



***Regional Initiative in Science and Education (RISE) Annual Conference: Imperial Royale Hotel, Kampala, Uganda: Friday 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2011***

**Theme: Integration of Science and Technology Research Networks in national and regional development through University-led Initiatives**

**Comments by Prof. Lillian T. Ekirikubinza during the opening of the Annual Conference**

Hon. Minister of Education and Sports and invited guests, I welcome all of you to the annual Carnegie RISE meeting. Thank you SIG for choosing Makerere University and the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology to host such a prestigious event. The RISE program has succeeded in increasing the population of qualified faculty teaching in Africa's universities. Training in home institutions has greatly contributed to the "retainability" of our staff.

The Science and technology networks under RISE are just the start of what promises to be a long and prosperous partnership that, as it continues to flourish, will bring together the most skilled and gifted individuals from all participating Institutions with a special strong link which spans the Continent.

Many of our Universities were working as entity silos, including their departments. Intra-university sharing of information and innovations was limited. One Dept would not know the strengths of the other and one's weaknesses were also difficult to know. This greatly stifled synergy and rates of achievement in the field of science and technology.

With the introduction of RISE, we have witnessed formation of strong inter-university networks with increased inter-departmental cooperation which has resulted into broadened research areas & Innovations. It is also good to note that many RISE networks have undertaken joint (inter-university) curriculum development emphasizing a

multi-disciplinary approach to training. The resulting human capacity is of great value to the institutions, not only at home but also region.

Science and technology ranks high as one of the most powerful instruments of national and regional growth and development. It has been increasingly looked upon by many countries, particularly the developing countries, as the most important way for bringing about extensive economic growth. In the face of increasing socioeconomic challenges, new demands are being placed on the S&T thus calling for Institutions and Governments to partner and embark on science projects with relevance to national needs and a view of today and tomorrow. Some of the leading industrial sectors in developing countries are geared primarily to breaking the inertia of underdevelopment of many kinds. They introduce technology quite advanced relative to their absorptive capacity, but feeder industries supporting the leader sectors do not necessarily require such advanced technology. This is the problem RISE Networks are trying to solve.

It is also very important to note that Academic, Public and private (APP) sector partnerships must take a pivotal role in promotion of science & technology in the countries, regions and emerging markets. Science bodies and governments must invest in activities ranging from promoting high end basic research and development of cutting edge technologies on one hand to service the technological requirements of the common person through development of appropriate skills and technologies on the other.

Governments should also play a key role in regulating the fruits of research networks through patents, copyrights, and antitrust law; regulating science-and-technology-intensive industries such as health care, telecommunications, energy, and transportation; being a major consumer of the products of R&D and of technology; and sponsoring and otherwise influencing the education of scientists and engineers and of the general public about science and technology. The bottom line is that government is a big player in the nation's science and technology enterprise and will remain so regardless of their priority ranking.

Because RISE networks have demonstrated that they provide a secure foundation for scientific and technologic growth, Universities pray that they are studied more by governments and their relevant agencies and bodies like National Council of Science and technology, with a view of integrating them into national and regional development plans.

I invite the Honorable Minister of Education and Sports to open the Conference.