

**SPEECH BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, PROF. BARNABAS NAWANGWE AT THE 5TH SESSION OF THE 74TH GRADUATION CEREMONY**

**ON FRIDAY 2ND FEBRUARY 2024**

* **Hon. Ministers;**
* **Members of the Judicature;**
* **Members of the Diplomatic Corp;**
* **Hon. Members of Parliament;**
* **The Chief of Defence Forces;**
* **The Chairperson of Makerere University Council, Mrs. Lorna Magara;**
* **The Vice Chairperson of Council, Rt. Hon. Dan Fred Kidega;**
* **Members of Council;**
* **The Deputy Vice Chancellors, Principals and Members of Management;**
* **Members of Senate;**
* **Members of Staff of Makerere University;**
* **The Commandants of the National Defence College, Njeru, Uganda Military Academy Kabamba, and the Senior Command and Staff College Kimaka;**
* **The Commandant of the Police Senior Command and Staff College Bwebajja;**
* **The Chairperson of Convocation;**
* **Your Excellency the President of the Students Guild;**
* **Graduands;**
* **Parents, Guardians and Sponsors;**
* **The Media;**
* **Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen!**

1. **Welcome Remarks**

Welcome to the 5th and final session of the 74th Graduation Ceremony of Makerere University that started on Monday 29th January 2024.

In a special way, I welcome and congratulate the graduands and their parents and guardians, as well as our hardworking staff upon the successful completion of yet another academic milestone.

I applaud the Government of Uganda, our dear parents, guardians, sponsors, development partners and friends for the enormous financial and moral support that you have provided to ensure that our dear graduands reach this special day. May the good Lord continue to bless you for all the sacrifices that you have made to contribute to the success of our students. I thank the Government and our development partners for the support we have received over the years that has enabled us to remain one of the best universities in the world.

1. **Chancellor**

Following the expiry of the tenure of Prof. Ezra Suruma as Chancellor of Makerere University, the University Council commenced the search for his successor. That process is still on-going. At this graduation ceremony therefore, I will execute the role of Chancellor as provided for in the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act. Prof. Suruma served Makerere University as Chancellor with excellence for eight years and I thank him and wish him success in his continued service to our dear nation.

1. **Graduation Statistics**

During the course of the 74th graduation ceremony, a total of **12,913** graduands will receive degrees and diplomas of Makerere University. Of these, a total of **132** graduands will graduate with PhDs, **1585** with Masters degrees, **11,016** with Bachelor’s degrees, **156** with postgraduate diplomas, and **24** with undergraduate diplomas. **53%** of the graduands are female and **47%** are male. In the category of PhD graduands, **46** are female and **86** are male. In the category of students graduating with Master’s degrees, **699** are female and **886** are male. Our goal is to graduate at least 200 PhDs per year in response to the World Bank call of at least 100,000 PhDs for Africa over the next 10 years, in order to pull our continent out of poverty.

It is our tradition at every graduation to recognize the best performing undergraduate students in the humanities and the sciences. At this graduation ceremony the best performing undergraduate students in the humanities are Tusubira Silas Wamala with a Bachelor of Chinese and Asian Studies and Atukunda Kevin with a Bachelor of International Business, who tied with a CGPA of 4.84 out of 5.0. The best performing undergraduate student in the sciences is Ruhweza Charles Godfrey, who obtained a CGPA of 4.8 out of 5.0 with a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering. These students will receive awards from convocation.

**Members of staff, children, spouses and student leaders graduating**

I congratulate the Members of staff of Makerere University who are graduating today. In addition, to your service to Makerere University, thank you for taking the right step to attain additional academic qualifications. In the same vein, I congratulate members of staff whose spouses and children are graduating during the 74th graduation ceremony.

To the graduands who have served as student leaders under Makerere University Students’ Guild, at the College and School levels, Class Representatives, to mention, but a few, I commend you for balancing leadership with studies. May the Good Lord, who called you to be leaders open up more opportunities for you, as you leave the gates of Makerere. I am happy to report that at the 74th Graduation Ceremony, four former Guild presidents have graduated, including H.E. Alionzi Lawrence who is graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering today and I congratulate him. .

1. **Research, Innovation and Outreach**

Our five-year Strategic Plan 2020/21-2024/25 envisions the transformation of Makerere into a “research-led” institution with a multi-faceted research agenda and enhanced engagement with industry. Specifically, the plan seeks to consolidate our position as a leader in graduate training and innovations that promote knowledge transfer and respond to the developmental and socio-economic wellbeing of society.

I am happy to report that with the support of the Government of Uganda and our development partners, we are on the path to achieving these aspirations. Since the Research and Innovation Fund was approved by Government four years ago, more than 1200 research grants have been awarded. The results are very encouraging as more than 800 innovations have already been registered as a result of this intervention. Through the Government of Uganda funded Makerere University Research and Innovations Fund (Mak-RIF), we are supporting PhD research ideas that generate knowledge that addresses national development priorities. Additionally, through the same fund, we are supporting the Commercialization of projects that have demonstrated the potential for scaling up.

