

Makerere University Flags off 31 Agriculture students to Israel



ON OCTOBER 3, 2013

AT

CoBAMS CONFERENCE HALL

A report compiled by the College Communication Officer to the Principal CAES

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1.0 Highlights

- ❖ Makerere flags off 31 Agriculture students to Israel for paid internship
- ❖ Students advised on discipline and to keep the image of Makerere and Uganda
- ❖ President pledges to reward students who get at least 75% mark by doubling their saving using the Youth Fund
- ❖ Education Ministry to clear 5500 US Dollar bill for students who had failed to raise money for their air tickets.
- ❖ Makerere Chancellor implores government to plan for agricultural graduates, revisit the Universal Education and Graduated tax policy and hold a national education stakeholders dialogue to address the teachers plight.
- ❖ Makerere top Managers plead with government to take over its wage bill

1.2 Introduction:

On 4th-5th April 2013 Makerere University Uganda and Bar Ilan University Israel signed a Memorandum of Understanding of collaboration towards students and staff training in Bar Ilan University, upgrade Makerere's research facilities, Post Doctoral and staff exchange, scientific cooperation and joint conferences and workshops. Further, the MoU is prompting Uganda's Socio economic transformation by jointly seeking funding for purposes of scientific research and Development (R&D), innovations and technological cooperation among others.

It is within this background that Makerere University students were going to be part of the Israel Agro studies International Internship program. This is the first time Makerere University and Uganda as a country is taking part in the program. The program has been running for the last nine years concentrating mainly on developing countries in Asia and Latin America. It was introduced in Africa in 2012. Other African countries taking part are Rwanda, Togo, Ivory Coast Burkinafaso and Kenya.

The objectives of the Israel Agro studies internship program are to enhance student's theoretical education and practical skills, on actual agricultural production system and expose students to modern ways of farming.

The program is an 11 month paid apprenticeship. Israel government gives students a comprehensive medical insurance for the entire period of internship. The students receive a salary for the work they do on the farms and the farm caters for their accommodation and upkeep in Israel. In addition each student receives a laptop.

After every course, there is an exam in which the student gets a grade. The Agro studies assess the student's performance both in the field and theory and awards a diploma from Agro studies and Ministry of Agriculture at the end of the internship.

On October 3, 2013 Makerere University flagged off 31 students to Israel on a one year paid internship. 26 students were second years undertaking BSc. Agric and BSc. Horticulture from the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, 3 graduates from the same college and 2 students from Busitema University.

The function was presided over by the Minister of Education and Sports Hon. Jessica Alupo on behalf of the President of the Republic of Uganda at a colourful ceremony held at the CoBAMS, Conference room . This report highlights what transpired.

1.3 Attendance:

The Function was graced by officials from the Ministry of Education led by the Minister of Education and Sports Hon. Jessica Alupo and was attended by Makerere University top management including the Chancellor Prof. Mondo Kagonyera, the Chairman Council, Dr. Wana Etyem, the Deputy Vice Chancellor Finance and Administration Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, among others. Others were Christians from Israel, Management and staff of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences and other University Administration staff.

1.4 Program

8:30 Students gather at CoBAMS

8:45 Invited Guests take seats

9:00 Chief Guest Arrives at CoBAMS

9:05 National Anthem

9:10 Opening Prayer

9:15 Opening Remarks: Mr. George Piwang-Jalobo, Research Fellow, Task Force on Job Evaluation, Re-organisation of Staff Structure and Financing of Makerere University

9:30 5-minute video of the Apprenticeship in Israel

9:35 a.m. - 11:50 p.m. Speeches:

- Genesis/Background to the Internship-Prof. Francis G. Omaswa
- Remarks by Deans School of Agricultural Sciences
- Remarks from Principal CAES
- Remarks by Vice Chancellor, Makerere University
- Remarks by the Council Chair Makerere University
- Remarks by the Chancellor, Makerere University
- Speech by Guest of Honour

11:50 Presenting the Small Uganda Flag to Each Student -Guest of Honour

12:20 Presenting the Uganda Flag to the Student Leader-Guest of Honour/Official Flagging off

12:25 Closing Prayer

1.5 Opening prayer:

The opening prayer was led by one person from the Christians from Israel.

2.0 Speeches

2.1 Opening Remarks:

Mr. George Piwang-Jalobo, Research Fellow, Task Force on Job Evaluation, Re-organisation of Staff Structure and Financing of Makerere University ;

Gave Chronology of events preceding the flagging of the 31 students as follows;

- Vice President Bar Ilan University Prof. Benjamin Enherenberg visit to Makerere on 4th – 5th April 2013 and signing of an MoU and benefits envisaged in the collaboration.
- Israel's Ambassador H. E Gil Haskel visit to East Africa and Makerere University on April 24, 2013 and his willingness to bring more Israel universities and private sector in partnership with Makerere.
- Receipt of an email from H.E Yaki Lopez on April 20, 2013 about the Agro studies apprenticeship.
- The shinning of Makerere in Accra Ghana during the 6th FARA General meeting and Agricultural Science Week signalling the potential of Makerere to fetch dollars out of her innovations and technologies.
- Concluded that what Makerere needs is to reach out and receive.

