

# RUFORUM MONTHLY

The Monthly Brief of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture

## New leadership of Africa University pledge commitment to growth of Higher education in Africa

The newly installed leadership of Africa University has pledged its continued commitment to the cause of higher education in Africa and has re-dedicated itself to the successful launch of the second phase of Africa University's institutional development strategy. The third Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of Africa University, Bishop David Kekumba Yemba and Professor Fanuel Tagwira were both inaugurated at a colorful ceremony that took place at the Africa University campus in Mutare, Zimbabwe on December 5, 2009.

Over 500 dignitaries from around the world came to witness the historic event, which saw Zimbabwe government officials, members of the Africa University board of directors, partner agencies of the United Methodist Church, partner institutions to Africa University and representatives from sister universities in Zimbabwe and within the region were present at the occasion. The last inauguration ceremony was held in December 1998, when the second Vice Chancellor of Africa University, Professor Rukudzo Murapa took office.

"This installation signals that this university, though very young, has strong, and deeply rooted traditions," said General Secretary of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, Dr Jerome King Del Pino. "These traditions of continuity help to give a clear picture of the future we want for this university".

In his inaugural address, Vice Chancellor Tagwira paid tribute to his predecessors; Professor John Kurewa, the founding Vice Chancellor who carried out the initial groundwork for

the institution and Professor Rukudzo Murapa, the second Vice Chancellor, who saw Africa University through its early years of tangible growth.



From left, looking on - Dr Jerome King Delpino, Bishop David Yemba, (second left) Professor Tagwira, Chancellor of Africa University and Bishop Eben Nhwatiwa, Resident Bishop of the Zimbabwe Area of the United Methodist Church, (in black gown).

- *RUFORUM Monthly* is an e-newsletter providing information on activities of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture.
- This *Monthly Brief* is circulated in the last week of every month ■

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Inception planning meetings for RUFORUM ACP S & T projects, Entebbe-Uganda** 10-12 February 2010.

**International Conference on Agro-Biotechnology, Biosafety and Seed System in Developing Countries: AGBIOSEED 2010.** Imperial Royale Hotel, Kampala Uganda 8-11 March 2010

**RUFORUM strategic Plan Review. Bellagio, Italy,** 12-16 April 2010

**RUFORUM Annual General Meeting Zimbabwe,** 4-6 August 2010

**RUFORUM Biennial Conference.** 13-17 September, 2010

**Ministerial Conference on Higher Education in Africa.** Speke Hotel Muyonyo-Uganda. 15-19 November, 2010

More information on RUFORUM activities can be accessed on the **RUFORUM BLOG** at <http://RUFORUMsecretariat.blogspot.com>

RUFORUM Website link now available at [www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org)

For more information about the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), Contact: The **Newsletter Editor**, RUFORUM Secretariat, Plot 151 Garden Hill, Makerere University Main Campus, P.O. Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda. Fax: +256 414 534153; Tel: +256 414 535939; E-mail: [secretariat@RUFORUM.org](mailto:secretariat@RUFORUM.org); Website: [www.RUFORUM.org](http://www.RUFORUM.org).



## Higher Education Institutions must remain relevant to development agenda to maintain sustainability



Above: Prof. Adipala Ekwamu, Regional Coordinator– RUFORUM

The Regional Coordinator for RUFORUM, Professor Adipala Ekwamu, has said universities must remain relevant to the development agenda and become pro active in proving their contributions to national development, if they are to remain viable in the new globally community of tertiary institutions.

In his paper entitled “Financing higher education institutions in the 21st century,” Professor Adipala stressed that universities in

Africa needed to re-look and re-strategise on their priorities if they are to survive the challenges of reduced funding. He was speaking at a seminar organized as part of the activities to mark the Inauguration of the third Chancellor and Vice Chancellor of Africa University on 4th December 2009 at the Africa University campus in Mutare, Zimbabwe.

Professor Adipala cited that an earlier pronouncement by the World Bank – that higher education was not to be prioritized and offered low rates of investments had relegated the role of higher education in Africa. The World Bank prescriptions had led to a significant neglect and limited visibility of the higher education sector in Africa.

