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**SPEECH BY UGANDA’S MINISTER**

**OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS**

**HON. JESSICA ALUPO**

**AT THE UONGOZI SCHOOL 2014**

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The Vice Chancellor Makerere University, Prof. John Ddumba-Ssentamu

The Principal, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Prof. Edward K. Kirumira

The Head, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Makerere University, Dr Suzie Nansozi Muwanga

All participants from Makerere University and sister Universities

Distinguished guests

Ladies and gentlemen,

I warmly welcome you all to Uganda, the Pearl of Africa and bring you greeting from the Ministry of Education and Sports. I am pleased to join you at this last session of the Uongozi School 2014 aimed at strengthening leadership and Governance on the African Continent. I wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the brains behind the East African Uongozi Institute for this great initiative. These kind of institutions are of great importance at this time when Africa is faced with so many leadership challenges that have resulted into suppression of human rights, violent conflicts, and economic deterioration. The role of good leadership cannot be overemphasized as it is central in our ability to thrive in a world of increasing complexity and accelerating change.

Dear participants, I am aware that the broader mission of the East African Uongozi Institute is to inspire and equip African leaders to realize their personal and collective potential to deliver sustainable solutions for African citizens. I am, however, particularly impressed that the institute works to promote civic and intellectual leadership qualities among the next generation of East African leaders - the youth. While racism, classism, and oppression affect us all, young people are among the most vulnerable, yet they are the future leaders/managers of affairs of most states on the African Continent.

The youth constitute the biggest percentage of the population in most states in Africa and if they are not guided to do right, we may end up with so many failed states. With the right resources and adult allies to support them — youth make meaningful change. I therefore appeal to governments on the African Continent to heavily invest in youth leadership programmes if any development is to be realized.

Dear guests, I am pleased to inform you that the Government of Uganda treasures and holds youth in high esteem because we know that they are the next generation of leaders. The youth are free to participate in politics and other matters of national importance. We have regional youth representatives in Parliament and other leadership forums. Besides that, the government has put in place a number of programmes to empower the youth to better manage the affairs of their countries. This year, the Government of Uganda with support from Uganda Youth Network (UYONET) established the Youth Budget Advocacy Alliance, a coalition of Youth in different sectors which provides leadership and conducts advocacy to ensure the concerns of Youth are included in the National Budget process. The alliance brings together over 25 Youth from CSOs, private sector and academia. Through this initiative, young people can build their capacities for budget advocacy as well as connect with the broader civil society budget advocacy agenda, hence mainstreaming of youth priority issues.

The Government of Uganda further acknowledges that youth participation in earlier livelihoods and employment programmes (i.e. Skilling Uganda, Youth Enterprise Scheme, Youth Venture Capital Fund) has been lacking and that the absence of youth manifested in number of related issues, including (but not limited to): (i) poor mobilization and sensitization of the youth (ii) inappropriate targeting, (iii) poor beneficiary selection mechanism, (iv) mismatch of skills with market demand, and (v) poor mind-set of the youth, among others. It is in light of this that the government allocated its latest youth intervention; the Youth Livelihood Programme a total of UGX: 256 billion over the next five years – a timely initiative to address the challenge of unemployment in Uganda. The Youth Livelihood Programme is designed to provide strategic and sustainable interventions for the youth to enable them effectively participate in the National development and improve their quality of life.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Education and Sports has introduced the Uganda Higher Education Students’ Financing Board (HESFB); a fund intended to provide financing to Ugandan students who have qualified for higher education in recognized institutions of higher learning but are unable to support themselves financially. The essence of the Higher Education Students' Financing Board is to support the sector policy objective of increasing access to quality education in view of the large number of brilliant but needy students who are not among the 4,000 students sponsored by government and can-not raise fees for self-sponsorship. In addition, the Ministry working with different institutions of learning promotes civic education at all levels and encourages cross-border partnerships aimed at strengthening teaching and learning in Africa. This we hope can act as a platform for promoting the best leadership experiences across the region.

I wish to acknowledge the efforts of Makerere University in promoting good governance and fostering economic development through extensive research and active participation in national policy formulation. I wish to specifically commend the Department of Political Science and Public Administration in ensuring that Ugandans participate in the East African Uongozi Institute programmes. I am certain that the Ugandans who have participated in the numerous trainings and networking engagements have been equipped with knowledge and skills to champion good governance and leadership in our country. I appeal to them to share this knowledge with other Ugandans who have not had the opportunity to participate in this kind of forum. I also appeal to the East African Uongozi Institute to extend this programme beyond the four leading Universities in the region.

I take this opportunity to thank all the facilitators of this activity, specifically Ford Foundation that provided a grant for the Uongozi School 2014.

I thank you for your kind attention. For God and My Country!