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Motivational/Personal Statement.

I am Gerald Nathan Balekaki, Ugandan National born on the 28th of July 1983 in Kampala, Uganda, living in South Africa for the past thirteen (13) months and currently studying a doctorate degree in Computer Science at the University of the Cape Town (UCT).

Being born in the time when the country was going through a bush war (1981-1986), a lot of things that i should have gotten as a young child from parents were missed and my future looked gutted. It is the very reason I still thank God due to the fact that I am still alive and progressing toward my ultimate dream. Although, I hold very little memory of this war, all I remember is the severe hungry which left a lot of children malnourished. Many thanks go to humanitarian organizations in Uganda that saved a lot of children at that time from dying of hunger, myself inclusive. Every time I remember this moment, I get more courage and determination to make a difference in this world by serving others without expecting anything in return.

I have grown up in what you would call a poor family which could only afford a meal a day in a very extended family of 18 siblings. Despite all this I managed to go to good schools and this was not because of my parent's money but purely by merit. I have always had a dream of getting an academic profession that would enable me create new innovations as a solution to the challenges of this world. I have a personal ambition of becoming a scientist/researcher or even a professor at a leading University such as University of Cape Town (UCT). During my childhood, I used to ask myself what kind of brainy people invent Computer programs and the Internet – *one of the biggest innovations this World has ever seen.*

I imagined how people would make hardware to function more diligent and accurately just out of computer codes/ instructions. My personal ambition is to become a renowned researcher and someday, come up with one technological remedy to the World's challenges. This dream of mine could not be achieved in a straight forward fashion as I did not have all the cutting edge expertise and that technological environment that stimulates top-notch research and development.

Moving to South Africa was one of my finest decisions I ever made, a country with a better higher education and advanced computing/digital systems coupled with equal opportunities continued to enhance my chances towards my goals. I applied to be accepted first at the Computer Science Department and then into the University as a PhD Student. The whole admission process took about six (6) months due to several interactions between myself, supervisor, department and University at large. Finally, I got accepted and immediately sought for funding within and outside of the University. This took me another six (6) months to acquire funding to commence officially with my research. Many thanks go to my Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Michelle Kuttel who played a major role in this process. I am extremely delighted to be associated with the University of Cape Town, together i hope to pursue greater things that are beyond my own expectations.

My plan is to complete my PhD in Computer Science and pursue a career in academia/ scientific research or even become a leading faculty member with department of computer science at UCT. This will give me a chance to interact and collaborate directly with the renowned UCT researchers both at a local and international platform. I am currently working on square kilometre Array (SKA) telescope project in an effort to devise effective computing techniques in mitigating the Radio Frequency Interference (RFI has continued to be detrimental during radio astronomy observations).

Furthermore, I am a proud member of the IETF, ISOC Africa Chapter, Computer Association of South Africa, the Uganda Statistical Society, Data Scientists of Cape Town and ICTD. I have also been in leadership positions, the highest being the speaker of the postgraduate student council at Makerere University where I demonstrated good leadership ethics. Right now I am aspiring to be a leader in the University of the Cape Town, Computer Science Society. Lastly, I am a mature and responsible father of a one Mubiru Raphael (6.5yrs) currently living in Uganda.

Sincerely,
GN. Balekaki
PhD Candidate (UCT)
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