However, recent Psacharapolous findings reveal that infact higher education offered high returns on investment. Supported by empirical evidence, the report pointed to the fact that each additional year of higher education could yield 10-15% returns in higher wages, and in the long term, lead to the growth of knowledge economies, which would ultimately lead to development.

Nonetheless, the sector has faced numerous challenges which have been a direct result of its neglect by respective African governments and partners in supporting and investing in higher education in Africa.

“The demand for higher education, by far exceeds capacity of African Universities,’ said Adipala, who added that University funding was declining, relative to student populations. “Paradoxically, we are asking the state universities to increase enrollment, but yet, we are not giving them the commensurate and accompanying funds to make that

happen,’ said Adipala. “These demands have not been accompanied by infrastructural development, funding for research and teaching and learning.” Moreover, “brain drain” had led to significant low staffing levels in universities, a prominent trend across Africa.

He provided the statistics.

“Most large universities are at 60% staffing capacity, with most senior faculty- almost close to retirement age...the majority of the young professionals and academics have left their countries in search of greener pastures elsewhere.”

Professor Adipala added that the lack of qualified and experienced personnel has also negatively impacted on quality issues and research output in universities. “Research output has remained very low, due to inadequate funding. In most African countries, governments do not channel funds directly to universities, but rather channel their funds to research institutes.

The answer was to be found in universities proactively playing an advocacy role, as well as making deliberate attempts to keep their research agenda in tandem with national development goals. “Our governments should set aside funds for research, but there is no way in which our governments will set aside funds for our research budgets if we do not show that we are contributing to national development processes.”

Professor Adipala added that the scope of a university’s research agenda should facilitate its entry into the global environment and the competitive education network.

He said Africans needed to look at areas of research and development where they would have the best comparative advantage. “We need to capitalize on emerging issues such as climate change, new sources of energy, globalization, to remain relevant and attract funding partners,’ said Adipala. Hard choices had to be made in order for Africa to get a quick win situation. The generation of knowledge; innovation and creativity in science and technology were also critical aspects of a University’s’ contribution to national development. “Knowledge is important, because there is no country which has developed with-

*(Continued on page 3)*

## Higher Education Institutions must remain relevant to development agenda to maintain sustainability

*(Continued from page 2)*

out critical, competitive and competent human capital". There is also a need to develop innovative programs which will strengthen science and technology innovation. "Universities have to be well integrated in the development process and be the key players in industry and agricultural innovation systems.

Another important role for universities was to continuously advocate policy changes, important for financing higher education institutions in future. "In its advocacy role, universities would need to continuously connect with non governmental organizations, farmers, and various stakeholders in its community outreach engagements."

The improvement of quality in teaching and learning through the modernization of curricula and harnessing of ICT's were also important in attracting students. "We need to be strategic and look at how we can become a first choice for our students who are in search of a premier institute of higher education."

Professor Adipala cited weaknesses in African curricula.

"Teaching delivery is old and archaic and desperately in need of an overhaul." He referred to the "yellow notes," used by some university lecturers as a mode of delivery. "But we now have a new generation of students who are empowered and our university lecturers must be prepared to deal with a different clientele who are knowledgeable about their rights and who have access to the information super highway."

If the higher education sector in Africa was to survive, there was a need for higher education practitioners to re-look and re-think their roles in relation to national, regional and global hopes and aspirations.

*Story and pictures by Sharai Nondo, programme officer, Information and Public Affairs Office, Africa University*

## Women top Makerere graduation

Makerere University for the first time, has passed out more female students than male ones this year. At the 60th graduation held, out of the 13,766 graduates, 6,936 (50.4%) were female, while 6,830 (49.6%) were male. This according to the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Mondo Kagonyera, was a tremendous step towards promoting gender balance in the country.

For good measure, the best overall student was a female. Ms Emmerentian Mbabazi was top of the lot, graduating with a bachelor's degree in construction management from the Faculty of Technology. Her cumulative Grade Point Average of 4.88 was only shy of the maximum total of five and the star student attributed her success to God. "I feel happy and lost for words," said Ms Mbabazi, who received a cash award of Shs500,000 for her feat. "I worked hard and prayed a lot and God decided to do it for me. Everyone is faced with different challenges but no one should ever give up working hard because it pays."

