



# Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum: Forum: Uniting for Higher Education Education Excellence

76<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum (UVCf) 11th August  
2025 Mbarara University of Science and Technology

Remarks by Prof. Eriabu Lugujo, Executive Director







# Meeting Context & Appreciation

This meeting comes at a time when higher education institutions in Uganda are navigating unprecedented financial, regulatory, and structural challenges. Yet, it is in such moments that the value of the Uganda Vice Chancellors' Forum becomes even more evident.

The UVCF serves as:

- A collective voice for higher education
- A platform for solidarity and intellectual discourse
- A mechanism for forward-looking leadership



Special thanks to Mbarara University of Science and Technology for their generous hospitality in hosting this important gathering of higher education leaders.



# Defending Access and Inclusion: The HEAC Success

## Committee Achievement

A Vice Chancellors' committee collected views defending the relevance and necessity of HEAC, presenting a comprehensive report to the Ministry of Education and Sports.

## HEAC's Purpose

The Higher Education Access Certificate was designed as a bridge—offering academically capable learners a second chance at university education.

## Principle at Stake

Its proposed phasing out would have shut the door on thousands of young Ugandans, many from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Your defence of HEAC is not just about a program—it is a statement of principle: that higher education in Uganda must remain **accessible, just, and inclusive**.

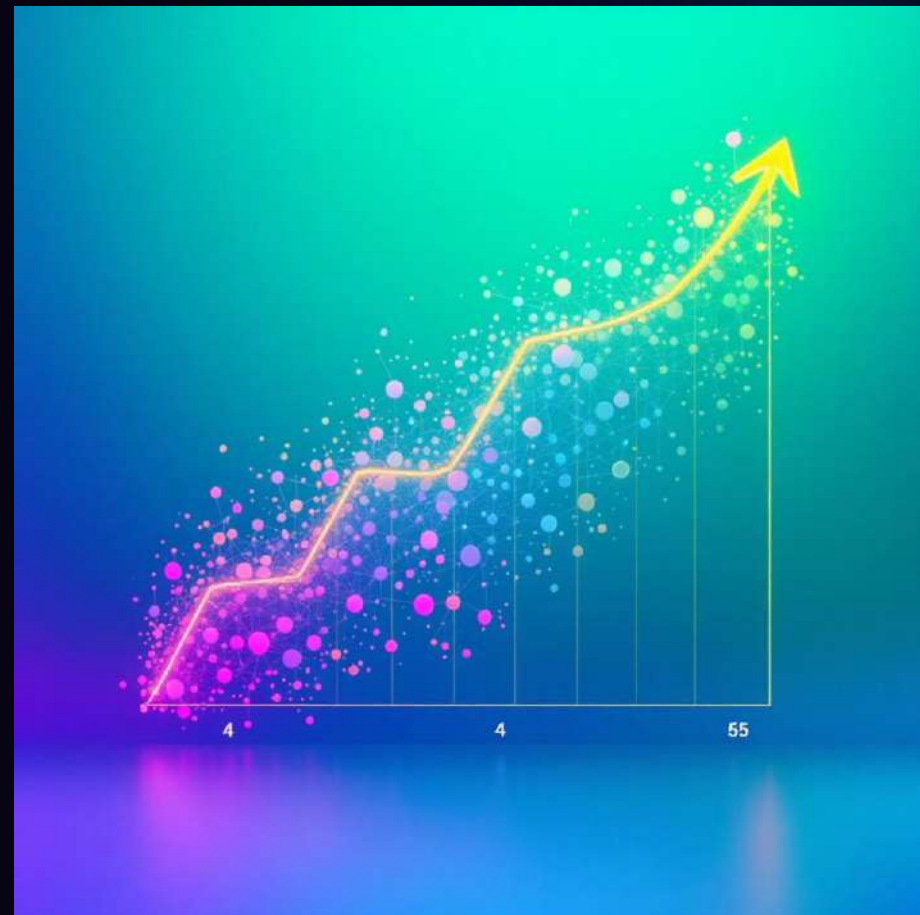
We must continue advocating for HEAC's preservation and strengthening, including building clear progression pathways and harmonized standards.



# UVCF Growth & Achievements

## 55 Member Institutions

Tremendous growth from the original four universities that formed this Forum over 27 years ago.



### Key Achievements Despite Financial Constraints:

- Regular quarterly meetings and national conferences, producing policy bulletins
- Targeted leadership development trainings for university administrators
- Published position papers, including the recent HEAC submission
- Meeting with Hon. J.C. Musingo, Minister of State for Higher Education

These achievements are possible because of your continued subscription support, collaboration, sacrifice and commitment to the Forum's vision.





# Strategic Area 1: Institutionalizing UVCF's Legal Status

We remain committed to pursuing legal recognition through a statutory instrument or Act of Parliament.



## Legal Recognition

Pursuing formal status through statutory instrument or Act of Parliament



## Advisory Role

Legitimizing the Forum's position as one of the key advisors on higher education policy



## Government Funding

Opening doors to financial support for joint initiatives



# Strategic Area 2: Supporting a National PhD Development Plan



## The Challenge

The PhD deficit in Uganda remains **alarmingly high**, limiting training, innovation, research capacity and academic excellence.

## Our Proposal

UVCf continues to advocate for a **Doctoral Training and Research Fund** that would:

- Include private chartered universities
- Address critical staff development needs
- Close research capacity gaps
- Strengthen Uganda's knowledge economy





# Strategic Areas 3 & 4: Strengthening Capacity

## Strengthening the UVCF Secretariat

With minimal staff and resources, the Secretariat continues to punch above its weight. We need investment in:

- Personnel capacity
- Transport infrastructure
- Digital systems and platforms

We will continue appealing to government and partners for direct logistical support.

## Leveraging Emerging Technologies

Universities must be at the center of Uganda's innovation ecosystem through:

- Private sector partnerships
- Research commercialization
- Entrepreneurship programs
- Industry apprenticeships

We need a legal policy framework with **tax incentives** for university-industry collaboration.

Countries like South Africa, Egypt, and recently Ghana provide tax rebates to industries that collaborate with universities.



# Looking Forward: Government Engagement

We must continue to engage with government at multiple levels. In the coming months, we seek to meet:

1

## **Minister of State for Higher Education**

To follow up on our policy submissions and discuss implementation strategies

2

## **Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports**

To develop concrete implementation pathways for our recommendations

3

## **First Lady and Minister for Education and Sports**

To discuss sustainable, long-term support for the higher education sector

Together, we are stronger. Our future must not be fragmented by institutional competition, but built on collaboration, trust, and shared purpose.







# Call to Action

## For All Member Institutions:



### Clear Outstanding Dues

Institutions that have not yet cleared their annual and conference subscriptions are urged to do so promptly.



### Champion Inclusive Growth

Advocate for policies that expand access while maintaining quality standards.



### Participate Actively

Engage fully in Forum activities, working groups, and policy development initiatives.



Your support keeps this Forum alive and impactful.



## A Moment of Renewed Purpose

# Let today be more than a meeting.

Let it be a moment of renewed purpose—to defend academic excellence, champion inclusive growth, and shape a higher education sector that truly serves Uganda's present and future.

"Together, we are stronger. Our future must not be fragmented by institutional competition, but built on **collaboration, trust, and shared purpose.**"

— Prof. Eriabu Lugujo Executive Director, UVCf