



RT HON AMAMA MBABAZI, PRIME MINISTER OF THE
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**OPENING REMARKS TO THE MAKERERE UNIVERSITY
MINI-STAKEHOLDERS MEETING**

3RD AUGUST 2012

SENATE CONFERENCE HALL

Hon Jessica Alupo, Minister of Education & Sports
Hon Dr. Chrysostom Miyingo, Minister of State for Higher Education
Professor Mondo Kagonyera, Chancellor
Eng. Dr Charles Wana Etyem, Chairperson of Council
Professor Venansius Baryamureeba, Ag Vice Chancellor
Development Partners and Makerere University's Key Stakeholders
Other Distinguished Alumni, Staff and students of Makerere University
Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am glad to be back to Makerere University my *Alma Mater*.

It is my expectation that this Stakeholders' Consultative Meeting organised by Makerere University will highlight issues in higher education that affect not only Makerere University but higher education in Uganda in general. At a cursory glance I see development partners, colleagues from Government and the private sector. This gives me great pleasure that partnerships are beginning to emerge between the academia and the public and private sectors. I am therefore pleased to note that one of the objectives of this meeting is to receive feedback from the University's Stakeholders, specifically from Government, Development Partners, and the Private sector

I note from the programme that the university is presenting its strategy to us as stakeholders. Universities should be felt as key players in the political, social and economic development both at national and global levels. By highlighting its contribution to the economic growth of the country, the Makerere University is moving towards establishing its relevance. The milestones achieved in health and agricultural research need to move beyond the classroom to the populace where they will create an impact on the livelihoods of the average Ugandan.

Credit also goes to our development partners; I have been informed that these have played a key role not only in funding for research but for the development

of research capacity; the enhancement of female participation in higher education, through the female scholarship initiative; gender mainstreaming, enhancing access to library resources and ICT as well as science and technology. As you support Makerere University you inevitably support government's programmes. May I request as the proverbial *Oliver Twist* that you continue with this support.

I commend the University for keeping abreast with the demands of a developing nation and for also initiating a number of projects and ventures, which have attracted international attention and led to collaborations with the development partners who are here today. This meeting emphasizes the importance of collaborations without which institutions cannot survive, No institution is an island, and we must therefore seek to work together in order to pool ideas and share experiences in order to attain excellence. May I also reiterate that we need to take this beyond Makerere University and embrace other universities, that way we create a vibrant higher education sector.

I would like to learn more about what other stakeholders think about the university strategy and indeed the transformations that have taken place in the sector particularly in Makerere University over the past two decades. I'm glad that today's meeting has made provisions for this.

From the government perspective we acknowledge the role of higher education in an increasing globalized environment. Indeed the National Development Plan which is the blue print for advancement in Uganda notes that higher education is the heart of education as well as the core of national innovation and development systems. Makerere University should respond to this challenge and generate the knowledge through research and provide skilled human resources that will champion development. As government therefore we envisage to increase the higher education gross enrolment ratio from the current 4.97 per cent to at least 15 per cent. This we believe will maintain Uganda's edge as a supplier/exporter of education in the region.

Our focus over the past decade has been on Universal Primary and Secondary education. But we realise that these need quality outlets if they are have meaningful impact on national development. We have therefore broadened scope to include post- secondary education.

I must add at this juncture that the government as a key player in the development drive is committed to supporting public universities since, as I already stated, they are avenues through which key components of development can be addressed. The government has therefore continued funding higher education and remains the biggest contributor to the universities including Makerere. Plans are underway to enable public institutions to access resources for infrastructure development. We anticipate that this resource from the African Development Bank will come on board by the FY2012/13. This is government attempt to address some of the challenges in public universities that have been characterized by over-crowded lecture rooms, dilapidated old infrastructures and meagre education facilities. Improving facilities will be the minimum requirement for universities in Uganda to claim a place in the global knowledge based economy.

The accountability concept as espoused in this stakeholders meeting is commendable. It provides an opportunity for government and other stakeholders to understand not only the challenges but also appreciate the prospects for investment in the higher education in Uganda. It gives the rare chance for collectively mapping out pathways for further advancement. I challenge Makerere University to take this forward; the ideas generated in this forum should be aggressively pursued. My belief is that this will affirm your vision to *be the leading institution for academic excellence and innovations in Africa*. What you receive in this meeting is valuable feedback and an institution that does not learn will surely die. It is my sincere hope that other institutions of government and particularly education institution can also pick a leaf from this practice.

I would like to reassure our partners that the political environment in Uganda is stable and that the conditions under which we have been working for the

last couple of decades that are conducive to development support will continue. The Government is committed to creating and sustaining an enabling environment in which all development projects will thrive. Our policy and belief is that security is a prerequisite for development and since it is the responsibility of the government to provide it, this will be done. I am therefore optimistic that Makerere University and all the other institutions will continue to receive support from our development partners with all the confidence that it will be optimally utilised.

I take this opportunity once again to welcome you for this stakeholders' consultative meeting which I believe is a very important event in the University. I therefore declare this workshop open and wish you fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.

For God and My Country

Rt Honourable Amama Mbabazi
Prime Minister