These commercialization efforts have been complemented by our partners, particularly the UNDP who have supported the establishment of state-of-the-art Innovation Pod, the first of **13** such pods to be established across Africa. The Pod will facilitate students, staff and other innovators to apply design thinking to solve societal problems and will offer collaborative working spaces to enable students create business ideas, form companies and employ our youth. I was delighted to find our students from CEDAT and CHUSS setting up the equipment and other facilities in the Pod.

On Saturday 20th January 2024, when the President of the UN General Assembly, H.E Dennis Francis visited the Makerere University Innovations Pod, he said: “I am thrilled to see Makerere University driving digitalization, innovation, and smart cities for accelerated structural transformation. The multi-disciplinary University Innovation Pod, a product of partnership with UNDP is a game changer. Bridging research and innovations, and fostering a multi-disciplinary approach, this project uniquely supports youth innovation, providing spaces for making, designing and collaborating.” We believe that the establishment of the Innovation Pod will greatly contribute to producing innovators, entrepreneurs and job creators. I invite the UPDF and the Uganda Police to make use of this facility. For example, we can now design all the uniforms you require and we can jointly establish a company to manufacture those uniforms and other equipment you may require. I am sure we can do this, given the example of the production of buses by Kiira Motors, our company in collaboration with NEC. We already have memoranda of understanding between Makerere and the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs and the Uganda Police Force to collaborate in training and research and this covers us.

1. **Vice Chancellor’s Research Excellence Awards 2023**

I am happy to report that as a result of the various partnerships forged over time, our research output in terms of innovations and publications is on the increase. It is in this spirit that I am announcing the inaugural Makerere University Vice Chancellor’s Research Excellence Awards, in recognition of outstanding performers in research and publication. Based on the highest number of publications between the year 2017 and 2023 according to the Scopus database, I am happy to announce Professor Moses Robert Kamya and Professor Rhoda Wanyenze as the Best Overall Male and Female Researchers respectively. Prof. Moses Robert Kamya has **271** publications and Prof. Rhoda Wanyenze has **153** publications in the aforementioned period.

I equally congratulate the **five** researchers from each of the ten (10) colleges and Makerere University Library, who have been recognized as the best researchers. The detailed list of the best researchers has been published in the Graduation Booklet and the Mak News Magazine.

1. **Colleges Presenting Students for Graduation**

I congratulate the following academic units that are presenting graduates today, namely: The College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology, and the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. These colleges have registered breakthroughs in teaching and learning, research and innovations. I am therefore pleased to highlight some of the achievements in these colleges.

1. **College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT)**

The College of Engineering, Design and Technology has a new Principal, Dr. Moses Musinguzi and a new Deputy Principal, Dr. Maria Kizito Kasule. I congratulate them on their appointments. I also congratulate the out-going Principal, Prof. Henry Alinaitwe and the out-going Deputy Principal, Dr. Venny Nakazibwe on a job well done.

The College has been recognized as a Centre of Excellence by ARUA and the PLuS Alliance, and Alliance of Arizona State University, Kings College London and the University of New South Wales, and five top African universities including Makerere University, and given the privilege to host a PhD programme in Industrial Development on behalf of all the ARUA and PLuS Alliance universities. The first cohort of students on this programme have already commenced studies. I congratulate the College on this important recognition. The College is carrying out cutting-edge research and I will highlight just a few examples.

**Materials Production using nanotechnology**

The African Centre of Excellence in Materials, Product Development and Nanotechnology (MAPRONANO ACE) at the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT) has continued to support training of highly skilled human resource and foster advanced research capacity in materials Science and nanotechnology innovations. A number of persons including staff at the College have benefited from this opportunity and consequently the students trained benefit from the knowledge acquired. Using the state-of-the-art research laboratory for materials, nanotechnology and nanomedicine in the Eastern and Southern Africa, the Centre has contributed greatly to the regional development through graduate professional scientists, who through their research initiatives and publications have helped in identifying feasible solutions to the challenges that we face today at national, regional and global levels. One such example of research is the development of Biomass Briquettes enhanced using Nanotechnology.

