**SPEECH BY THE HEAD OF ARCHITECTURE AND PHYSICAL PLANNING DEPARTMENT, CEDAT, MAKERERE UNIVERSITY, AT A PUBLIC DIALOGUE AND LAUNCHING OF A PROCESS TO ESTABLISH MAKERERE UNIVERSITY REGIONAL CENTRE FOR URBAN RESEARCH, GOVERNANCE AND INNOVATION, 5TH JUNE 2024**

**Dr Kiggundu Amin Tamale**

Good morning

Our Chief Guest and the Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe.

**You are welcome to CEDAT and to this important event.**

**And also thank you for the excellent leadership and guidance as the VC of Makerere University.**

I also wish to recognize the presence of our College Principal, Prof. Moses Musinguzi, who has supported and provided guidance in organizing this important event.

Recognized also are: Prof. Edward Baale Director Graduate Training and Research, Deputy Principal CEDAT, Prof. Maria Kizito, Dean School of Built Environment, Prof. Gidudu Anthony, Heads of Departments present, lecturers, our sponsors from GGGI, European Union and Cities Alliance, representatives from various Governemnt Ministries, NGOs , students, invited guests, ladies and gentlemen.

Today’s event has been organized in partnership with GGGI and European Union and to achieve the following objectives:

1. **To provide a common platform for various stakeholders to discuss critical issues related to urban development and greening Uganda’s cities;**
2. **To launch the process of establishing a fully -fledged Makerere University Regional Centre for Urban Research, Governance and Innovation.**
3. **To thank GGGI and European Union for the support provided to the Department and Makerere University**
4. **To thank the top leadership of Makerere University for the continued support to our Department.**

Besides, we appreciate and cherish the partnership that has been established between GGGI/EU and the Department of Architecture and Physical planning.

Both GGGI and European Union have supported several activities at our Department. Notable among them are:

* Organizing today’s event and several previous public dialogues in 4 cities of Jinja, Mbale, Gulu and Arua.
* Research activities on urban greening in Uganda at the Department (**9 research papers have been produced with GGGI and EU support)**
* Development and preparation of the training modules and manuals for the training of urban managers in Uganda
* Training of urban managers in the 4 cities of Jinja, Mbale, Arua and Gulu on issues related to city planning and urban management
* Purchase of training and research equipment for the urban research centre such as laptops (20), desktop computers (3), furniture (several tables 10 and chairs 30), photocopier (1), projector (1), printer (1) etc
* Renovation of a building at CEDAT to accommodate the new urban research centre: repainting the building, putting new gutters, repaired the roof and toilets etc
* Support for the initial efforts and activities to establish a fully- fledged Makerere University Regional Centre for Urban Research, Governance and Innovation (MUCURGI)
* Support for the development and preparation of a strategic business plan for the new urban research centre

While the majority of Ugandans still live in villages, there are signs indicating that the future economic status of Uganda will be defined and molded in cities and not in the rural areas.

Greater Kampala for example, contributes over 70% of Uganda’s tax revenue.

International experience also shows that countries that have established functional and efficient cities have been able to build stable economies, created numerous jobs, delivered better public services to the citizens and established strong economic linkages and connections with various countries across the globe.

This is the very reason why cities and city development matters. It is also the reason why urban research and training for the next generation city leaders should be prioritized and supported.

Besides, the growth and expansion of cities tends to lower the cost of providing basic infrastructure such as roads, schools, piped waster and hospitals.

Normally, the provision of these facilities represents what is described by experts as development or economic success.

It is costly and unsustainable to build expensive power distribution infrastructure, piped water system or schools in remote small villages just to serve a few people.

In large cities like Kampala and Masaka, one big school or a hospital can serve thousands and millions of people.

As a department however, our desire and plan is not to portray villages or rural areas as useless and irrelevant but rather to promote the idea that when properly managed and supported, cities can help to quicken national transformation and create new economic opportunities as well as strengthen rural -urban linkages and connections for the benefit of all citizens.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE NEW URBAN RESEARCH CENTRE**

Specifically, the proposed Makerere University Regional Centre for Urban Research, Governance and Innovation aims to achieve the following objectives:

* To undertake trans-disciplinary, cutting-edge and pioneering policy research that will enable the formulation of relevant urban policies
* To fill the existing gap in urban policy analysis for improved decision making
* To serve as a regional think tank and an incubator for innovative urban development ideas
* To establish local and international research networks through collaboration
* To strengthen the capacity of towns and cities through regular training targeting city mayors, town clerks, councilors, city planners and other key stakeholders with the aim of producing a critical mass of change agents
* To organize public dialogues, seminars and conferences focusing on topical urban issues and emerging challenges in partnership with various stakeholders

Most important is the need for independent and top notch research institutions and centres that are able to explore new possibilities and provide innovative solutions outside government.