Uganda Education minister Namirembe Bitamazire said: "This is an affirmative action that targets to emancipate women. Every government organ must have at least 40 per cent of women and now that they are getting into the professional areas like technology, it will contribute to the development of the country." "When we have educated mothers it means we will have healthy and educated families," she added. Female students get an extra 1.5

points to help them join public universities in Uganda.



*Graduates enjoy the moment. Photo by Geoffrey Sseruyange*

This year has registered the highest number of grandaunts since Makerere's establishment in 1992. Of the grandaunts 39 obtained doctorates, 1,249 masters degree and 74 received post grandaunt diplomas. Another 273 received undergraduate diplomas, while 12,131 obtained undergraduate degrees.

**Soruce of Information; Daily monitor, author Patience Ahimbisibwe and The New Vision, authors Milton Olupot and Conan Businge**



## GULU University passes out first medical doctors

GULU University in Uganda passed out the first graduates in medicine and surgery. The 40 pioneers, who received bachelors degrees, were part of the 1,050 students who passed out during 5th graduation at the first public university in northern Uganda. Thirteen students graduated with masters in business administration and public administration and management. The highlights at the ceremony included the commissioning of the new faculty of medicine.

The project was supported by the local authorities of Re-



The university chancellor, Dr. Martin Aliko, confers a honorary degree on Prof. Luigi

gione Campania, the City of Naples and the Italian cooperation. At the same occasion, Prof. Luigi Greco of the University of Naples in Italy, was awarded a honorary doctorate of science for participating in writing the curriculum and looking for funds for the faculty of medicine. Luigi said the faculty started from a dirty and dilapidated maternity ward at Gulu Hospital in 2004 before the Italian cooperation offered funds to support the faculty. The Chairperson of the university council, Opika Opoka, hailed Italy and the University of Naples for funding the new building. He said the new faculty would help improve the lives of the people through adequate medical care.

The Vice Chancellor, Prof. Jack Nyeko Pen-Mogi, said the 40 graduates of medicine and surgery had five years of intensive and extensive training at the university. "These fresh doctors interacted with the local communities in extremely remote dispensaries and health centers." He added that the doctors and surgeons participated in the massive vaccination of children living in camps for the internally displaced. "They took part in the control of the hepatitis E outbreak in Kitgum and Pader districts. We are confident the doctors are ready to provide efficient and effective medical services in remote areas where city-trained doctors may not accept to work," Pen-Mogi

pointed out. "This year, the Government introduced a low-interest agricultural loan scheme. I urge all of you who are graduating today to find out details about this loan and write business plans to access the funds. "We appeal to the President to consider establishing a graduate entrepreneurship loan scheme which is accessible to all graduates on a competitive basis."

Pen-Mogi cautioned the graduates against indulging in vices such as corruption, nepotism, over-drinking and prostitution. He instead urged them to promote good governance in order to industrialise and transform the rural areas. Without giving details, the vice-chancellor disclosed that Gulu, Makerere and Mbarara universities are jointly developing a PhD programme.

He appealed to Makerere University to waive fees on lecturers from Gulu University who go there for masters and PhD studies as Mbarara university has done. The state minister for higher education, Mwesigwa Rukutana, said the Government would pay doctors and scientists slightly higher than other professionals beginning next financial year in an effort to reduce brain-drain.

He said the Government would make Gulu University a center of science excellence, with several constituency colleges all-over the region. Rukutana explained that the Government had introduced the students' loan scheme to enable children from poor backgrounds to pursue higher education. "The taskforce for the loan scheme is already in place. Hopefully by next financial year, the loan scheme will have started."

The Chancellor of Gulu University, Dr. Martin Aliko, called upon the university council to focus on physical growth and expansion. "Acquisition of land should be paramount. I appeal to our people to cooperate and make land available for development." He advised the graduands to support good governance, saying poor governance was the major cause of under-development.

The graduation was attended by the former minister for education, Amanywa Mushega, MPs, delegations from the partnering Universities and vice chancellors from Makerere and Mbarara Universities.