**CEDAT Support towards securing land ownership rights**

The Department of Geomatics and Land Management has since 2015 to date supported the poor and vulnerable communities in a number of Districts to secure land rights of smallholder farmers including women, youth, and the elderly. The districts include Kasese, Nwoya, Adjumani, Kabale, Kisoro, Mityana, Mubende and Kassanda. This effort has been made possible because of the support from different development partners such as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UNFAO), GIZ, UNhabitat and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development. The department supported the registration of land for these vulnerable communities/people using **over 120** graduate intern students. The beneficiaries have been issued with Certificates of Customary Land (CCOs), **5000** in Kasese, **1000** in Nwoya, **5000** inAdjumani, **10,000** in Kabale and **7,000** in Kisoro. In the central region where the land tenure system is basically mailo land specifically in Mityana, Kassanda and Mubende, over **30,000** occupants, otherwise known as Bibanja holders were registered to give them Land Inventory Protocols (LIPs) so that they could get the Certificates of Occupancy (COOs). Also supported were efforts to strengthen the land registration capacity of local institutions including the Area Land Committees, District Land Boards, Sub-county chiefs and LCs. In collaboration with the Department of Architecture and Physical Planning, a Physical development plan has also been developed for Kitumba Sub-county in Kabale district.

**CEDAT hosts the Center of Excellence for Occupational Safety, Health and Environment (OSHE)**

The Occupational Safety, Health and Environment (OSHE) Center was on 4th May 2023 launched at the College of Engineering Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT). This came up following a discourse on the Advancement of Occupational Safety, Health and Environment (OSHE) knowledge and Skills in Uganda’s Higher Educational Institutions and the Industrial Sector that brought together stakeholders from the Academia, Industry and student community. With support by the Royal Academy of Engineering under its Engineering Skills wing, CEDAT is playing a pivotal role in filling the existing Occupational safety, Health and Environment awareness and enforcement gaps amongst Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and Industrial stakeholders for sustained Social economic transformation. It is anticipated that Occupational Safety, Health and Environment (OSHE) will be mainstreamed in engineering students training and industrial activities and that engineering graduates will be able to formulate Occupational Safety, Health and Environment (OSHE) policy and implementation frameworks aimed at reducing the number of accidents and fatalities within various industrial settings in Uganda, regionally and globally. It will also enhance the local capacity of professional in this area to develop customized industrial solutions through Research and Development initiatives.

**Apac District gains from CEDAT’s intervention of providing rural internet connectivity**

In line with the University’s objective of being responsive to the needs of the community, the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology (CEDAT) piloted a Rural Broadband Connectivity Model aimed at ensuring that the rural areas specifically Apac District gets internet connectivity that is not only reliable, but also with appropriate data speed. A team of researchers undertook the activity that realized the expansion and deployment of the Rural Broadband Connectivity Model, covering **twelve (12)** sites including primary and secondary schools, a technical institute, a hospital, the District Headquarters, a women’s group office, and a farmer’s group. As realized from the diverse nature of the service beneficiaries, this positively affected a number of sectors including Agriculture, Health and socio economic and income generating activities. To date, the area has realised increased internet engagement and demand from the targeted rural communities. Further to having access to internet connectivity, the intervention has helped in analyzing the issues or identifying the gaps impacting the communities by taking keen interest in the way of life of the people.

1. **College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHUSS)**

During this 74th Graduation ceremony, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences has presented the highest number of Doctoral candidates totaling 30. This is a groundbreaking achievement. We congratulate the college leadership led by Prof. Josephine Ahikire for maintaining the lead in graduate output for **three (3)** consecutive graduation ceremonies.

**CHUSS partnership with UPDF produces 85 graduands**

The college has also presented a total of **85** Uganda Peoples Defence Forces (UPDF) generals, senior and junior staff officers graduating with masters, bachelors and diplomas after completing studies in different disciplines related to defence, security and medical studies. This is historical in the lifetime of Makerere and the UPDF where for the first time, a huge number of officers from our affiliated institutions of the National Defence College Uganda and Senior Command and Staff College Kimaka are walking away with awards. We congratulate Brig. Flavia Byekaso, Brig. Gen. Ruteran and Col. Edith Nakalema and the entire security team upon this achievement. Makerere University is proud to partner with the UPDF and Uganda Police in their efforts to professionalise the disciplined forces. I also take this opportunity to thank your disciplined forces for keeping our Country safe.

**Partnership with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia bearing ripe fruits**

I extend my sincere gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through its Royal Embassy in Uganda as one of our development partners working with the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Makerere University. The Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, and Makerere University have worked on several projects including a grant that benefited close to a hundred students who received bursaries to study Arabic at Makerere University and ICT equipment which have supported the teaching of Arabic language in the School of Languages, Literature and Communication. We also acknowledge the generous support to our moslem staff to fulfil the fifth pillar of Islam- Pilgrim to Mecca. We are also grateful for the ongoing initiatives being made to establish the Centre for Arabic Language Studies at College of Humanities and Social Sciences, support training and research in Oil and Gas, ICT and Engineering.