In addition, the decision to establish a new urban research centre at Makerere University was taken after analyzing the current national and global development trends as well as critical issues such as:

**a)Establishment of the 15 new cities by parliament of Uganda**

The establishment of the the urban research centre has come at a time when government has just established 10 new cities. Most of these cities are institutionally and financially weak and cannot adequately provide the required services.

**b)Shortage of inspirational, creative and committed city leaders**

As part of the newly established regional urban research centre, we intend to provide 21st Century strategic and collaborative leadership skills to enable city leaders triumph in any given environment. This will be achieved through regular training targeting city mayors, city planners, town clerks and councilors. Coached and trained city leaders will serve as change agents and next generation leaders that are fully committed to city transformation and improved service delivery.

City mayors constitute important assets of cities. Decisions made by city mayors affects thousands and millions of people who live in these cities. Often times, city mayors manage substantial budgets used to fund various development programmes.

**c)Emergence of wicked and complex urban problems**

Wicked problems such as climate change, urban poverty, urban informality and poor urban governance do not have definite and clear solutions. Solving these problems requires a new approach to city planning and management as well as city leaders that are versatile, imaginative, creative and are ready to serve as change agents.

**ACHIEVEMENTS**

* **Acquisition of space for the urban research Centre**

Currently, the Centre is being operated in a small room that was provided by CEDAT.

* **Produced 9 research papers funded by GGGI**

As part of this initiative, the Department has been able to produce 9 research papers. Six of them have already been accepted for publication and three are still under review.

* **Developed an online platform for the urban research centre.**
* Received training equipment from the GGGI and European Union for the urban research centre

**CHALLENGES FACED IN ESTABLISHING THE URBAN RESEACH CENTRE**

**Inadequate space for the urban research centre:**

Currently, we have one small room that is used to carry out the activities of the urban research centre. We would want to occupy something bigger. Probably an entire building. Our initial plan was for Makerere University to partner with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development to establish a National Urban Research and Innovation Centre (NURIC) based at Makerere University. The National Planning Authority supported this idea but the Ministry of Lands has been dragging its feet.

Because of this challenge, we decided to partner with GGGI to create a small research centre that we are launching today. In future however, it might be necessary for the Ministry of Lands to provide funding and Makerere University to offer a piece of land where a bigger national urban research centre can be built.

In future, an MOU can be signed between the two parties to guide the process of establishing the proposed partnership.

**Institutionalizing the urban research Centre**

We are aware of the process to be followed in establishing research centres at Makerere University. We therefore request that the institutionalization of this Centre is prioritized and supported by various leaders within the University for its future operation and sustainability.

**Sustaining the urban research centre**

To sustain the various research activities to be carried out at the new urban research centre, a lot of money will be needed. We therefore request Makerere University and the external partners like GGGI and European Union not to abandon us but continue supporting us and providing the required funding for research and capacity building.

**FUTURE PLANS AND PROGRAMMES**

* **Training of the Next Generation City Leaders’ Training and Mentorship programme targeting city leaders in the new 11 cities.**

The primary objective of this programme is to produce a critical mass of change agents and leaders who are committed to city transformation. MOUs will be signed between the 11 cities and Makerere University focusing on issues of urban research, training and industrial training for our students

* **Fundis & Informal Contractors Training Initiative**.

This will target all the Fundis in Uganda with the aim of enhancing their knowledge and skills in modern building design and construction technologies.

* **Engaging and Training Real Estate Developers in the Greater Kampala Region**

As part of this initiative, we intend to engage and train the real estate developers in the greater Kampala on issues related to modern housing design, city planning and urban governance.

* **Research activities targeting intermediate cities to create new knowledge and provide up-to date data for quantifying decision making**

A special research programme focusing on the intermediate and secondary cities will be implemented. Intermediate cities accommodates the majority of the urban residents in Uganda.

**END OF THE SPEECH**

As I end my speech, I would like to thank our partners especially GGGI, Cities Alliance and European Union for the support that they have provided towards establishing the urban research centre. But as a new urban research centre we will need more training equipment and possibly a vehicle to use during field study trips.

**Thank you for coming and listening .**