2.2. 5-minute video of the Apprenticeship in Israel:

The video was played by Makerere University's Marketing and Brand Manager Mr. Agaba Issa Mugabo.

2.3 Genesis/Background to the Internship-Prof. Francis G.Omaswa

Prof. Francis Omaswa was represented by Dr. Mangeni. Dr. Mangeni;

- Gave a brief background to the formation of the Makerere University Task Force on Job Evaluation, Re-organisation of Staff Structure and Financing of Makerere University that was chaired by Prof. G. Omaswa.
- Told participants that the report was out and that the committee would like to see it publicised and its recommendations circulated.
- Said the days function was part of the output of the task force where individuals networked across borders to have this collaboration with the Israelites to enhance the student's knowledge.

- Said the wealth of the nation is to do with the balance of knowledge and not how much was in Bank of Uganda.
- Emphasised the importance of institutions like Makerere in Knowledge creation to cause change and the need for such institutions to look at themselves as more important than financial institutions.
- Encouraged students to strive to be better than Israelites and acquire as much knowledge and skills as they can, come back and implement to cause change.

2.4 Remarks by the Dean School of Agricultural Sciences

The Dean School of Agricultural Sciences represented by Head Department of Agricultural Production Dr. Denis Mpairwe;

- Said, this program was to be part of the internship program conducted at the University .
- Expressed confidence that students will perform well.
- Advised students to go for practical training and acquire as much skills as they can.
- Thanked the Senate for approving the program.
- Promised to give students withdrawal permission from the program for one year saying the school was to hold a sitting to approve their withdrawal requests.
- Assured students that the tickets and Visas were ready.
- Appealed to the government to help support such programs saying, most of the students who succeeded came from very poor families that cannot even afford an air ticket.
- Suggested that this could be done by providing soft loans so that students go as products of the nation.

2.5 Remarks by the Principal College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences.

Speaking on behalf of the Principal College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Deputy Principal Prof. Gorettie Nabanoga:

- Described students and lecturers as a lucky group flagging off Makerere as Uganda to Israel for the first time.
- Advised students to take this course seriously.
- Implored students to give that image that Makerere and Uganda deserves and to be good spies outside.
- Promised that students will have space in Kabanyolo to put in practice what they would have learnt.
- Expressed optimism that government had the will to support the graduates through the Youth fund.

2.6 Remarks by Vice Chancellor, Makerere University

Speaking on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, the Deputy Vice Chancellor in charge of Finance and Administration Prof. Barnabas Wanangwe;

- Underscored the role of Makerere as a great African University that has given birth to other universities and will remain the most single important institution in Uganda that requires special attention.
- Said the University has become a centre of attraction and a big collaborator with international institutions and has generated a lot of technologies and innovations that have improved people's livelihoods.
- Implored students to keep the name of Makerere, get knowledge and skills and come back home and implement.
- Expressed gratitude to the government of Uganda and the President for the support given to Makerere during the recent difficult times.
- Assured the Minister that the University was open and calm.
- Asked the Minister for continued support to engage government take over the wage bill and also help the University cover the debts.

2.7. Remarks by the Council Chair Makerere University

The chairperson Makerere University Council Dr. Wana Etyemu;

- Described the send off as an important function that will yield the manpower that will improve agricultural production and productivity.
- Observed that the biggest challenge in the country was organising the workforce to do the right things at the right time.
- Said the most annoying thing he has experienced as an orchard farmer is lack of consistency in spacing and hoped that the students being flagged off will come back and help people like him who retire into farming.
- Wished students the best of their internship requesting them to utilise the opportunity productively and come back home to help Ugandan farmers improve their livelihoods.
- Thanked the Minister for supporting the University during the trying moments and prayed that the Minister will continue engaging government to solve the most challenging issues of Makerere.
- Asked for the Minister's support to address Makerere's long term challenge as far as the wage bill is concerned by way of dialoguing with relevant organs to convince government take over the University wage bill.

2.8 Remarks by Chancellor Makerere University

The Chancellor Makerere University Prof. Mondo Kagonyera;

- Reiterated the need for students to remain disciplined.
- Expressed gratitude for the sponsors saying, he had no doubt of the students' intellectual capacity and readiness to put in practice what had been learnt.
- Expressed concern over government's complaints that Ugandan scientists go out there, get knowledge and skills but never put it to use saying, that one time he came back from Israel and wrote a report but government has never done anything.
- Said the students were going to get the right skills and demanded to have a covenant that when they come back government will reward them and have a way of putting them to specific tasks.
- Re - emphasised that these powerful resources of the country must be planned for because no development can take place without worshipping knowledge.
- Drew the attention of the Minister to the recent report that was published in the media indicating that 84% of Uganda's teachers would like to leave teaching describing this situation as a real trouble for the country.
- Said if 84 % of the most fundamental resources do not like what they are doing, then he was certainly sure that they were not doing anything good.
- Proposed the need for government to bring all stake holders in education including the executive, parliament, civil society, private sector in a dialogue to find a cure for the despondence of the teachers.
- Advised government on the Universal Education System and exemption of men from Graduated tax as not yielding much but instead breeding a generation of irresponsible parents.
- Observed that the frequent teachers' strikes and other chaotic situations in the country were symptoms of underlying causes that calls for a national dialogue and a revised national policy.

