



Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU)

Enabling Research & Education Collaboration

Eng. Dr. Okello Appointed Chairperson of the RENU Board of Directors



Eng. Dr. Dorothy Okello



Dr. John Kitayimbwa

In the 27th meeting of the Directors of the Research and Education Network for Uganda (RENU), **Eng. Dr. Dorothy Okello** was appointed Chairperson of the RENU Board of Directors. She replaces Prof. Michel Lejeune, whose tenure as Chairperson ended at the 11th Annual General Meeting that was held in August 2020.

She becomes the first female Chairperson of the RENU Board of Directors, and also the first Chairperson that is not a serving Vice Chancellor. Eng. Dr. Dorothy has served on the Board of Directors, first as a member, then as the Deputy Chairperson, and now as Chairperson. This has given her the opportunity to witness RENU grow to the countrywide network we are now all proud of.

Eng. Dr. Okello's Message to the Members

At inception, RENU's first collaboration focal issue was the reduction of the cost of international bandwidth, and improvement on the quality of connectivity for its member institutions. This has been achieved through the private network that has been built, starting in 2014. However, quality and affordable connectivity was never the ultimate goal. It was just a necessary means to an end, the end being uplifting the quality of education and research in our country, through the provision of various ICT services to support education and research.

With over 200 campuses now connected to the RENU network, RENU's vision is to *facilitate collaboration among Uganda's research and education institutions for knowledge creation, sharing and utilisation, through the provision of advanced networking and other advanced technical services.*

We believe that it is through collaboration that sustainable improvement in the quality of education and research will be achieved. This refers to both local and international collaboration, and as we have seen in 2020, connectivity and digital channels are

very important in delivering this collaboration and interaction among members.

On top of connectivity services, RENU now offers a broad range of services to support online learning and collaboration. These include but are not limited to, Learning Management Systems (LMSs), web conferencing, eduroam, cloud hosting, web hosting, identity federation etc. RENU also recently rolled out zero-rated mobile access to websites and online learning platforms to support institutions through the challenges of rolling out blended learning. With Metro eduroam and zero-rated mobile access, students and staff of our members can now access all digital content without restrictions on the connectivity side. To ensure member institutions are safe online, RENU has a strong cybersecurity unit, that works in close collaboration with other cybersecurity units in the country, for example, the UgCERT of UCC, and the National CERT of NITA-U. We believe that cybersecurity issues are also best handled through collaboration.

Again, through collaboration, RENU has always worked with various commercial service providers and Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to deliver services to member institutions. We are very grateful to all the operators that continue to support our mission. We hope to continue counting on their support for many more years to come.

We remain grateful to the leadership and the teams that came before, for their effort that birthed RENU and got it where it is today. We expect to continue building on their success under the new RENU Board, with the same level of commitment and dedication, to see to it that the quality of education and research in our country is uplifted.

Dr. Kitayimbwa Appointed Deputy Chairperson

In the 27th meeting, Dr. John Kitayimbwa was appointed Deputy Chairperson.

Dr. Kitayimbwa's Message to the Members

I have watched with great pride, how the RENU dream, through visionaries such as Prof. Stephen Noll, Dr. Patrick Mangheni, Prof. Venansius Baryamureeba, Prof. Michel Lejeune, Eng. Isaac Kasana, Eng. Dr. Dorothy Okello, and Mr. Nicholas Mbonimpa has unfolded before our own eyes. RENU has surely become the engine that is helping many research and education institutions achieve the connectivity that they need at an affordable rate.

Being a data scientist myself, I have been a beneficiary of RENU services. However, since March 20th 2020, research and education institutions have been driven to rethink the way they do work and connect with our key stakeholders like never before. The new normal has had and will have far reaching consequences on the research and education landscape in Uganda and beyond.

It is at a time such as this that RENU will have to take lead in helping our Ugandan institutions cope and remain competitive through services such as Metro eduroam, zero-rated mobile access, learning management systems, cloud computing and storage, and the like. It is a time of great challenges but also great opportunities.

I am privileged to be joining the RENU Board of Directors at such a time in the history of our country, and I am persuaded to believe that with the past successes of RENU, the great team at RENU (both past and present), and with the Lord on our side, we will be able to deliver on this new mandate under the wise leadership of Eng. Dr. Dorothy Okello.

Eng. Dr. Dorothy Okello's Profile

Eng. Dr. Dorothy Okello is the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), the regulator of the communications sector in Uganda. She is the Dean, School of Engineering, College of Engineering, Design,

Art and Technology (CEDAT), Makerere University, a Senior Lecturer, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, a researcher with netLabs!UG, as well as an adjunct member of Faculty at the Institute of Technology Carlow, Ireland. She is also the Director of Innovate, ResilientAfrica Network (RAN), hosted by Makerere University.

She served as the first female President of the Uganda Institution of Professional Engineers (UIPE) from 2016 to 2018. She is a registered member of UIPE, and is also registered by the Engineers Registration Board (ERB). She is a member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), where she also served on the Institute's Ad Hoc Committee on Africa (AHCA) from 2017 to 2019.

Dr. John Kitayimbwa's Profile

Dr. John Kitayimbwa is the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic Affairs) at Uganda Christian University (UCU). He is a highly qualified Ugandan PhD Fellow in Computational Biology. He is the Head of Computing and Technology, and a Senior Lecturer in Computational Biology at UCU. He previously served as Board Secretary to the Makerere University Retirement Benefits Scheme (MURBS). He is an astute educationalist, with a track record of raising over £8 million in research funding from many diverse international academic sources.

About RENU

RENU is Uganda's National Research and Education Network (NREN). It is a member-based organization, founded in 2006, and incorporated in 2008 as a not-for-profit organization and company limited by guarantee, to uplift the quality of education and research in the country, through the provision of reliable and affordable connectivity and other related ICT services.

Contact Us: House No. 31, The Edge, Makerere University Tel: (+256) 393516521, Email: info@renu.ac.ug, Website: www.renu.ac.ug