

# MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON UNIVERSITY GIVEN CHARTER STATUS

BY JOHN SEMAKULA

The community at Mountains of the Moon University (MMU) in Fort Portal, Kabarole district is in high spirits after being awarded a charter.

The university received its charter on Thursday during a ceremony held at the National Council for Higher Education's (NCHE) offices in Kampala.

With its new status, MMU is one of chartered university in Uganda. Others are Nkumba, Uganda Christian University (UCU), Kampala International University, Kampala University, Ndejje University, Nkozi University, Bugema University, Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi and Bishop Stuart University.

According to the University and other Tertiary Institutions Act, a charter is a full grant authority to exercise

responsibility of running a private university and is given by the head of state. It is also the highest licence possible for the regulator and evidence that the university meets all the standards set by NCHE.

Dr Pamela Tibihikirra-Kalyegira, the director of quality assurance and accreditation at NCHE, said the process of awarding MMU a charter has been the smoothest amongst the chartered universities.

Tibihikirra said the documents MMU submitted were well-prepared and gave NCHE "a real treat going through." MMU applied for the charter through the NCHE on July 27, 2017 and President Yoweri Museveni granted it on December 20.

Speaking at the function, the executive director of NCHE, Prof. John Opuda-Asubo, asked MMU's top management to guard their

new rights to manage the university jealously. "Ensure that the university runs in perpetuity and do a self-audit after every two years and give us a report," Asubo said.

He also challenged the management to ensure that the university is sustainable and that its image remains intact. "The charter is like getting a PhD; you must show that you deserved it."

*Sunday Vision* has learnt that some of the requirements NCHE considers to endorse any university for a charter include essential physical infrastructure such as an administration block, staff housing and classrooms. Others are a functioning library, clinic, operational laws approved by the university and academic programmes ratified by NCHE.

The university's chancellor, Prof. Edward Rugumayo, said the charter was the 2017

## FACT FILE

Mountains of the Moon University is a community, non-profit-making institution registered and incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on June 28, 2002 before it was given a provisional licence by NCHE on March 28, 2005.

The university has an enrollment of 1,780 students registered per year in the last five years and 166 personnel in academic and administrative roles.

Christmas gift which President Museveni gave to the people of Tooro and the Rwenzori region.

"We have come a long way. Some of us who benefitted from free education years ago shared the dream of how we could help our area in the education sector. That is how this idea of starting a university came about," Rugumayo said. "There is nothing greater than the idea whose time has come."

He explained that because the intention was to help the community, they conducted a prior study which informed the type of academic programmes that could benefit locals and embraced them. Rugumayo said their programmes include education, agriculture, banking, and community development.

MMU is a community, non-profit-making institution registered and incorporated as a company limited by guarantee on June 28, 2002 before it was given a

provisional license by NCHE on March 28, 2005.

The university's vice-chancellor, Prof. John Kasenene, said the charter came at the time when they were in the process of being converted into a public chartered university.

He said the idea of becoming a public university that was tagged to being chartered was endorsed by President Yoweri Museveni recently. Kasenene said becoming public would boost their infrastructural capacity and staff sustainability.

The university has an enrollment of 1,780 registered per year in the last five years and 166 personnel in academic and administrative roles.

Kasenene noted that their new charter position will also help them deal with the ever increasing competition in the region.