda's Minister of State for Higher Education. Also in attendance were the Chinese Ambassador to Uganda, the Vice President of Xiangtan University, Makerere University Vice Chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, and a delegation from Xiangtan University. The event included cultural performances, speeches, and panel discussions that highlighted the growing ties between Uganda and China.

### **Uganda's Ministry of Education Extends Gratitude to Confucius Institute**

A representative of Uganda's Minister of State for Higher Education, Mr. Mulindwa Israel lauded the Confucius Institute at Makerere University for its decade-long role in fostering stronger ties between Uganda and China. Speaking at the Institute's 10th anniversary celebrations, Mr. Mulindwa, the Director for Basic and Secondary Education at the Ministry of Education and Sports, emphasized the Institute's pivotal contribution to promoting Chinese language and culture in Uganda.

Mr. Mulindwa delivered the message on behalf of the Minister of State for Education, Dr. Nicholas Uyengo, who was unable to attend due to another pressing engagement. "It is my great honor to represent the Ministry today as we celebrate a decade of academic collaboration and cultural exchange between Uganda and China," Mr. Mulindwa stated. "The Confucius Institute has been an important bridge in strengthening the relationship between our two nations."

Highlighting the Institute's achievements, Mr. Mulindwa praised its role in introducing Chinese language instruction to Ugandan secondary schools and facilitating teacher training. "This year, we witnessed the significant milestone of Chinese language assistants being deployed across Uganda's ordinary and advanced secondary schools. I am also excited to note the commitment to train over 500 teachers in the coming years to meet the growing demand for Chinese language education," he said.

The Director also commended the Institute for its innovative virtual Chinese and Asian Studies program, which has already produced highly qualified graduates in the Chinese language. "This

initiative complements the Ministry of Education and Sports' efforts to train sufficient teachers to meet the increasing demand for Chinese language instruction," Mr. Mulindwa added.

Reflecting on the philosophy of Confucius, Mr. Mulindwa concluded, "Learning without thought is laborious. Thought without learning is priceless. The Confucius Institute embodies this philosophy, nurturing minds and fostering global citizenship."

He further expressed gratitude to the Chinese Embassy in Uganda, the leadership of Makerere University, and all partners involved in supporting the Confucius Institute's success. Mr. Mulindwa assured them of the Ministry's continued support in advancing cultural understanding, innovation, and cooperation between Uganda and China.

"Congratulations to the Confucius Institute on this remarkable achievement," Mr. Mulindwa concluded, pledging continued support for the Institute's future endeavors.

### **Makerere Vice Chancellor Celebrates 10 Years of Cultural and Educational Achievements**

Makerere University Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, hailed the Confucius Institute for its transformative impact on Chinese language education and cultural exchange in Uganda. Prof. Nawangwe emphasized the institution's role in fostering deeper ties between Uganda and China.

"The Confucius Institute at Makerere University, established in 2014 with the generous support of the Chinese Government and Xiangtan University, has achieved remarkable milestones over the past decade," Prof. Nawangwe remarked.

He highlighted the growth of the Chinese language program at Makerere University, which began with just 30 students and now boasts over 4,000 learners across degree programs, short courses, and secondary schools. "This significant growth reflects the increasing interest in Chinese language and culture among Ugandans," he added.

Prof. Nawangwe acknowledged the Institute's pivotal role in building partnerships with Chinese companies and institutions, enabling Makerere students and staff to access scholarships and other opportunities in China. He also commended the Institute for serving as a bridge between Uganda and China, enhancing economic and cultural ties.

Looking ahead, the Vice Chancellor outlined an ambitious vision for the next decade. "We envision the Confucius Institute becoming a leading center for Chinese language and cultural studies in East Africa. Our plans include expanding our programs to cover Chinese culture, history, and business, and establishing more partnerships with Chinese enterprises and institutions," he stated.

Recognizing the challenges of meeting the growing demand for Chinese language skills driven by Uganda-China economic ties, Prof. Nawangwe called for continued investment in programs, infrastructure, and innovation.

