



P.O. BOX 1 KYAMBOGO, KAMPALA-UGANDA

Speech Delivered at the Science, Technology,
Engineering, Agriculture and Mathematics (STEAM)
Festival under the theme, “**Demystifying Science,
Technology and Innovation for Community
Development.**”

BY

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Our distinguished Guest of Honour, the Vice President, RTD Major Jessica Alupo, representing His Excellency, The President of the Republic of Uganda, General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni,

Hon Ministers present,

Members of Kyambogo University Council present,

The Vice Chancellor, Prof Eli Katunguka-Rwakishaya and Management,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is my humble and greatest honour to welcome you all to this momentous event.

Your Excellency the Vice President of the Republic of Uganda, we thank you so much for gracing this event as our most esteemed Guest of Honour. Your presence here at this STEAM Festival is a testament to the value that the President of the Republic of Uganda attaches to the economic development of our country and the well-being of the people of Uganda. Science and technology play a critical role in economic development. No country has really ever developed fully without investing a considerable amount of resources in advancing sciences, innovation, and industrialisation. Your resolve to prioritise **education**, science, innovation and technology is an indication of the great vision you have for this country.

I am happy to let you know that Kyambogo University is well-aligned to the vision that His Excellency the President has for the country. The University was established primarily with the aim of promoting and advancing knowledge and development of skills in Science, Technology, and Education. This STEAM Festival is testament that we have lived up to our promise. We take this opportunity today, to restate our commitment to delivering on this mandate.

Nevertheless, while we are committed to strengthening science and technology, we also acknowledge that true prosperity and community development cannot be achieved without ensuring that our scientific endeavours align with other disciplines and values. Ethical practices and integrity need to go hand in hand with science, technology, and innovation to ensure a brighter and stronger future for our country. Scientists who excel in their fields are of no value to our country

if they are corrupt, unpatriotic, lack knowledge of the history of their country, or are not civically engaged. Therefore, the necessity of maintaining a holistic view of the world and absolute commitment to values aligning with the greater good of the community cannot be overemphasised. It is with the same commitment to these values held in high esteem at Kyambogo University that the STEAM Festival has come to be realised. This is just the beginning! Other festivals bringing together diverse disciplines will be organised in the years to come.

Your Excellency, permit me at this point to acknowledge the several leading experts from the academia and various industries who are part of this festival, exploring three different sub-themes:

- I. **Harnessing infrastructure, innovative technologies, and partnerships for socio-economic development.** Global sustainable development requires a transformation that would be impossible without a sustained effort to close the technological gaps between developed and developing countries. Technology and innovation have to contribute to three dimensions of sustainable development: Economic, Social, and Environmental. Science, technology, and innovation frameworks have to consider new societal challenges and consider broader concepts of innovation systems.
- II. **Promoting a sustainable food basket for a productive and healthy population.** No society can progress unless the most basic needs of its people for proper sustenance are met. Socioeconomic factors have been a major roadblock in meeting these requirements for the people of Uganda. However, through harnessing innovative technologies, it is possible to establish more sustainable methods to provide for these needs. Sustainable diets are diets with low environmental impacts and high affordability without compromising on meeting nutritional security.
- III. **Pragmatic learning for job creation and youth empowerment.** Young people are the driving force of all nations. They are the ones who provide the energy, hope, and leadership needed for the future. It is crucial to understand the importance of holding our youth in special esteem and retaining them in our country. They are a blessing, and we need to do all we can to adequately equip and encourage them to become active members of society and contribute to the development of our great country. The pandemic struck the entire world hard, and none more so than our country. After several years of improvement, unemployment rose from

1.72% in 2019 to 2.44% in 2020 (O'Neill 2022)¹, continuing to climb higher in the last two years. Young people make up a significant portion of the Ugandan workforce. It is through introducing practical-based learning for job creation and empowering our youth that we can truly define the path to a stronger future.

Demystifying Science, Technology, and Innovation for Community Development will help us pave the way to realizing the vision for a stronger and greater Uganda.

Once again, I wish, through you Her Excellency the Vice President, to thank the President of the Republic of Uganda for his commitment to growing the capacity for Science, Technology and innovation in Uganda. We hope that the STEAM Festival goes a long way in contributing to the fulfilment of this grand vision for this country.

Once more, I warmly welcome you Your Excellency the Vice President to our university and humbly invite you to address this gathering, which is eagerly waiting to hear from you.

Thank you!

Knowledge and Skills for Service. For God and My Country

Mary Goretti Nakabugo, PhD
Chairperson, Kyambogo University Council

¹ Aaron O'Neill (2022) *Unemployment rate in Uganda from 1999 to 2020*.
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/447763/unemployment-rate-in-uganda/> [Downloaded on 16/06/22].