

Makerere awards Winnie Mandela honorary degree

By Joseph Kizza

Added 19th January 2018 11:59 AM

"To my friend Mrs. Winnie Madikizela Mandela, and the entire Mandela family, I congratulate you upon this well-deserved award," President Yoweri Museveni says.



PIC: Winnie Mandela (pictured) has been awarded an honorary degree by Makerere University. Her niece received the award on her behalf. (AFP)

EDUCATION

KAMPALA - President Yoweri Museveni has congratulated Winnie Madikizela Mandela upon receiving an honorary doctorate of laws from Makerere University on Friday, and paid glowing tribute to her family.

In his message delivered by public service minister Wilson Muruli Mukasa on the last day of the institution's week-long 68th

graduation ceremony, the President said the Mandela family "gave their all for Africa".

"To my friend Mrs. Winnie Madikizela Mandela, and the entire Mandela family, I congratulate you upon this well-deserved award, the honorary doctorate of laws of Makerere University.

"The Mandela family was very instrumental in the liberation of South Africa and the entire African continent," Museveni said.

'No debt with Africa'

Mandela, now 81 and an activist, was among the hundreds of women arrested while demonstrating against the injustices of the apartheid era and, according to Museveni, she "remains an important figure in the South African society" and in the history of liberation struggle.

Her niece received the award on her behalf on a warm Friday.

"The Mandela family indeed gave their all for Africa. They have no debt with Africa. They contributed to the achievement of emancipation, democracy and some steps toward economic integration in the form of Southern African Development Community (SADC)," the President said in his message.

According to Makerere University's vice-chancellor Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, Mandela was successfully nominated following a thorough vetting process.

"I warmly congratulate Mrs. Winnie Mandela upon this achievement and welcome her to Makerere," Nawangwe said.

South Africa's national anthem was played in honour of the presence of South African high commissioner to Uganda Prof. Maj. Gen. (rtd) Lekoa Solly Mollo at Makerere's main campus in Kampala, the venue of the function.

Meanwhile, Nawangwe urged Ugandans to pick up interest in the Chinese language, as Makerere graduated the first ever group of students that studied the language.

He said it was a "landmark achievement" in the consolidation of the good relations between Uganda and China.

'Critical' research and innovation

Meanwhile, as many as 710 students graduated from the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology on Friday. Of these, 20 excelled with first class degrees.

The college was particularly recognised for its research work and innovation "critical for national and regional development), such as the solar irrigation pump by Prof. Joseph Byaruhanga.

Nawangwe said the Government has taken up to commercialise the pump and plans are "in advanced stages" to start a manufacturing plant for the useful pump.

To illustrate the tireless efforts of the college, electrical engineering students Alvin Kabwama and Stephen Kalyesubula feature on the shortlist for the 2018 Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation.

This is for their innovation: UriSAF Maternal Kit. The kit quickly and accurately tests urine to pick up on infections, the results of which can be shared with a doctor.

"The system can almost instantly detect health issues, such as UTIs, dehydration, diabetes and kidney failure," Nawangwe said in his address.

The other group to graduate on Friday was a 2,626-strong one from the College of College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Of this, 34 graduands got first class degrees.

The college was hailed for winning the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant of \$4m (about sh14b) towards academic and research capacity building.

Meanwhile, the School of Law graduated 288 students, with one first class degree (Peterson Mwesiga). Nawangwe said Mwesiga is a member of staff at the College of Engineering, Design, Art and Technology.