

Prioritise science courses, Karooro tells universities

By Vision Reporters

Mary Karooro Okurut, the state minister for general duties, has called on universities to prioritise teaching of science programmes to spur development.

Karooro applauded Kampala International University (KIU) for prioritising sciences.

"The university is vibrant and has launched expensive to run programmes, but which are much-needed. Courses like medicine, pharmacy, engineering, dental surgery and law are critical for the development and wellbeing of our people," she said.

Karooro made the remarks on Saturday while officiating at KIU's 21st graduation ceremony at its main campus in Kansanga, Kampala.

"In many hospitals, both in Uganda and other East African countries, you find a good number of doctors who have qualified from KIU. This is a big contribution to humanity.

"The youth make up the majority of our population and yet many of them are unemployed. Institutions of higher learning should embark on programmes that support skilling and vocationalisation as well as industry partnerships to realise the dreams of these young minds and the future of our society," the minister said.

"The Government fully appreciates the chairman board of trustees, (Hassan) Basajjabalaba, for his committed, transformational and insightful leadership, which has seen this university grow. We also thank him for his spirit of *obuntu* (humaneness) which has seen him give scholarships to hundreds of needy students," Karooro added.

She called on the graduands to be disciplined and self-respecting.

16% miss graduation

A total of 2,962 students were awarded degrees, diplomas and certificates in different field, with 38% of the graduands being from the sciences disciplines.

KIU vice-chancellor Dr Mohammad Mpezamihigo, said 486 (16%) of the 3,448 students who enrolled for various academic programmes some three years ago, failed to "cross the graduation line", mainly because of financial constraints.

"May I appeal to any organisations and individuals who are willing to sponsor some of our needy students and those who have



Karooro (left) talks to MP Micheal Mawanda (centre) as Prof. Fred Wabwire looks on during the graduation ceremony of Kampala International University

Basajjabalaba cautioned the graduands to be careful in their search for wealth

outstanding balances to assist," Mpezamihigo said.

Caution

Mpezamihigo cautioned the graduands against reckless lifestyles, noting that despite being the majority, many youth were not so lucky to attain university education.

The university chancellor, Prof. John Ssebuwufu, challenged graduands to prepare

to learn new things, improve work ethic, aspire to relate well with others and sharpen their attitude toward life.

"Do not undermine any job offered, but at the same time, do not throw yourselves into despair if you do not get a job immediately," he said.

Future

Basajjabalaba unveiled several projects to be accomplished in the next three years, which include the construction of a hospital in Kampala to train specialised students and staff.

"KIU will also start a college of science and technology in Kyambogo, come January 2021," he said.

Go slow on riches

Basajjabalaba cautioned the graduands to be careful in their search for wealth.

"Do not rush to be rich like Basajja Balaba in the next two years. But also, do not wait too long to get jobs; you can actually be innovative and create your own," he counselled.