



**MAKERERE**

**UNIVERSITY**

**OPENING REMARKS BY PROFESSOR BUYINZA MUKADASI,  
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MAKERERE UNIVERSITY**

**AT THE LAUNCH OF MULTI-INSTITUTIONAL COLLABORATIVE  
ASF RESEARCH PROJECT (2018 – 2021)  
TUESDAY 26<sup>th</sup> June 2018**

- Our partners from collaborating Institutions
- Members of the Makerere University Community
- Principal Investigators, Researchers and Mentors
- Students and all Invited Guests
- Ladies and Gentleman ..... A GOOD MORNING TO YOU.

On behalf of the Makerere Management, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Uganda as we launch an important collaborative research project under the theme **”Developing Innovative and Sustainable approaches to prevent the spread of African Swine Fever (ASF) in Africa (ASF-RESIST) .**

Allow me to specifically welcome our collaborators from the partner institutions including MRC – University of Glasgow, Centre for virus Research Scotland; National Veterinary Research Institute Nigeria; BioSciences eastern and Central Africa (BeCA) ILRI Hub Kenya; National Veterinary Institute Sweden, NARO, Wellcome Trust, RUFORUM, and CONAS Makerere University.

It is pleasing to note that over years, our scientists have proved that African swine fever (ASF) is the main threat to the development of the African pig industry. Its extremely

high potential for transboundary spread has placed all the countries in the region in danger and has raised the spectre of ASF once more escaping from Africa. At least, there is ample documented evidence to show that ASF is a disease of growing strategic importance for global food security and household income.

In fact, the extremely rapid spread of ASF is due to its highly contagious nature and the ability of the virus to persist in a protein environment, including meat products, for long periods. The fact that mortality is nearly 100 percent creates an enormous surplus of dead pigs, which constitute a huge reservoir of virus. There are no vaccines and no known treatment of the diseases!!

I am informed that the only means of control is by compulsory slaughter, avoidance of which leads to clandestine movement of potentially infected pigs. The most important factor that has been identified as contributing to the spread of this devastating disease is lack of early detection due to insufficient knowledge/experience on the part of farmers and pig breeders and among technical personnel regarding the manifestation of the disease.

In this regard, we Congratulate Prof Charles Masembe and your research group for your research leadership that has led to wining a big grant worthy USD 1.2 million.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a known fact that that animal diseases have negative impacts on markets, trade, economy, and public health at farm and national levels. In resource-poor settings, these impacts are especially severe as the animals have multiple roles in the economy, and individual households, as well as the national income, are highly dependent on their livestock. Therefore, disease control is important for mitigation of these negative

consequences. We have one option, namely, adopt biosecurity measures!.

It is therefore, heartwarming to note that during the 3-years of research collaboration you will determine the genotypic features of pigs that survive ASF outbreaks; develop local bio-security approach to control ASF; diverse rapid diagnostics under resource constrained setting.

I hope this project will bring all actors on board because, when domestic pigs and their products constitute the source of infection and large populations of free-ranging pigs are kept in traditional systems, a holistic approach to control is required that takes into account socio-economic factors as well as animal health. Most important for disease control, however, is a surveillance system that will ensure early warning and reaction.

Being the premier academic institution in Uganda, Makerere University is a major source of various home-grown innovations and technologies that are contributing to the transformation of our society. I am, therefore, hopeful that this Inception workshop will help to enhance the recognition of ASF at all levels for early warning and early reaction, so that the disease can be identified and eliminated at the earliest appearance.

On behalf of Makerere University, I extend our sincere appreciation to the Collaborating Institutions and look forward to receiving a copy of your resolutions.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my honour and duty, to officially declare this research project OPEN. **AS WE BUILD FOR THE FUTURE.**