

FRIENDS OF MAKERERE IN CANADA, INC. (FOMAC)

ANNUAL REPORT 2011/2012

GENERAL

Friends of Makerere in Canada, Inc. (FOMAC) presents herewith a brief report for 2011/2012. This past year has been one of challenges and disappointments, largely due to the dwindling donations and the inability of the Executive to attract alternative sources of funds. Consequently projects have stalled. Nevertheless the Executive Committee continues to function well, meets on a regular basis and has fulfilled its financial and constitutional mandates. Contacts have been maintained with the stakeholders, including the Makerere University administration and the FOMAC branch in Kampala. Due to a lack of action from the usual sources in Uganda, a new channel of communication has been opened up with the office of the Director of Investments. The directorate has assumed responsibilities for alumni activities. It has undertaken to review and give guidance on new approaches as regards our projects, including the Friendship House, which has been dormant for a while.

FOMAC has resurrected another of its most important projects - the Staff Development Award. Following an exhaustive examination of relevant documents, a decision has been taken by the Executive Committee to award a fellowship to an African Researcher and Lecturer from the Strathmore University in Nairobi, Kenya. He is co-sponsored by his university. He will undertake an eight month research assignment at the University of Windsor, Ontario, Canada. FOMAC believes that the research outcomes will be beneficial to not only Strathmore University and Makerere but also to other social scientists and academics. The fellowship commences in January 2013.

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY BECOMES A NONAGENERIAN?

If Makerere University were human, he/she would be called a nonagenarian! For this year the University celebrates its 90th anniversary, making it one of the oldest universities on the African continent. It gives FOMAC much pleasure and joy to join the Makerere family, at home and around the world, in celebrating this great achievement. We congratulate this erstwhile institution on its successes and resilience over the years, in the face of many trials and tribulations. Its positive contribution to the academic, social, economic and political developments in the whole region of Eastern Africa cannot be denied.

Makerere's journey has been long and challenging. Established in 1922 by the British colonial administration, originally to train civil servants, it was at first a technical school. Later it was upgraded and renamed Uganda Technical College, offering courses in carpentry, building and mechanics. Soon it added courses in medical care, agriculture,

veterinary sciences and teacher training. It grew and expanded in subsequent years until 1937 when it became a true centre of higher learning and offered post-secondary education in various academic fields. In 1949 Makerere became a University College affiliated to the University of London and offering general degrees of the University of London. In keeping with the major political developments occurring in the region, in 1963 the University of East Africa was created. Makerere University College became a constituent of the University of East Africa. Finally in July 1970, Makerere became a fully-fledged national university, offering undergraduate and postgraduate courses. It remained the sole university in Uganda until 1988 when the first private university, the Islamic University in Uganda, was established. Since the 1970s Makerere grew rapidly, in terms of the diversity of courses and research offered as well as in student numbers. Recently it moved from a faculty-based institution to a collegiate, with 9 constituent Colleges and one School, all operating as semi-autonomous units of the university. Currently the student enrolment stands at 34,694 (19,427 males and 15,267 females). Included in the numbers are 1146 international students. There are 4,123 staff members. According to the university administration, Makerere has accelerated its offer of innovative teaching, learning, research and services, as it responds to national and global challenges.

A NEW VICE CHANCELLOR IS APPOINTED

After three years and many months of rigmarole and confusion, Makerere, finally, has a substantive Vice Chancellor. **Professor John Ddumba-Ssentamu** was installed as Vice Chancellor in August 2012. The Vice Chancellor is elected by the University Council, on the recommendation of the University Senate. He is then appointed by the Chancellor of the university. Initially there were nine candidates, including the Acting Vice Chancellor, Professor Venansius Baryamureba.

Vice Chancellor John Ddumba -Ssentamu has been Professor of Economics. He holds a PhD in Economics from Makerere University, a Masters in Economics from the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, and Bachelors in the same field from Makerere. For over a period of almost thirty years Prof. Ddumba-Ssentamu has served Makerere in various capacities. He was Associate Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Head of Economics Department, Director, Makerere Institute of Economics, Dean, Faculty of Economics and Management, and Member of Senate representing the School of Economics and Vice Chairman of the University's Change Management Committee. He has 30 publications to his name. He has served as an external examiner at the University of Waterloo (Canada), University of Legon (Ghana), Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (Ghana) and University of Dar es Salaam (Tanzania). Internationally Prof Ddumba-Ssentamu has served as a consultant to such agencies as UNDP, FAO, WFP & WHO.

