

**REMARKS BY THE MAKERERE UNIVERSITY VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROF. JOHN
DDUMBA SSENTAMU AT THE LAUNCH OF RESILIENTAFRICA NETWORK**

IN THE

KAMPALA SHERATON HOTEL, RWENZORI BALL ROOM

ON

TUESDAY 4TH JUNE 2013

TIME 1:00-6:00 PM

Prime Minister, Rt. Hon Amama Mbabazi

Chancellor, Professor Mondo Kagonyera,

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners here present

USAID Mission here present

Ministers and Members of Parliament,

Governor Bank of Uganda,

Distinguished Alumni of Makerere here present

Staff and students of Makerere University

ResilientAfrica Network Team

All Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of Makerere University and on my own behalf, I welcome you all to the launch of ResilientAfrica Network.

I congratulate the College of Health Sciences (Makerere University School of Public Health) for having worked hard and won the Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN) USAID award of \$25Million and making Makerere University the Only African University among all the HESN winners, the other Six originating from USA. We all pride in you. I am particularly happy to learn that this project, will harness local innovation, to not only prevent and manage disasters in the communities but also rehabilitate these communities after a disaster. In addition, I note that this will involve a multi-disciplinary approach, thus involving several colleges in the University and partnership with the private sector. This is in line with the University's strategic direction that is "Makerere University to respond to local problems using local solutions". I also note that the School of Public Health will be working with 20 other Universities in 16 African Countries.

Your Excellencies, Makerere University has a rich and attractive history. Established in January 1922 as a humble technical school with 14 day students, on 4th August of the same year, the school transformed into a College, and continued to grow to become one of the leading universities in East Africa. To date, the University has over 40,000 students enrolled in different academic disciplines and two up-country campuses in Jinja and Fort-Portal. Over the 90 years of her existence, Makerere University has significantly contributed to the transformation of society through training and nurturing quality human resource personnel. These gallant Alumni have not only excelled in their respective fields, but have also gone on to serve at national, regional and international levels.

Distinguished guests, Makerere University was voted by the people of Uganda-the best public University of the Year in appreciation and recognition of her contribution towards attainment of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals in Uganda. The survey was conducted by the Public Opinions Inc, and we received the award at a colourful ceremony held on 22nd March 2013.

Makerere has throughout her 90 years of existence forged strong partnerships, which have proved extremely valuable in institutional capacity building. I strongly believe that Makerere University has continued to grow because we value every partnership and collaboration. For example, over 50 years partnership between Makerere University and the Government of Norway. We dedicated 6th March 2013 to celebrate the decades of cooperation, and at the same occasion, we officially launched The Norwegian Programme for Capacity-Building in Higher Education and Research for Development (NORHED). The NORHED programme, estimated worth NOK 150million, and particularly focusing on South-South University collaborations, will go a long way in finding common solutions through high level research collaborations amongst Universities in the region. This, we believe, will be an unprecedented way of changing lives and skyrocketing development in the region.

On 21st February 2013, Makerere University celebrated 25 years of inter-continental university collaboration with the University of Bergen, Norway. Through this collaboration focusing on the promotion of multi-disciplinary approaches in research , the staff undertake joint research programmes, which have further improved the quality of our research findings and outputs. I am happy to mention that with th discovery of oil

in Uganda, the Makerere University College of Natural Sciences in collaboration with the University of Bergen, Norway are developing Master of Science programmes in petroleum geosciences to train vital Human Resource for Uganda's nascent oil and gas industry.

Through the Presidential Science Initiative, H.E The President of Uganda, committed UGX.25billion to support research and innovations in science-based colleges at Makerere University. The funding has also helped Makerere to put up state-of-the-art teaching and research laboratories to stimulate scientific innovations. On Saturday 4th August 2012, the President of the Republic of Uganda and Visitor of Makerere University, H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni launched the year-long celebrations commemorating the University's 90 year journey of building for the future. The President, in appreciation of the quality of exhibitions and innovations displayed by staff and students, pledged a revolving fund to support student innovations.

Makerere University has also embarked on a strategic research journey with the Government of Israel. H.E Gil Haskel, Israel's Ambassador to East Africa visited Makerere University on Wednesday 24th April 2013, to cement Makerere/Government of Uganda and Israel's efforts in the promotion of science and technology, research and development. Courtesy of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Makerere University and Bar Ilan University-one of the leading universities in Israel signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 5th April 2013 The MoU is aimed at promoting academic exchange and cooperation between universities, staff development and training, upgrading of

Makerere University's laboratory and research facilities modeled on Bar-Ilan University's state-of-the-art research laboratories, technological research and development (R&D), and innovations facilities. The collaboration will bring on board Bar-Ilan's Faculties of Exact Sciences; Life Sciences; Medicine; and Engineering while the Makerere University consortium will comprise the Colleges of Health Sciences; Engineering, Design, Art and Technology; and Natural Sciences.

We are therefore equally happy that the Launch of the Resilient Africa Network today, 4th June 2013, brings on board 20 African universities focused on strengthening the capacities of vulnerable communities to withstand natural and man-made stresses. As we focus on the internationalization of Makerere University, I am glad that the Resilient Africa Network (Solutions through Innovation) connects our University to other Universities in Africa through innovation hubs, thus further bringing in collaboration and harnessing of ideas from the African continent.

Makerere has grown to appreciate the synergies that come with collaborations between academia in universities. These synergies have been and still are fertile grounds for breakthroughs in research. For example Johns Hopkins University in partnership with Makerere University conducted research, which led to the development of Nevirapine drug an inhibitor used to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS. The Makerere University College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology took part in the Vehicle Design Summit (VDS) 2006; a brainchild of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) which brought together 27 universities from across the globe to build

a hybrid car; one that could work on both electricity and fuel. These engagements inspired the College Staff and Students to develop their own and Uganda's first electric car-the Kiira EV, and have embarked on developing a 45 seater Kayoola Bus aimed at providing public transport to Ugandans.

- We are therefore glad that the ResilientAfrica Network, a consortium of 20 African universities, is also here now to further identify, incubate and scale up the students innovations to benefit the communities. What matters is, what impact you create in the community but not what you do for the community. I urge all of you to rally behind this yet unique and well thought out network for the benefit of the entire Africa. To the USAID team and potential partners here present, I take this opportunity to assure you that we have qualified and committed human resources. The University has over 500 members of staff with Doctorates (PhDs) in different disciplines ready to undertake research.

I sincerely thank our development partners, the US Government, Rockefeller Foundation, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, for the unconditional love and generous support to Makerere University. We are very grateful.

Let all of us find wisdom in the great words of John F. Kennedy and I quote: "*And so, my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country*", *Ladies and Gentlemen, Partners in Development* ask not what Makerere University can do for you; ask what you can do for Makerere University.

Let us get those great students ideas out of the Universities to benefit the communities.

As we build for the future; For God and My Country; I thank you.

It is now my honor and pleasure to invite Professor George Mondo Kagonyera, the Chancellor of Makerere University, to address us.