*This story has been reproduced from The New Vision and written by Chris Ocowun Sunday, 24th January, 2010*

## Partners support RUFORUM in E-Content Development & Staff Retooling Workshop

RUFORUM, ASARECA and the University of Greenwich (through the Natural Resources Institute) collaborated to run a five-day training workshop on e-content development and staff re-tooling targeted at AICM lecturers/facilitators. Twenty-five participants from Egerton University and the University of Nairobi came together to solidify and learn e-learning course design, moodle course management, tutoring and structural infrastructure and cultural change issues.

Dr Simon Walker and Dr Timothy Chancellor from university of Greenwich and Ms Nodumo Dhlamini from RUFORUM Secretariat facilitated this training. The training was part of RUFORUM's vision for strengthening e-learning across its member universities so that;

Member universities increase their use of ICT to support effective, decentralized learning and sharing of knowledge;

All the teaching resources for the RUFORUM supported regional postgraduate programmes are made available in electronic format by 2014;

All the teaching resources for the RUFORUM supported regional postgraduate programmes are released as Open Educational Resources under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License.

RUFORUM will continue to mobilize resources to support the actual development of e-content and training of staff. An important focus area in 2010 will be supporting staff so that they produce tangible outputs in terms of electronic teaching resources for their subject areas. One of the activities planned with support from Association of African Universities is to support the development of electronic teaching resources for the MSc AICM (Agricultural Information Communication Management) at Egerton University and the PhD (Aquaculture and Fisheries Science) at Bunda College of Agriculture. The training at Egerton was financed by ASERECA through the SCARDA (Strengthening Capacity for Research Development in Africa) program. ASEAR-ECA and RUFORUM are co-funding training of a pilot group of 17 MSc AICM students at Egerton University.



Participants who attended the training at Egerton University

## THE RUFORUM FIELD ATTACHMENT PROGRAM AWARD (FAPA)

RUFORUM announces the **Field Attachment Programme (FAPA)** which is intended to improve training at post-graduate level specifically through ensuring quality and relevance of the university graduates to the job market. This is expected through improvement in the connections between graduate students and their target job markets i.e. to the relevant firms that offer employment particularly with local government, NGOs, and the private sector (especially agribusiness firms). The Programme makes available Fifteen (15) awards each year to M.Sc. and PhD students participating in RUFORUM programmes. Relevant details are described below. There is an open call, available on the RUFORUM Website ([www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org)), where proposals are submitted throughout the year. The grants are for up to a maximum of US\$2,000 for a maximum period of 3 months to cover subsistence and other basic requirements for MSc. Students being trained under RUFORUM Programmes and attached to RUFORUM Universities. Proposals may be received throughout the year, but will usually be considered only twice a year (normally August/September and February/March).

For more information, please contact: **The Grants Manager RUFORUM Secretariat**, [secretariat@ruforum.org](mailto:secretariat@ruforum.org) with copies to [m.osiru@ruforum.org](mailto:m.osiru@ruforum.org) and [ntwalica@gmail.com](mailto:ntwalica@gmail.com)

## RUFORUM GRANTS COMPLIANCE CHECK FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED UNDER CALL ID: RU/CGS/GRG/15/11/09

The RUFORUM Secretariat under the auspices of its Competitive Research Scheme issued an open call for Graduate Research Grants at the end of September 2009. The deadline for the submission of the proposals was 15 November 2009. The call was circulated widely through e-mail, print media in particular the RUFORUM News Letter and at different meetings and fora.

One hundred nineteen proposals have been downloaded under the November Call ID as compared to 40 in the first call. Of these, 110 were received by the end of day on 15 November 2009, whereas the remaining 9 were submitted after the deadline (16<sup>th</sup> November onwards) and were disqualified.

The proposals submitted were predominantly from 2 universities that is Makerere University and University of Nairobi, who together submitted 41% of the proposals. On the other hand, five Universities submitted proposals, which were within the same range that is 7 – 10 submissions. The number of female grants applicants is up from the last RFPs in June 2009 (8%). Never the less the percentage (19%) is still comparatively low and calls for more effort in mobilizing female scientists in the different Universities.