In his new capacity Vice Chancellor Ddumba-Ssentamu will be responsible for the administrative, academic and financial affairs of the university. He will also be the primary

link between the university and the government as well as the public and academic institutions, locally and internationally. He becomes the chair of the University Senate, the University Management Committee and a Member of the University Council.

The Vice Chancellor has promised not to wreck the boat but to continue the positive reforms initiated by his predecessor. He plans to improve the University's governance, corporate image, financial controls, and promote positive relationships with all the stake holders as well as the media. In academic matters Prof. Ddumba -Ssentamu has vowed to improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as the quality and output of research activities.

The University Council has also confirmed the appointment of two Deputies:
The Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs is **Professor Lillian Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza**
The Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration is **Dr. Sandy Stevens Tickodri-Togboa**.

FOMAC has welcomed the appointment of Prof. Ddumba-Ssentamu and of his Deputies and has sent congratulations and best wishes.

THE EMERGENCE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA - A COMMENT

The media in Kenya reported recently that three Kenyan applicants for the posts of Inspector-General of Police and Deputies were disqualified. Their credentials were not recognised by the Commission for Higher Education in Kenya (CHE). It turns out these candidates were graduates of the Kampala International University (KIU) in Uganda, one of the most popular private universities in East Africa. Apparently KIU has been operating for some years without accreditation by the regulatory body in Uganda, the National Council for Higher Education. According to CHE Kenya could not recognise certificates from an institution that is not chartered. This situation has put at risk thousands of students who graduated from KIU in the last ten years or so. The regulatory body in Uganda has stopped all graduations at KIU.

This has set us wondering and questioning: what are the roles and responsibilities of private universities in East Africa? Why have they mushroomed?

The concept of private universities is fairly new in East Africa. Until the 1980s, in Uganda and in most E. African countries, university education was considered a public good - provided freely by public institutions, such as Makerere. Public universities had a near monopoly in providing higher education. However, when it became clear that public universities could not satisfy the increased demand for higher education due to increased populations, private universities began to emerge and to fill the gap. This phenomenon

exhibited itself clearly beginning in the 80s and early 90s. Rapid population growth, in the midst of declining budgetary allocations for higher education resulted in unmet needs in terms of demands for higher education. For example in Uganda, the share of the education budget devoted to public universities declined from 24% in 1990/1991 to 11% in 2000/2001. Hence high demand for higher education has stimulated the establishment of private universities. As a result private higher education sector has expanded fast. Today in Uganda there are 22 private universities, as compared to 5 public universities. These private institutions have enrolled large numbers of students who would otherwise have missed out. The numbers vary from about 100 in 1980s to about 138,000 by 2006. The biggest contribution of these universities is that they are able to provide higher education at a minimal cost to the public.

The question, however, is: what is the real reason for the proliferation of private universities? Is it to provide higher education for the sake of it?

The reality is, at least in Uganda, that higher education has become commercialised. These private universities function more or less like commercial entities. They are there to make money for their owners while they provide substandard education to their students. They depend largely on student tuition fees. They absorb large numbers of students who fail to qualify for public universities. They have insufficient facilities and funding, they rely on part-time teaching staff and have low academic standards. They are regarded with disdain by the mainstream academic community. Besides, some have operated with impunity and without regard to accreditation by the regulatory authority, as the example of Kampala International University has shown. How many KIUs are there? Students are in peril and those who allegedly graduate are not recognised by the educational authorities and are unlikely to find employment in the present competitive workplace. The real dilemma is, should they be allowed to exist at all without rigorous quality control and does the state have the capacity to police them?

These are the bad apples. They are bad for society. However, as always there are some good ones. They may be classified as "elite." These are private institutions that were mostly established by the major religious groups. In Uganda, for example, you have the Anglican (Uganda Christian University, Mukono), Catholic (Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi), Islam (the Islamic University in Uganda, Mbale) and Seventh Day Adventist (Bugema University). These universities are relatively well off because they are able to mobilise resources from external sources. They offer qualitatively superior higher education and have qualitatively superior faculty. They have better facilities and students are chosen selectively.

Nevertheless one might ask again: what was the motive of the founders? Was it dissatisfaction with conditions in public universities, such as overcrowding and relatively

poor quality of education? Or was it a strategy to expand and exert their respective social influences as a means to achieve their ulterior religious motives?

