CHAIRMAN FIRE AWARDS COMMITTEE REMARKS AT 2021 FIRE AWARDS

REMARKS OF THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE FiRe AWARDS COMMITTEE

AT THE 2021 FiRe AWARDS CEREMONY

On behalf of the FiRe Awards Committee, I welcome you all to the 2021 FiRe Awards Ceremony.

ICPAU, Uganda Securities Exchange (USE) and the Capital Markets Authority (CMA) hold annualy the Financial Reporting (FiRe) Awards. This year, the Awards run under the Theme: **'*Integrated Reporting: Building Blocks for Stakeholder Confidence*'.**

The 2021 FiRe Awards attracted a total of 88 participating entities. Due to the current pandemic-related restrictions and challenges, some organisations informed the FiRe Awards Committee that they were not able to finalize their annual reports in time for submission. Nonetheless, the Committee continues to be impressed by the level of enthusiasm and commitment in the FiRe Awards – A total of 58 organisations that participated in the 2020 FiRe Awards also participated in the 2021 FiRe Awards.

In line with our theme this year, the FiRe Awards Committee placed more emphasis on integrated reporting. The Committee noted an overall increase in adoption of the <IR> Framework by the reporting entities assessed. There was increased usage and reference to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and stronger commitment to the sustainability agenda. Many entities also provided useful disclosure on the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic. Of the 88 reports submitted for the 2021 FiRe Awards, only 14 were identified as Integrated Reports, or prepared as such.

The Committee found that entities still had some ground to cover in fully appreciating the purpose and content of an integrated report. Some of the areas for improvement included:

1. Lack of an explicit statement on compliance with <IR> Framework.

2. Need for explanation of the materiality determination process.
3. Better articulation of the entity's value creation, preservation and erosion process.
4. Disclosure of key performance indicators used to evaluate success and achievement of value creation goals.
5. Explanation of entity's climate change action and linkage to the value creation process.
6. More information on the Board's specific deliberations on strategy, value creation & preservation, as well as the integrated reporting process.
7. Information on the assurance or other measures taken to ensure the integrity of the integrated report.

To this end, the winners of the FiRe Awards were selected based on both their financial and non-financial reporting achievements. The Committee continues to encourage all organisations to embrace and continue to enhance their quality of integrated reporting.

Nearly every organisation, industry and indeed the global economy, has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. That is why it is important, now more than ever, during these times of economic uncertainty, that organisations report in a transparent and balanced way.

Whereas the full financial impact of the pandemic is not yet fully reflected in the reported results of many organisations, the annual reports of some reporting organisations described the challenging impact that the pandemic has had on their activities and their increased focus on ensuring sustainability.

As organisations find their place in this *new normal*, we believe that the process of preparing the annual report allows organisations to consider and faithfully report on both present and future impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This requires organisations to not only focus on the risks facing their organisations, but also the opportunities that lie ahead. The process of preparing the annual report is a great opportunity to re-examine the organisation's business model, to refocus strategies and reposition the organisation to create sustainable and long-term value.

We continue to encourage participants to make use of the expert feedback

provided by our professional team of evaluators, and be able to make continous improvements.

We wish to thank the different Regulatory Bodies and Associations that did not only participate in this year's Awards, but also encouraged the entities under their supervision to participate in the Awards. In a special way, we wish to thank the Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority who mobilized their sector entities to participate in the 2021 FiRe Awards.

We continue to thank our partners CMA, USE and the New Vision (our Media Sponsors) for your continued support to the FiRe Awards over the years. This year, we brought on board a new Sponsor - CaseWare Africa. We pray that you continue with us through it all.

I would also like to thank the team of eminent professionals that comprise the FiRe Awards Committee, the evaluation team and the entire ICPAU Secretariat for having entrusted us with this responsibility.

Finally, I congratulate all the winners of the various Awards that will be given out today. I hope that organisations, large and small, will be both inspired and encouraged by the very high bar that you have set.

I thank you for your kind attention.

CPA Stephen Ineget,

Chairperson, FiRe Awards Committee