Table I ( on Page 7) also indicates that with the exception of Maseno and Bondo, 12 Universities from the RUFORUM network responded to the November call for proposals. This is an increase in University response when compared to the June call where only 7 Universities responded. However, there were no proposals submitted by the remaining 13 Universities of the RUFORUM Network.

The following processes have been followed;

### ***STEP ONE: Receiving and compiling proposals***

Most of the proposals were sent via the e-mail system therefore these were printed and filed. Those which were received via the postal services were stamped and also filed. All the proposals were then assigned reference numbers, which were communicated to the Principal Investigators. In the same communication the Secretariat sent a confirmation of receipt of proposals as well

information on the next stage in the evaluation process. A data bank in print as well as in soft copy has been set up for storage and management of all the proposals that have been received.

### **A few challenges arose at this stage especially:**

1. One proposal being e-mailed by more than one person a couple of times
2. Different sections of the proposal being sent in different emails.
3. PI submitting sections of the proposal up to two weeks after the deadline.
4. PI not following guidelines for writing their projects documents, which resulted in exceeding the page limits
5. PI sending PDF files and yet the instructions requested for word files, inter alia.

### ***STEP TWO: Eligibility and Compliance Check***

All the 110 proposals, which met the submission deadline, were taken through an eligibility and compliance check, a step which is carried out at the Secretariat. Only 90 of the 110 proposals that met the submission deadline, met the compliance criteria and have been sent for external review by 3-4 independent evaluators.

Those disqualified did not follow submission guidelines, going beyond the prescribed page limits, budgeting beyond the budget limit of \$ 60,000 and 2 proposals were from non eligible universities.

The report will detail feedback from the universities for both successful and non successful proposals. The Secretariat will also review gap areas and address them in future calls.

The Secretariat will communicate the results of the external review of all the 90 proposals and final selection by the RUFORUM Technical Committee in early April 2010. Other calls will be announced in the RUFORUM Website ([www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org)).

*(Continued on page 7)*

## RUFORUM GRANTS COMPLIANCE CHECK FOR PROPOSALS SUBMITTED UNDER CALL ID: RU/CGS/GRG/15/11/09

Table1: The distribution of the proposals by University and gender disaggregation.

University	No. of Timely Proposals	No. of late proposals	Gender of PI	
			Female	Male
University of Nairobi	22	-	5	17
Makerere University	22	2	5	19
Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	10	3	2	11
Sokoine University of Agriculture	7	-	0	7
Kenyatta University	6	-	2	4
Egerton University	10	-	0	10
Kyambogo Univeristy	1	-	0	1
University of Zimbabwe	9	1	2	8
Bunda College of Agriculture - UNIMA	11	2	1	12
Moi University	6	-	3	3
Instituto de Investigacao Agraria de Mozambique	3	-	1	2
Maseno University**	1	-	0	1
Mekelle Univeristy	1	-	0	1
Bondo University College**	1	-	0	1
University of Botswana	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>98</b>

\*\* Maseno University and Bondo University College each submitted 1 proposal. However, they are not part of the RUFORUM Network and will thus not qualify for proposal evaluation.

Call ID: [RU/CGS/CARP/15/02/2010](#)

**CONCEPT NOTE DEADLINE: [FEBRUARY 15, 2010](#)**

**For selection in March 2010**

RUFORUM announces the **RUFORUM Community Action Research Programme (CARP) First Call for Proposals**. The purpose of the Programme is to demonstrate innovative approaches towards strengthened University engagement with development practice in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. Initially, priority will be given to projects that focus on scaling-up and out research outputs from the most successful RUFORUM CGS projects. Projects to be funded should also show linkage of participating university researchers with on-going pilots developed by Universities, CGIAR centers, international NGO's, or National extension experiments. Please consult guidelines for writing the call and CARP proposals. Concepts that do not follow guidelines closely may be disqualified.

