

## **Vice President of the China University of Petroleum at Qingdao visits Makerere**

On 19<sup>th</sup> April 2018, the Vice Chancellor of Makerere University Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe hosted the Vice President of China University of Petroleum, Qingdao (UPC) - Prof. Liu Huadong on a visit to Makerere University. Prof. Huadong was accompanied by the Director – International Training Department Ms. Ying Zhou and Dr. Hu Yigui, Vice President of the College of Continuing Education. Prof. Huadong expressed his excitement to visit Uganda and Makerere; this was his first visit to both places. A meeting was held to discuss the partnership between Makerere University and UPC.

The meeting was also attended by the Principal of the College of Natural Sciences (CoNAS) Prof. Joseph Mugisha, the Principal of the College of Education and External Studies (CEES) Prof. Masagazi Masaazi, members of Makerere University Management, Staff from CoNAS, officials from Sunmaker Energy Uganda Limited, the Mak Public Relations team and journalists from New Vision and Daily Monitor.

Prof. Nawangwe led a Makerere University delegation on a visit to UPC in December 2017. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the two institutions. The MOU seeks to leverage expertise at UPC to establish an Institute/School of Petroleum Geosciences/Engineering at Makerere. This fits with the appointment of Makerere University as the Centre of Excellence for petroleum and minerals by the Northern Corridor States. UPC and Makerere also agreed to jointly apply for funding from international funding agencies to support establishment of state of the art petroleum engineering labs at UPC and Makerere. Makerere and UPC will also collaborate through student and staff exchange programmes.

In his remarks, the Vice President of UPC said, 'our visit here is due to the hospitality of your delegation to our University in December 2017. We return your visit and hope to build our partnership'. It is a privilege for us to start this partnership because of the reputation of Makerere University as one of the oldest academic institutions in Africa but also famous for its research work, he further noted. Prof. Huadong explained that the discussions held by the Makerere delegation with the departments at UPC were very extensive and hence UPC's good feeling about the partnership between the two institutions. UPC and Makerere will start with staff and student exchanges and develop the partnership further.

The Vice Chancellor of Makerere University welcomed the Vice President of UPC and his delegation to Makerere University. He thanked him for the hospitality of UPC when they visited in December 2017. It should be noted that Makerere is the first African University that UPC signed a MoU with; this was made possible by officials from Sunmaker Energy Uganda Limited. Sunmaker established a training centre in Bugolobi, Kampala to skill technicians and other lower cadre staff employable in the oil and gas sector; it's the first centre of its kind in East Africa.

Prof. Nawangwe said, 'it is our belief that staff from UPC will be comfortable working with staff of Makerere University that are highly qualified in their areas of specialisation. 60% of the academic staff at Makerere have completed their PhDs and others are already registered'. The research output of Makerere has been ranked second on the African Continent and we are favourably placed on the Times index, Prof. Nawangwe noted. He also reiterated that while Sunmaker is training the lower cadre staff for the oil and gas sector; Makerere University is well placed to train the managers; this can further be enhanced by the partnership with UPC. The oil and gas sector is a key one for Uganda and the region; the new relationship of our institutions therefore has an important role for the development of the sector, he further said.

Prof. Mugisha, the Principal of CoNAS and member of the delegation to UPC in December 2017 thanked UPC for choosing to work with Makerere University. 'As a direct beneficiary of the MoU between our institutions, CoNAS is very excited and looks forward to the growth of the partnership. We were impressed by the laboratories, manufacturing of machinery for oil and gas industry we saw at UPC. It is our expectation that some of our staff can be trained at UPC for further enhancement of their skills', Prof. Mugisha noted. He further said that, 'your support in establishing a Petroleum Institute at CoNAS will be appreciated'.

Prof. Masaazi, the Principal of CEES voiced his interest to discuss with UPC regarding support of distance learning at Makerere University. After the meeting, the UPC delegation toured facilities at the College of Natural Sciences.

UPC is a comprehensive university established in 1953. It was recognised and set as a Chinese centre of excellence for oil and gas by the China Ministry of Education and corporations (China National Petroleum Corporation-CNPC, China Petrochemical Corporation-SINOPEC, China National Offshore Oil Corporation-CNOOC, and China National Chemical Corporation-ChemChina). The university is regarded as the cradle of talents in Petroleum in China committed to specialist training in the petroleum and petrochemical industries.