In the coming months FOMAC will examine more closely the impacts of the deregulation policies in various African countries. While some of these policies have led to the emergence of the private higher education sector or to the commercialisation of higher education, it is not yet clear what the long term effects will be on state support for public institutions like Makerere, and what will be the roles and responsibilities of these private institutions in ensuring the effective provision of high quality education, training, research and technology to address the 21st century development challenges.

SOME NOTEWORTHY DEVELOPMENTS AT MAKERERE

Technical Experimentation and Innovation

Various units of the university are engaged in practical research and experimentation in different fields. For example (i) the design and production of a low-cost irrigation pump in agriculture

(ii) Researching the role of natural products in health care delivery by showcasing herbal/medicinal products in the treatment of cancer and diabetes

(iii) Extending HIV/AIDS & TB testing and counseling with a view to increasing accessibility.

Nobel Peace Prize Associates

It is little known outside Makerere University that two of its faculty members in Science were participants in the scientific work leading to the award of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007. The Prize was shared between the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), a scientific body of the UN and former US Vice President Al Gore. **Professor Tom Otiti** (Department of Physics) was part of a team of researchers from Africa, US, China and Russia who conducted a project for IPCC on how to effectively circulate the best environmental sound technologies in the world. Prof Otiti has been a member of the IPCC for 15 years and has taken part in publishing special reports on topics relevant to the implementation of the UN Convention on Climate Change.

On his part, **Associate Professor Charles Basalirwa** (Department of Geography) was part of a team of eight members from Africa who produced a report on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability of climate change in Africa.

FOMAC congratulates these brilliant scholars.

The Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN)

Makerere University has been chosen, alongside seven leading American universities, to participate in a new ground breaking partnership that engages students, faculty, staff and universities in solving international development challenges. Known as the Higher Education Solutions Network (HESN), it was launched recently by the United States Agency for

International Development (USAID). HESN proposes to develop more result-driven, effective, efficient, cost effective and accessible development solutions. The universities participating are: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of California - Berkeley, Michigan State University, Drake University, Texas A & M University, The College of William & Mary and Makerere University. The launch was attended by the Chancellor of Makerere, Professor George Mondo Kagonyera.

According to information supplied by USAID, each university will establish development labs that will work with USAID field mission agents and Washington staff to apply science and technology to define and solve key problems, in areas such as global health, food security and chronic conflict. USAID plans to spend US \$27 million across the 7 institutions to establish these labs.

Special ICT Training by the Chinese giant HUAWAI

Makerere has been offered scholarships and specialised training in ICT by HUAWAI, a leading global Information and Communication Technology (ICT) service provider.

Makerere's top performing students will be trained and provided with specialised ICT skills at HUAWAI CENTRES in various countries as well as at HUAWAI University in China. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with Makerere's College of Computing and Information Technology, as part of HUAWAI's "global knowledge transfer programme."

TOTAL Petroleum Company

Makerere University stands to gain from a new relationship with the French petroleum giant TOTAL. A Memorandum of Understanding signed recently provides for the company to assist in providing high quality training and internship for graduates in Civil and Electrical Engineering. Selected students will be offered high level training at the French Institute of Petroleum, with a view to preparing them to practise their skills in the oil industry.

Latest Ranking of Universities in the East Africa Region

According to the latest survey conducted by CPS Research International, between April and October 2012, Makerere University Business School was ranked the best in East Africa, in terms of using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to teach and communicate between faculty and students. Strathmore University in Nairobi and Uganda's Busitema University came second and third respectively. The object of the survey was to assess the extent to which higher education Institutions in the East African region have embraced the use of ICT. Altogether 250 universities and colleges were surveyed in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi. Makerere came up 7th while the University of Nairobi was 8th.

In a different kind of ranking, according to a study by Martin Prosperity Institute of the US, Uganda has been ranked among the top three countries with advanced technology and innovation capabilities in Africa. According to this study Uganda is second only to South Africa, followed by Madagascar. According to the authors of the study, the research focused on how each country was performing in terms of research and development, scientific and engineering research and the level of innovation.

Bereavement

Professor Jethro Ariko Opolot, a well-known and highly respected former Professor and Head of the Department of Education Psychology at Makerere, passed away in June 2012, from natural causes. He was 79. Although Prof. Opolot had retired from Makerere after several decades of teaching and researching, he continued to teach at the Christian University in Mukono and at the Kampala International University. He was buried at his ancestral home in Serere, Soroti District.

FOMAC extends heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and to his friends and colleagues.

Winnipeg, Manitoba

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