For more information on RUFORUM and the CARP call, please visit [www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org)

### **TIME FRAME for Call ID [RU/CGS/CARP/15/02/2010](#)**

1. Deadline for Concept Note submission to RUFORUM Secretariat is **15 February 2010**.
2. Compliance Review by RUFORUM Secretariat by **1 March 2010**.
3. Technical Committee to select potential proposals by **15 March 2010**.
4. Full Proposal Writing Workshop to be held by **30 April 2010**.
5. Secretariat to compile proposals for final selection and approval by Technical Committee by **15 May 2010**.
6. Results from the selection will be communicated to PIs by **end of May, 2010**.
7. Projects to commence implementation by **end of June, 2010**



## RUFORUM Competitive Grants awarded

RUFORUM would like to thank all those who participated in the first call for proposals. We received 40 proposals which went through International review and final approval by RUFORUM Technical Committee. Below is the list of the 23 successful applicants.

Name	Topic		
Dr. Jenipher Bisikwa	Participatory management of striga in cereal-based cropping systems in Eastern Uganda	Dr. Monica Karuhanga Beraho	Integrating Indigenous and scientific soil quality indicators for improved crop production
Dr. Luisa Santos	Identification of tomato varieties adapted to different growing seasons of Mozambique and resistant to ToCSV	Dr. Maina Mwangi	Promoting macro-propagation technology to improve small scale farmers' access to affordable high quality seedlings of banana cultivars with high market demand
Dr. Simon Madyiwa	Selection and optimization of soil fertility and water management technologies to cope with soil variability under changing environmental conditions in Zimbabwe	Dr. Isiah Nyagumbo	Evaluating the effects of conservation agriculture and related technologies on soil biodiversity, crop and labour productivity in semi arid Zimbabwe
Dr. Margaret Najjingo Mangheni	Understanding the gender dimensions of the impact of climate change on agriculture and adaptation among small holder farmers in Uganda	Dr. Nyambilila Amuri	Evaluation of changes in top soil organic matter, soil fertility and environmental quality under different cropping systems and geo morphological setting in southern highlands of Tanzania
Dr. Florence Mtambanengwe	Translating integrated soil fertility management empirical knowledge into action through participatory learning and marketing with farmers in Zimbabwe	Dr. Paul Kibwika	The potential of school gardening to mitigate short term hunger and its effects on schooling in Universal Primary Schools in Eastern Uganda
Dr. Richard Edema	Development, promotion and dissemination of improved Fusarium wilt resistant pigeonpea lines in drought prone areas of Uganda	Dr. Olaleye A.O.	Assessment of wetland losses in Lesotho: Impacts of climate change anthropogenic pressure
Dr. David Mutetika	Developing appropriate feeding and breeding strategies for improved small-holder pig production	Dr. Theodora S. Hyuha	Prospects of aquaculture as a rural development Intervention in Eastern Uganda
Dr. Patrick Okori	Development of plant nutrient efficient use sorghum varieties to support livelihood strategies of East African farmers	Dr. George Chege Gitao	Developing capacity for implementing innovative PPR control strategies based on the epidemiology and socio-economic aspects of the disease in East Africa
Dr. Menas Wuta	Sustainable crop production using hairy Vetch ( <i>vicia Vvlllos roth</i> ) to enrich soil fertility and conserve soil moisture For maize cropping In smallholder farming Systems In Zimbabwe	Prof. Philip N. Nyaga	Enhancing sustainable livestock productivity and marketing through control of Rift Valley Fever Virus in Eastern Africa
Dr. Margaret Nabasiywe	The impact of climate change and climate variability on agricultural productivity in Uganda's cattle corridor	Dr. William Ekere	Assessment of spatio-temporal bovine migratory routes and trans-boundary animal diseases infestation in Uganda
Dr. Majaliwa Mwanjalolo	Enhancing the resilience of agricultural communities to Climate change and variability In Eastern Uganda and Albertine Rift	Dr. Prossy Isubikal'u	Understanding the persistence of foot and mouth disease in Uganda
		Dr. Richard N. Onwonga	Modelling the potential impact of climate change on sorghum ( <i>sorghum bicolor</i> ) and cowpea ( <i>vigna unguiculata</i> ) production in semi-arid areas of Kenya using the agricultural production systems simulator (APSIM)