2.9. Speech by the Chief Guest H.E President Yoweri Museveni.

In his speech, read for him by the Minister of Education and Sports Hon. Jessica Alupo, the President;

- Described the one year apprenticeship training in Agricultural and modern farming practical skills in Israel for the 31 students as a fundamental step towards agricultural modernisation and value addition he had been preaching for years.
- Pledged to reward students who will work hard, save and come back with a business plan.
- Promised that each student who will attain a 75% mark at the end of this internship and save some money, government will match it from the Youth fund

in a ratio of 1:2. “If you attain at least 75% mark and save equivalent of USD 1000, we shall match it by USD 2000 or equivalent so that you start your agribusiness or commercial farming enterprise. If you save USD 2000; we shall match it with USD 4000 as start up capital for your agribusiness. This way, I want you to become the “seeds” of my agricultural transformation in Uganda”, The President promised.

- Extended appreciation to the government of Israel through Ambassador Gil Haskel and his staff for their commitment to support Makerere University’s partnership with Israel’s universities, the private sector and other institutions towards promoting and scaling up the Presidential initiatives in Makerere University.
- Advised students to exhibit a high level of discipline, work hard and learn as much as they can about practical and gainful skills from Israel modernised agriculture and apply them back home.
- Reminded the pioneers to always remember that they are not only the flag bears of Makerere and Uganda but also Agricultural Modernisation Cadres.
- Thanked the University especially the College of Agricultural and Environmental sciences for the collaboration with Uganda Police and Prisons for taking the Mobile fruit Processor acquired under the Presidential initiative to Yumbe.
- Applauded the University Council Chair Dr. Wana Etyem for his speech during the 50th Anniversary of the University of East Africa that described the Presidential initiatives in Makerere as a leeway to the transformation and repositioning of the University into a centre of excellence.
- Pledged to work with the University leadership towards the implementation and realisation of its vision.
- The minister pledged to clear the outstanding bill of USD 5500 for air tickets for students who were unable to raise money for their air tickets and would have missed the opportunity.
- Requested the University to write a letter asking for support and submit to her office immediately before she leaves the country that very day. Out of 31 students, 26 had cleared their bills while the rest had already lost hope.

3.0 Closing Prayer

The closing prayer was led by one of the Christians from Israel.

4.0 Appendices

4.1 Appendix 1

List of Students on Agro studies Internship Program from Makerere and Busitema Universities 2013/2014

	Sur name	First name	Age	Course	Year of Study	University
1	ASEGA	Hussein	23	BSc. Hort	2	Makerere
2	AWUZU	Ivan Santiago	24	BSc. Hort	2	Makerere
4	BIZIMANA	Samuel	21	BSc. Hort	2	Makerere
4	BWIRE	Emmanuel	23	BSc. Hort	2	Makerere
5	BWIRE	Denis	23	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
6	DDUMBA	Samuel	22	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
7	ENYETU	Joshua	25	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
8	KAKUMBA	Elisha	22	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
9	KALULU	Jonah	22	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
10	KANSIIME	Pedson	22	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
11	KAVUMA	Shafiq	21	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
12	KIBERU	Ronald	22	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
13	KIYIMBA	Frank	22	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
14	KYEYUNE	Micheal	23	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
15	LUBEGA	Emmanuel	21	BSc. Hort	2	Makerere
16	MBALAMUKUNGI	Samuel	20	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
17	MUBIRU	David Rukundo	24	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
18	MUGABI	Ashraf	25	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
19	MUHWEZI	Justus	24	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
20	MUKASA	Steven	26	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
21	MURANDA	Ezakiel	21	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
22	MUSASIZI	Jonathan	24	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
23	MUSISI	Nelson	23	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
24	OCEN	Jasper	23	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
25	OKILLIAN	Edward	23	BSc. Hort	2	Makerere
26	SIMON	Okwaro	23	BSc. Agric	2	Makerere
27	SSEKAMANYA	Micheal	27	BSc. Agric		Busitema
28	SSEKISAMBU	Dissan	24	Irrigation		Busitema
29	SUNDAY	Alex	26	BSc. Agric		Makerere
30	TUGUME	Ian	28	BSc. Hort		Makerere
31	WAMALA	David	26	BSc. Agric		Makerere