



REMARKS BY THE MAKERERE UNIVERSITY VICE-CHANCELLOR,

PROFESSOR JOHN DDUMBA-SSENTAMU

**DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST RESILIENCE INNOVATION CHALLENGE
4 ADVERSE CLIMATE EFFECTS GRANTS CALL AND OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE RESILIENTAFRICA NETWORK (RAN) INNOVATION LAB**

**VENUE: MAKERERE UNIVERSITY-RESILIENTAFRICA NETWORK (RAN)
INNOVATION LAB OFFICE PREMISES, PLOT 30, UPPER KOLOLO TERRACE**

DATE: 13TH AUGUST 2014

TIME: 2:30PM-6:00PM

- **Hon. Minister of Health, Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda**
- **The Chancellor Makerere University, Prof. George Mondo Kagonyera**
- **The Division Chief, Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN), U.S. Global Development Lab/USAID, Dr. Ticora. V. Jones**
- **The Ag. Deputy U.S. Mission Director, Ms. Jo Lesser Oltheten**
- **Members of Makerere University Management**
- **The Dean, School of Public Health and Chief of Party ResilientAfrica Network, Prof. William Bazeyo**
- **Members of Staff and Students, Makerere University**
- **Scholars present from other Universities and Institutions of Higher Learning**
- **Gallant Exhibitors**
- **The Media**
- **Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:**

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On behalf of Makerere University, I welcome you all to Uganda’s premier institution of higher learning. I thank you for honouring the invitation to this occasion and making it very meaningful not only to Makerere University but also the entire community that we serve.

In a special way, we welcome Dr. Ticora V. Jones, Division Chief of the Higher Education Solutions Network [HESN]. We are most honoured by your personal presence here today as we launch the first Resilience Innovation Challenge for Adverse Climate Effects Grants Call and the official opening of the ResilientAfrica Network Innovation Lab at Makerere University. We thank you and the Higher Education Solutions Network for your sincere and dedicated support.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are privileged to be joined by the Ag. Deputy U.S. Mission Director, Ms. Jo Lesser Oltheten. We thank her and the Mission for the continued support to Makerere University. We welcome our Chief Guest today for being here with us on this important occasion.

Your presence shows the passion you have for innovation, which is paramount for the progress of any society. Thank you for loving Makerere University and always identifying with us in all aspects.

There are several projects at Makerere University, including ResilientAfrica Network (RAN), which have immensely contributed to our success and visibility as one of the best Universities on the African continent in terms of teaching, learning, research and innovation.

The impact of such initiatives within the communities will remain a great legacy of Makerere University.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) is led by Makerere University through the School of Public Health. It is one of the eight development labs within the USAID-funded Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN). It is a partnership targeting 20 African Universities in 16 countries. **The Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) is composed of 8 development labs, 7 based in the U.S. while Makerere University is the ONLY lab based in Africa.** This is a big achievement for Makerere University and we are indeed very proud.

The focus of the ResilientAfrica Network is on strengthening the capacities of at-risk communities to withstand natural and man-made disasters, presenting as shocks and stresses. One of the core objectives of the project is to strengthen resilience to natural and man-made shocks and stresses at the individual, household, and community levels through innovative technologies and approaches to development. These innovative technologies and approaches are incubated and scaled through the Resilience Innovation Lab in collaboration with its partners.

Today, we are gathered to witness the launch of the ResilientAfrica Network's first Resilience Innovation Challenge for Adverse Climate Effects (RIC4ACE) and the official opening of the ResilientAfrica Network (RAN) Innovation Lab.

The ResilientAfrica Network's first Resilience Innovation Challenge for Adverse Climate Effects Grants Call focuses on sourcing, developing and scaling innovative technologies and approaches that will strengthen resilience to shocks and stresses arising from climate change.

This is one of the activities directly aimed at contributing to the theme of **Achieving Vision 2040: Innovations to Accelerate Uganda's Social-Economic Transformation.** We are indeed proud as Makerere University to be a forefront stakeholder in the mission to develop ideas and knowledge that will lead to the achievement of the national development plan as outlined in Vision 2040.

The Innovation Lab being launched today is a timely asset to the University because we are now focusing on avenues of ensuring that more innovators, students and faculties engage in relevant research and innovation activities to respond to community challenges.

The Lab will provide an opportunity for all of us to interact and engage with local and international partners including Microsoft, Google, Agricultural incubators, financial institutions and Innovators in the Silicon Valley, among others. I therefore appeal to all experts in your various fields present here to avail your time, knowledge and skills to mentor the innovators under this Innovation Lab.

Makerere University has benefited from US funding for research, human capacity strengthening and institutional/infrastructural development. In particular, the United States Agency for International Development [USAID] has been a friend of Makerere University through programmes such as: Leadership Initiative for Public Health in East Africa (LIPHEA), the Walter Reed Programme (MUWRP), the Avian Influenza/Pandemic Influenza (AIPI) programme, One Health Central and Eastern Africa, to mention but a few. We wish therefore to greatly appreciate the generous support from USAID, which has been key in helping us confront some of the pressing challenges of our society.

We wish to re-assure you and all our Development Partners, that despite any challenges that may exist, Makerere University is committed to ensuring our shared goals and greatly values all its partnerships.

In addition, we appreciate Government's support to Makerere University through the Presidential Initiative for Science, Technology and Innovation, among others. This support continues to enable us create, develop, and utilise knowledge for the transformation of livelihoods.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am glad to inform you that Makerere University is fully committed to ensuring success of the various initiatives that we are undertaking, including the ResilientAfrica Network project. We are equally focused on availing high quality learning and teaching resources, and are endeavouring to improve the quality of the learning environment as well as services to all our stakeholders. This will go a long way in improving the research status of our nation and its ability to deal with emerging challenges that threaten the enhancement of livelihoods. At this moment, allow me to thank the Exhibitors for a job well done.

It is my pleasure to note, at this moment, that Makerere University has initiated a drive to fully develop its land in prime locations, through public private partnerships.

I am happy to note that the College of Health Sciences is actively involved in spearheading this initiative, which will help Makerere University to achieve some of its key objectives, through utilising all its resources to increase financial sustainability. We welcome all of you to help us in this mission.

Once again, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for honouring our invitation to this event. Let us all work together to develop **“Solutions through Innovation”** as we **“Build for the Future”**.

It is now my privilege and humble duty to invite the Chancellor of Makerere University, Prof. George Mondo Kagonyera, to share additional words of wisdom. Thank you.