

Focus on relevant disciplines, President tells universities

By John Agaba
and Cindy Aaca

President Yoweri Museveni has said universities have a duty to develop Africa and called upon the institutions of higher learning to focus on relevant research and disciplines that can address the continent's challenges such as poverty and disease.

In a speech read by Dr John Chrysostom Muyingo, the higher education state minister, Museveni said schools and education institutions were a channel "we can use to pull Uganda and the African

region from poverty into middle-income status and modernisation".

To do this, universities and institutions of higher learning on the continent needed to design courses and programmes that are relevant to the continent's needs.

This was on Friday at Kololo Independence Grounds during the eighth graduation ceremony organised by Cavendish University in Uganda.

A total of 966 students graduated with certificates, diplomas and degrees in various disciplines.

BETWEEN THE LINES

■ Nineteen nationalities graduated from Cavendish University, mainly from South Sudan, Tanzania, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Uganda.

Benjamin Mkapa, the former president of Tanzania and chancellor of the university, also graced the function.

Museveni challenged the graduates to use their acquired skills to develop the continent.

"Uganda and Africa need graduates who appreciate their

background and can contribute to the development of the continent through innovation and new research," Museveni added.

He commended the administration at Cavendish University and the students, who he said, developed a mobile application that was adopted by the Uganda Police Force to find lost items. The app is called Lost and Found.

The President said he had been told the students at the university had also developed another application which can help improve tax collection.

"These are the innovations

we need," Museveni said.

He said Uganda was peaceful and the reason many students from all over Africa came to pursue their education here.

Nineteen nationalities graduated from the institution, mainly from South Sudan, Tanzania, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Uganda.

"The cross-cultural networks will create a sense of the pan-Africanism that we need to move the continent forward," Museveni said.

Mkapa advised the graduates to be "proactive, have self-drive and enthusiasm as well as the capacity to think

independently" to contribute to the development of Africa.

"You have a duty to create a better life for yourselves, your family, country and Africa," he said. He challenged them to go into the world with confidence and to target "ground-breaking achievements" for the bloc.

Mkapa commended Museveni for his "good stewardship" and for creating a secure country, which allowed students from the rest of Africa to pursue their education here.

Prof. John Mugisha, the vice-chancellor of the university, advised the graduates to serve and not to wait to be served.