**Associate Professor Susan Kiguli wins a Lifetime achievement-becoming the First African to win such an award**

On the global Scene, the College delivered the **First** African Recipient of the prestigious “Lifetime Achievement Award” in Italy at the Vercelli Seminar in August 2023. Makerere's Poet and Literary scholar, Associate Professor Susan Kiguli who denounces violence and abuse of power in the black context was at the centre of the festival and Chief guest. Kiguli’s first book in Italy titled, “The Weeping Lands” was published and launched fetching another prize called, the "Ali sul Mediterraneo Libri & Cultura” international award.”

**Dr. Lyn Ossome, Director of MISR elected President of CODESRIA (2023-2026)**

The University participated in the 16th Council for Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) General Assembly on 4th to 8th December 2023 which was held in Dakar, Senegal. The Deputy Vice Chancellor together with staff from College of Humanities and Social Sciences attended the General Assembly. Dr. Lynn Ossome, Director of MISR at Makerere University was elected the President of CODESRIA for the period 2023-2026. In addition, the University received a donation of **seventy-nine** **(79)** books from CODESRIA, which were delivered and presented to Makerere University Main Library.

1. **Launch of the Makerere University @100 book**

On the first day of the 74th graduation ceremony, the Minister of Education and Sports, Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni represented by Hon. John Muyingo launched the Makerere University Century Book. The book, **titled Makerere’s Century of Service to East Africa and Beyond: 1922-2022** tells our unique story as a university serving Uganda, East Africa and the world.

I thank the following editors: Prof. A.B. Kasozi, Prof. Josephine Ahikire, Prof. Dominica Dipio, Prof. Helen Byamugisha and Dr. Isaac Tibasiima for the commitment to this noble task. I am delighted to report that this book has been published by our very own Makerere University Press headed by Dr. William Tayeebwa. I also take this opportunity to thank Dr. Sam Siminyu, the outgoing Head of the Makerere University Press for a job well done. I equally thank the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs), Dr. Umar Kakumba, who coordinated the work in his capacity as the Chair of the Mak@100 Programmes Sub-committee.

1. **Makerere University Transcripts and Certificates**

I have the pleasure to announce that the academic transcripts for the 74th Graduation are ready and they are due for issuance to graduands who have satisfied the academic and financial obligations. I therefore urge all our graduands to pick their transcripts from their respective colleges at the end of this graduation ceremony.

1. **A Word to the Graduands**

I wish to repeat what I told graduands at yesterday’s ceremony. Graduation day is the most important and most memorable day in the life of any scholar. It is the day you are given a licence in the form of a degree, a licence that confirms that you have read enough books to be trusted intellectually, the only licence for which a person spends between16 and 18 years in the field in the search for knowledge. Indeed, it is not only a licence to succeed in life, it is a licence and a privilege to serve humanity. You have worked hard to get a degree from one of the best universities in the World. This is a license for you to succeed in whatever you choose to do in your life career. But always remember that success will only come with discipline, humility and hard work, while honoring your parents and fearing God. Shortly you will become an alumnus of this great institution. Cherish the knowledge and experiences you have collected while here, but remember that learning never ends. Our gates remain open for you if you wish to pursue higher degrees.

With a degree from one of the best universities in the World, you have no reason not to succeed in life. Indeed, the World is yours to conquer. If jobs are not forthcoming, create them, for we have empowered you not only to be employable, but also to be entrepreneurs. Be the light that others will follow. Resist temptations that may lead you to corruption, in other words, do not become a thief. Always carry yourself with confidence, and with dignity, and be guided by professional ethics. Let people know that you passed through the gates of Makerere successfully through your good deeds and not through self-acclamation. We are proud that we have been a part of your life, that we have given you the knowledge and courage to face life in this ever-changing World.

Go out to the World and make it a better place. Thank you very much for your attention, AS WE BUILD FOR THE FUTURE!

1. **APPRECIATION**

I would like to thank the Minister of Education and Sports, Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni who was represented by the Minister of State for Higher Education, for officiating at the opening session of this graduation ceremony. In the same vein I thank all the Government officials, religious leaders, parents and sponsors that have participated in this ceremony.

I wish to thank members of Council, Senate, Management, and members of staff for all the efforts in making the 74th graduation ceremony a success. I thank the Department of the Academic Registrar, led by Prof. Mukadasi Buyinza, and the ceremonies committee led by Prof. Bonabana for the tremendous work done in ensuring the success of this ceremony. I thank the Department of Performing Arts and the Uganda Police for entertaining the guests and the security agencies for ensuring the security of the ceremony. I thank all the service providers and the media for making this 74th graduation ceremony a memorable event for our graduands and their parents and sponsors. Above all, I thank the Good Lord for enabling us to conclude this week-long activity in peace and with excellent weather. God bless you ALL!

Thank you very much for your attention, AS WE BUILD FOR THE FUTURE!

**Signed:** ……………………………. **Date**: 2nd February, 2024

**VICE CHANCELLOR**