

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

CELEBRATIONS TO MARK TEN YEARS OF EXISTENCE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES AND THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE NEW WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES BUILDING ON MONDAY, JULY 22, 2002

SPEECH BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR, PROFESSOR P J M SSEBUWUFU

The Guest of Honour, Honourable Zoe Baroku Bakoko
Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development
Honourable Ministers and Members of Parliament
The Director General of NORAD, Ms Tove Strand
H.E. The Royal Norwegian Ambassador to Uganda
The Representatives of Sida/SAREC and the Royal Swedish
Embassy in Uganda
Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Academic and Administrative staff, Makerere University
Distinguished Guest, Students, Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the University management, I warmly welcome you
to this very special and significant occasion.

As we have all heard from the previous speakers, ten years ago,
the Department of Women and Gender Studies comfortably fitted
in a small room in the basement of the Social Sciences building.

One typewriter, three chairs and a box for a library were deemed sufficient for the 10 pioneer students and a small number of lecturers. What was once an invisible, ill equipped and meanly facilitated Women Studies Department has within ten years been transformed into a visible, effective, better-equipped and more populated Department.

Agencies and individuals that have contributed to this transformation deserve to be commended. The beauty of it all is that a good majority of the contributors are well represented here in person and attending the Women's World's Congress 2002.

Hosting the Congress is not only a significant achievement of this Department but also a clear testimony to the visibility of the Department on the world stage.

The Department has registered giant strides in the teaching of gender studies. Once a field unknown in Uganda, gender studies has, in a pace of ten years, become legitimised as an essential component of scholarship.

The cadre of professionals in the area of Gender and Development who have emerged from this Department are clearly making a significant mark in both the Government and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Equally significant is the impact this Department has begun to realise within the University through the gender mainstreaming process. Gender mainstreaming being a long term process of

changing attitudes, modifying practices, as well as reorientation of perceptions and approaches, the impact achieved so far is only a tip of the iceberg. There is no doubt the gender mainstreaming process has now been fully institutionalised within all University functions.

If I could be allowed to speculate further; if the current momentum and linkages within and beyond Uganda are further strengthened, the Department of Women and Gender Studies will be a vibrant centre of academic and practical excellence in the field of gender studies in this region within the next ten years.

I would like to particularly acknowledge the contribution given by Sida/SAREC, NORAD, USAID, the Fulbright Commission, the Commonwealth Secretariat to mention a few to the growth of the Department and indeed other areas in the University and the support towards the organisation of the Women's World's Congress 2002. I equally thank all other donors and the Women's Movement for the unwavering support to this young Department. Hon. Professor Victoria Mwaka, the first head of the Department and her pioneer staff and students deserve a special pat on the back. By taking a leap in the dark you truly built for the future of this Department. My predecessors, Professor Goerge B. Kirya and William Senteza-Kajubi; who had the vision to perceive and practical wisdom to initiate and operationalise the Department, also deserve a special thank you. In conclusion, I would like to thank all of you here who have made the effort to come from far and near to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Department of Gender Women Studies. To the donor organizations, thank you once again for your support and understanding of our needs. Your presence and support will continue to be an encouragement to the staff and students of this

Department for more hard work aimed for faster engendering of this country and the world.

I thank the Director General of NORAD, Ms Tove Strand for accepting to come and officially open this magnificent new building for the Department in person. The support of NORAD to this Department is indeed immense. I thank you for giving the Department an ultra modern home which is befitting such a premier Department. We shall make good use of the new building.

I thank you all.
