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**UNIVERSITY**

**MAKERERE**

 **REMARKS BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR**

**PROFESSOR BARNABAS NAWANGWE**

**AT THE VISIT OF THE ROTARY INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT**

**WEDNESDAY, 15THSEPTEMBER 2021,**

**ROTARY PEACE CENTRE BOARD ROOM,**

**MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

* Rotary International President Shekhar Metha;
* The Chairperson of Makerere University Council, Mrs. Lorna Magara,
* The Deputy Vice Chancellors
* All Members of the University management,
* The Governors of Rotary Districts 9213 & 9214 (Uganda &Tanzania),
* The Advisory Board of the Rotary Peace Center,
* Esteemed staff and Faculty
* All Rotarians here present
* Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to you all

I have the honour and pleasure to welcome you, President Shekhar Metha, to Makerere University, one of Africa’s oldest and largest universities. Since 1922, when she was first established as a technical college, Makerere has through the century trained more than 400,000 young people from across the globe and we are proud of our alumni, who are truly global citizens, serving humanity and advancing the cause of peace and human development. Makerere University was instrumental in producing political leaders that struggled for the emancipation of the entire east and central African region from colonisation and producing the badly needed human resource for the young independent nations. Our destiny is hence embedded in this historic heritage.

With students from more than 50 countries, 38 of them in Africa, we are a truly international university. We believe that bringing young people from diverse cultures together is the best way to nurture a peaceful world. We have been involved in training peace builders for quite a long time. As far back as the 90s, we introduced programmes in peace and conflict resolution at both undergraduate and graduate levels. We have been directly involved in global efforts to bring peace to our often, volatile region. Our university was the first to send professors to universities in Rwanda after the genocide, we were the first university to send professors to Somalia when relative peace returned to that country, and our researchers were actively involved in the search for peace in Uganda during the long war by the Lord’s Resistance Movement.

The decision to establish the first Rotary Peace Centre in Uganda was welcomed with excitement and gratefulness. We consider this to be a vote of confidence in our efforts in the peace and conflict resolution agenda. The role played by our local Rotary clubs is great. But I must say that practically all the leadership and the majority of members of Rotary in Uganda are our alumni. We are proud to associate with the local Rotarians in this noble endeavour.

The Rotary Peace Centre at Makerere took off very smoothly thanks to the tireless efforts of the leadership of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, where the Centre is located and the Centre Director, Dr. Helen Nkabala and her team.

By the end of this year, we will have hosted two cohorts of peace fellows. The first cohort was here between February and May, 2021. Currently, these Peace fellows are carrying out their peace initiatives in their communities. The second cohort will report later this year on September 27, 2021. Allow to me say that in both cohorts, Peace Fellows were chosen from 20 countries and by the end of the year, we will have had a total of 36 Fellows. In carrying out community initiatives, the Fellows build Makerere’s capacity as a pillar of community engagement where faculty and staff are given a chance to showcase their knowledge and research in the world they serve. Rotary International is building this capacity and we are truly elated to know that we are part of this great endeavour.

Mr President, as Management, we are committed to growing the Rotary Peace Centre. Our vision is to have a fully-fledged centre with complete mediation facilities. We want to do this in order to serve the Makerere Community, the nation of Uganda, the continent of Africa and humanity at large. We plan to encourage and support peace clinics that will ably respond to the challenges in the communities that the Peace Fellows come from and those that surround us. For us, this is a grand vision. The Peace Centre enhances our relevance to society and enables us to meet the needs of our communities, something in line with the vision of Rotary International.

I thank the Governors of Districts 9213 and 9214 for their support throughout the process of setting up this Peace Centre. I thank the Advisory Board for their commitment in serving the Peace centre and guiding it to achieve its mandate. I would like to thank all Rotarians for their support thus far. Without you, we never would have gotten this far.

As Makerere celebrates its 100 years, we have surely added something to it that we want to keep strong over the centuries to come. For us, it is important that we do not kill the vision of Rotary International or even of Makerere. As we celebrate this Peace centre, we look forward to working with Rotary International as partners in the development of Makerere University and its core aims of teaching, research and community engagement. We look forward to working together in the years to come. We thank you for honouring us with your visit in your extremely busy schedule. We salute you and the entire Rotary International fraternity for your role in promoting peace in the world and caring for the vulnerable,

Once again, welcome to Makerere University.

I thank you.