

- Our Chief Guest, Hon. Minister of ICT and National Guidance, Hon. Nabakooba
- The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Nawangwe
- The Deputy VC, Finance and Administration, Prof Nabukenya
- The Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Ahikire
- The Deputy Principal CHUSS,
- The Deputy Head of Cooperation at the Norwegian Embassy, ~~Ms~~ Shashit Lindowe
- The Dean, School of languages, Literature and Communication
- The staff of the Department,
- All our invited guests,
- Former and current students,
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

⇒ I have the pleasure to welcome you to this year's Annual Media Convention. This event is held by the Department of Journalism and Communication, every year since 1998. This <sup>year's</sup> event has coincided with the Department's activities to commemorate World Press Freedom Day, which is celebrated on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, annually.

⇒ **The major aim of the DJC Annual Media convention is two-fold:**

- ⇒ One to provide a forum/space to enable the academy and practitioners to engage on matters affecting the media and communication industry in order to position it to address challenges that hinder its contribution to society.
- ⇒ For instance, this year's theme focuses on **elections, media freedom and the future**, which we thought is a very timely one, given the events that have unfolded in the country and in our midst in the last few months leading to the January 2021 general elections. But it has also coincided with the World Press Freedom Day
- ⇒ The convention also acts as a platform where the Department showcases its work, achievements, shares its challenges and unveils its plans.
- ⇒ Hon. Minister and Our dear Vice Chancellor, allow me to inform you that for the last eight years, the Department has been in trenches to develop internal capacity to match both internal and external expectations. The department has managed to move from just two PhD holders in 2012 to 10 in 2020. This in our view is no mean achievement, especially because it has direct implications on how the department will contribute to the overall agenda of a research-based university that Makerere has become.
- ⇒ Allow me to also report that we had informed you during our last Annual Media Convention that our Department, in a bid to strengthen research and graduate training would start two new M.A programmes one in Journalism and Multimedia and another in Corporate and Strategic Communication. I have the pleasure, Hon. Minister and our dear VC to announce at this event that the Makerere University Senate has reviewed and <sup>approved</sup> ~~passed~~ these programmes and we hope to start student enrolment on these programmes not so far from now.

⇒ **We want to thank our partners who have worked with us through the years, starting with the sponsors of today's event:**

- ⇒ In this spirit, ladies and gentlemen join me to appreciate the role that is played by our Norwegian partners through the **Journalism and Media International Centre of Oslo Metropolitan University** in Norway. This is the third year in a row that they are sponsoring the events to commemorate the World Press Freedom Day at our department. The Norwegian government, through its Norhed project has also directly and indirectly contributed to capacity building in the Department in form of PhD training and research funding. The Deputy Head of Cooperation at the Norwegian Embassy (Ms Shashit Lindoe) is here with us today, and I am certain that he will carry our message of appreciation to the Norwegian government and the Oslo metropolitan University.
- ⇒ We have also a great partnership with the New Vision. They have sponsored an award to the best photojournalism student in memory of the late Cranimer Mugerwa since 2002.
- ⇒ In the same way, the <sup>Nation Media Group.</sup> (Daily Monitor) has sponsored the overall best student in the journalism and communication undergraduate programme award since the early 2000s. We thank them greatly.
- ⇒ We also appreciate all our partners including, the Swedish Government through Sida, UNESCO, UNICEF, SCIDEV. NET and Script which have sponsored a science communication programme since 2018, Ultimate Media Uganda who have boosted our multi and digital media training, and the American Embassy. We are indebted to you all dear partners.
- ⇒ With your support, we believe a lot more can be done in the way of strengthening journalism and communication research, as well as propelling the contribution of the department and the university at large to addressing the challenges that confront our country and society.
- ⇒ We therefore invite key stakeholders to work with us in some of the plans we have for the future: We specifically invite you to strengthen our award mechanism for students who have excelled in various skills, and we challenge establishments such as Public Relations Association of Uganda, media organizations such as Next Media, other television stations, radios and corporate organisations to join this important cause.
- ⇒ We also want to appeal to you Hon. Minister, to lead the way in the restoration of the frequency for the Makerere University FM radio. It was repossessed by UCC a few years back and we believe through you Hon. Minister, we can regain it for our training purpose.
- ⇒ To our Dear Vice Chancellor and all members of management here today, the Department of Journalism and Communication has come of age and we have now started on the road to metamorphose into a School of Journalism and Communication. We look forward to your support in this effort.



- ⇒ Our effort to put in place a multimedia hub for the Makerere campus FM and television have not yet materialised, majorly due to the disruptions and disturbances that were occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic. But we are coming back to you ladies and gentlemen to revive this important activity that seeks ensure that our training matches the current technological changes and trends in the industry.
- ⇒ Finally, let me thank the team that has worked tirelessly to ensure the success of the events of today. The group is led by our latest doctoral addition, Dr. Marion Alina.
- ⇒ Others are Dr. Gerald Walulya, Dr. Sara Namusoga, Dr. Fred Kakooza, Dr. Adolf Mbaine. Mr. Kaija Wilson and Mr. Robert Madoi
- ⇒ I thank you very much ladies and gentlemen and wish you great deliberations through the day.
- ⇒ At this juncture, please allow me to invite the Dean, SLLC to give her remarks.