He expressed gratitude to the Chinese Government, Xiangtan University, and the Centre for Language Education and Cooperation for their unwavering support. “We are also deeply thankful to our dedicated staff and students, whose efforts have made the Confucius Institute at Makerere University a success,” he noted.

As the celebrations concluded, Prof. Nawangwe reaffirmed Makerere University’s commitment to promoting Chinese language and culture and strengthening the relationship between Uganda and China.

“This 10th anniversary is not just a reflection of our achievements but a beacon for the exciting opportunities that lie ahead,” he concluded.

### **Directors Celebrate Milestones**

Directors Dr. Gilbert Gumoshabe and Mr. Tang Fei reflected on the Institute's achievements. They highlighted milestones such as training over 50,000 students in Chinese language and culture, preparing 170 Ugandans as Chinese language teachers, and facilitating the further studies of 200 students and scholars in China.

“Today, we celebrate a journey that has transformed lives and fostered understanding. With unwavering support from our partners, we have moved mountains,” Gumoshabe said

The Institute has also excelled in hosting cultural events, supporting the introduction of Chinese in Ugandan secondary schools, and launching a Bachelor of Chinese and Asian Studies program that has already produced graduates. Additionally, it has connected students to job opportunities in Chinese companies, significantly improving their livelihoods.

One of the notable accolades mentioned was the recognition of the Confucius Institute as the "Institute of the Year" in 2018, a testament to its exemplary performance. Other achievements include fostering research in China-Africa relations, excelling in international competitions such as the Chinese Bridge Competition, and organizing cultural activities beyond Makerere University.

The Directors acknowledged the support of Makerere University, particularly under former Vice Chancellor Prof. Ddumba Ssentamu and current Vice Chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe. They also extended gratitude to partners such as Xiangtan University, the Chinese Embassy, and the National Curriculum Development Centre, led by Dr. Grace Baguma, for their role in the Institute's success.

Looking ahead, the Confucius Institute aims to expand academic programs, deepen cultural exchange, and enhance language training to meet growing global demands. The Directors also paid tribute to former CI directors, including Prof. Hong Yonghong, Prof. Oswald Ndoleriire, Ms. Xia Zhuoqiong, and Dr. Zhong Jianghua, for their contributions to the Institute's growth.

In their closing remarks, the Directors invoked the wisdom of Confucius: "The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones." They expressed pride in the journey of hope and

persistence that led to this milestone and emphasized their commitment to achieving even greater heights in the years ahead.

### **Chinese International Education Foundation Applauds Confucius Institute at Makerere for 10 Years of Excellence**

The Vice President and Secretary General of the Chinese International Education Foundation congratulated the Confucius Institute at Makerere University on its 10th anniversary, celebrating its achievements in promoting cultural exchange and education between China and Uganda.

In a message delivered during the anniversary celebrations, the foundation commended the collaborative efforts between Makerere University and Xiangtan University. “In the past ten years, Makerere University and Xiangtan University have sincerely cooperated with each other. The Confucius Institute, adhering to the principles of carrying forward traditions, daring to innovate, uniting and cooperating, and dedicating with professionalism, has become an important bridge for disseminating Chinese culture and fostering friendship between China and Uganda,” the message read.

The foundation highlighted key milestones of the institute, including offering multi-level Chinese language courses, organizing cultural activities such as *Voice Into My Heart*, and training local teachers to successfully integrate Chinese language education into Uganda’s national system.

Acknowledging Makerere University's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, for his congratulatory video message on the Confucius Institute Day in September, the foundation noted the strong support for the institute from both Ugandan and Chinese stakeholders. “This reflects how both the Chinese and Ugandan sides value and support the cause of the Confucius Institute, for which we express our heartfelt appreciation,” the Secretary General stated.

Expressing optimism for the future, the foundation emphasized its confidence in the institute’s continued success. “It is believed that with the cooperation of our two sides, the Confucius Institute will be able to give full play to its unique advantages and achieve even greater milestones,” the message concluded.

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