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#### **MAKERERE UNIVERSITY CELEBRATES 90 YEARS**

If Makerere University were human, he/she would be a nonagenarian! For this year the University celebrates its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary, making it one of the oldest and most prestigious universities in Africa. It gives FOMAC much pleasure and joy to join the Makerere family in Canada 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. Makerere's tremendous contribution to the academic, social, economic and political developments in the whole region of Eastern Africa cannot be denied.

Makerere's historical journey has been long and challenging. Established in 1922 by the British colonial administration as a technical school to largely train civil servants, it was later 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 Centre for Higher Education in East Africa 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, including the political independence of Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, in 1961, 1962 and 1963, respectively, the University of East Africa was created in 1963. Makerere University College became a constituent member of the University of East Africa, and remained so until July 1970 when it 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.

Makerere has grown rapidly since the 70s, in terms of the diversity of the academic programmes 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 is diversifying as it offers innovative teaching, learning and research services, and is responding well to national and global challenges.

## **MAKERERE HAS A NEW VICE CHANCELLOR**

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 an impressive profile. He 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 a 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 liaison between the university and the national 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.

On taking office the Vice Chancellor has promised to continue the forward-looking and progressive reforms introduced by his predecessor. In addition he says he will improve the University's governance, corporate image, financial controls, and promote positive relationships with all the stake holders and the media. In academic matters Prof. Ddumba - Ssentamu has vowed to improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as pay particular attention to research and development.

The University Council has also confirmed the appointment of two Deputies:

**Professor Lillian Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza** becomes Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs while **Dr. Sandy Stevens Tickodri-Togboa** becomes Deputy Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration.

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

## **SOME NOTEWORTHY DEVELOPMENTS AT MAKERERE**

### **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 up to US\$27 million across the seven institutions to establish these laboratories.

### **Technical Experimentation and Innovation**

Various units of Makerere 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, and

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

### **Nobel Peace Prize Connections**

It is little known outside of Makerere University that two of its faculty members in Science were participants in the scientific work that led 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 United Nation 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 successfully conducted projects 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 a member of a team of eight from Africa who produced reports on impacts, adaptation and vulnerability of climate change in Africa, as part of IPCC scientific work. FOMAC congratulates these brilliant scholars.

### **Special ICT Training by the Chinese giant HUAWEI**

Makerere has been offered scholarships and specialised training in ICT by HUAWEI, 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 HUAWEI CENTRES in various countries as well as at HUAWEI University in China. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed recently with Makerere's College of Computing and Information Technology, as part of HUAWEI'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 training at the French Institute of Petroleum, with a view to preparing them to practise their skills in the nascent oil industry in Uganda.

### **Latest Ranking of Universities in the East African 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 7<sup>th</sup> while the University of Nairobi was 8<sup>th</sup>.

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 private universities - Uganda Christian University, Mukono and 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.

### **FOMAC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)**

The Annual General Meeting of FOMAC was held on Saturday, November 24, 2012, at the United Way Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba. It was cold, snowy and windy, but the business went on methodically.

The AGM reviewed the state of the organisation and noted that the past year had been one of challenges and disappointments, largely due to the dwindling resources. Individual donations have slackened and the organization has not found alternative sources of funding. Consequently projects have stalled. Nevertheless, FOMAC has revived one of its cherished projects, namely, the Staff Development Award Scheme. FOMAC has selected and will sponsor a lecturer from Strathmore University in Nairobi, Kenya, to undertake an eight-month Research Fellowship at the University of Windsor, in Windsor, Ontario, starting in January 2013. On completion the researcher will return to teach and continue research work at Strathmore and other institutions in East Africa.

The AGM adopted the Annual Report as well as the Audited Report and Accounts for the 2011/2012 financial year. It also re-appointed the Auditors, Craig & Ross, Chartered Accountants.

The two-year term of Office of the Executive Committee came to an end. The AGM is mandated by the constitution to elect new officials. After much discussion and consideration the AGM decided to maintain the status quo. The current Executive Committee was re-elected en bloc. It will be composed as follows:

President/ Chairperson - Mr. Wilson Okwenje

Treasurer - Mr. Peter Luzige

Secretary - Dr. Martin Nyachoti  
Committee Member - Mr. Andre' Doumbe

The AGM authorised the Executive Committee to co-opt more members as it deemed necessary.

## **THE EMERGENCE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN AFRICA**

One of the subjects discussed at FOMAC's AGM was the emergence of private sector institutions in the provision of higher education in African countries and the implications thereof. Historically the concept of private universities is relatively new in East Africa. For example, 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 post-secondary education. However, when it became apparent that public institutions could no longer satisfy the increased demand for higher education, due partly to increased populations, private institutions began to emerge and to fill the gap. This phenomenon coincided unfortunately with the drastic decline in the national budgetary allocations for higher education. There were clearly unmet needs in terms of popular demands for higher education, which in turn fueled the establishment of private universities. For example in Uganda, there was only one national university, Makerere, until the 1980s. However between then and now the number of universities has grown from one to 27. Only 5 are public universities. While these private institutions are able to provide higher education at a minimal cost to the public, it is not clear whether they are truly in the business for the sake of education.

The reality is that a large majority of them are more or less commercial entities. They are there basically to make profits 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 depend on part-time teaching staff and have low academic standards. They are regarded with disdain by the mainstream academic community. Unfortunately some have even operated without accreditation by the regulatory authority. The Kampala International University was recently revealed to have done exactly that.

The big question is: what is the role and responsibility of these private institutions? How are they regulated and is anyone paying sufficient attention to the type and quality of education they provide or the knowledge, skills and values they impart? Are they doing a good job of preparing graduates for rewarding careers or are their students in peril? Should they be allowed to operate without effective mechanisms for regulatory and quality control?

This assessment does not include faith-based universities, such as Uganda Christian University, Mukono or Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi. These are the good apples among bad ones. They provide good quality education, have relatively good facilities, they are well funded and are able to mobilise resources from external sources

The AGM discussed at length the issues surrounding the private universities and decided that deeper research and analysis were required. The FOMAC Executive was requested to take the lead in convening a small group of interested educators. They should examine the impacts of policy deregulation in the provision of higher education in Africa and the consequent emergence of private sector institutions. What effects have they had on state support for public institutions? What are their short-term as well as long-term impacts on the students, the citizens, and the nations? Are they preparing their students sufficiently for the competitive global economy? The expectation is that the suggestions and recommendations that emerge will be shared widely.

## **FUNDRAISING**

As a non-profit organization, FOMAC relies for funding almost entirely on private and personal donations, membership and annual fees. These have been slow in coming. We wish to take this opportunity to appeal to everyone to consider a donation to FOMAC especially as the holidays loom large.

For more information about FOMAC and its activities please feel free to visit our website: [www.friendsofmakerere.ca](http://www.friendsofmakerere.ca)

We wish you all Happy Holidays

Wilson Okwenje  
President of FOMAC  
[wokwenje@mts.net](mailto:wokwenje@mts.net)

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