

## **Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture Secretariat Quarterly Report**

**1st October- 31st December 2018**

### **Summary**

This report presents key achievements and progress made in the period 1<sup>st</sup> October- 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018 (The second Quarter of the Financial Year 2018/19, and the first year of implementing the Operational Plan-2018-2022 of RUFORUM [Vision 2030 Strategy](#)). Below are the highlights of progress made:

1. Convened the [Sixth](#) Africa Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference on 21<sup>st</sup>- 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2018. The event attracted 1107 participants from 50 countries; held 20 pre-conference and side events, attracted 67 exhibitors; held 12 Plenary sessions; and, 18 Technical sessions. The event was officially opened by Amb. Dr Amina Mohamed, the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kenya. Invited keynote speakers included; Hon. Janet Kataha Museveni, the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Uganda; Hon. Naledi Pandor, Minister of Higher Education, South Africa; Hon. Obiageli Ezekwesili, former Minister of Education, Nigeria; and, Hon. Prof. Marie Odile Attanasso, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Republic of Benin.
2. Convened the dialogue meeting between Ministers from six African countries, the representatives of African Regional Economic Commissions, and 105 Vice Chancellors from RUFORUM member Universities. The dialogue highlighted the need to: (a) prioritise strengthening staff capacities in African universities; (b) strengthen data analytics, management and foresight capacity in African Universities; (c) prioritise investments in research and teaching facilities in universities; (d) increase investment in post graduate training and research; and (e) strengthen policy dialogue between Policy makers, university leaders and researchers.
3. Held the 14<sup>th</sup> RUFORUM Annual General Meeting that: (a) launched the Africa's Higher Agricultural Education Capacity Indicators Platform; (b) admitted 22 new member universities bringing the network membership to 105 member universities in 37 African countries; and, (c) elected a new RUFORUM Board Chair elected - Prof. George Kanyama-Phiri, Vice Chancellor Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources and deputized by Vice Board Chair Prof. Ophelia Inez Weeks, President-University of Liberia.
4. Participated in the first Extra-Ordinary Summit of the Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government (C10) Championing Education, Science and Technology in Africa, held on 2<sup>nd</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2018 in Lilongwe, Malawi. The C10 summit developed an action plan that will be tabled to the upcoming Heads of States Summit for endorsement and subsequent implementation by the Africa Union Commission.
5. Convened the Ministerial Round table meeting on building regional Synergies to strengthening Africa's Higher Education Systems on the 24<sup>th</sup> October 2018. The meeting recommended the need for a collaborative approach- between governments, industry, higher education and development partners to achieve the goal of having higher education, science, technology and innovation being key drivers of Africa' development. Recommendations from this Ministerial Round table meeting were incorporated into the C10 agenda.

6. In partnership with African Institute of Capacity Development (AICAD), conducted a Leadership and Management Training for Postgraduate students. The students attained skills in navigating difficult conversations, how to work in their sphere of influence, brainstorming and negotiation.
7. RUFORUM network received funding to a tune of US\$4.3 million from the African Union Research Grants to support implementation of five projects. RUFORUM Secretariat supported the supported the constitution of the research teams, development and submission of proposal
8. Launched the 2018 RUFORUM Young African Entrepreneurs Competition (RUYAEC) whose overall purpose was to catalyze entrepreneurship development through competitively identifying and supporting promising business innovations developed by Africa's youth. The competition attracted a total of 1,332 applicants from 42 African and 4 non-African countries. Consequently, 23 applicants were awarded a seed fund of \$2000.
9. Convened the Development Partners' (DPs) meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2108 in Nairobi, Kenya. The DPs called for the consolidation and scaling up of RUFORUM's work in Africa, strengthening entrepreneurship capacity development, demonstrating impact on ground and committed to support RUFORUM to implement the organization's Vision 2030.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Report presents key achievements the RUFORUM Secretariat accomplished during the period 1 October- 31 December 2018, the second quarter of the financial year 2018/19. The Report is arranged by Flagship Programmes of the RUFORUM Vision 2030 strategy

### **Flagship programme: TAGDev-Transforming African Agricultural Universities for Africa's Growth and Development**

#### ***Support to Community Action Research Teams***

Convened a joint learning and lesson sharing event of the Principal investigators implementing Community Action research Programme PLUS (CARP+) and the RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Program (RECAP). The event recommended that the research teams document the emerging lessons especially in areas where the teams exhibited creativity and innovation during project implementation in this new domain of teaching and research in Africa Universities. This was observed as critical to support lesson sharing and scaling up the best practices to other member universities. The research teams were further taken through the intellectual property rights issues, to ensure that the unique intellectual property emerging from the implementation of CARP+ and RECAP projects is well protected.

As part of strengthening agricultural business/entrepreneurship and incubator programs at selected universities, during the Vice Chancellor dialogue, a resolution was made to strengthen agribusiness innovation in Africa through improving the entrepreneurial mindset of graduates to contribute to the creation of employment opportunities for young people. Several challenges limiting agribusiness incubation were identified including aflatoxins impeding value addition; fortification of small grains; and, high overhead costs required to unlock the commodity value chains.

### **Flagship programme: RANCH: Regional Anchor Universities for Higher Agricultural Education**

### ***RUFORUM-inspired training and skilling programs***

During the C10 summit held 2-3 November, 2018 in Lilongwe-Malawi, RUFORUM exhibited innovative training models, namely; university community engagement model, student-centered learning and outreach model and student enterprise scheme (SES) for entrepreneurship skills development that have since been institutionalized in some of the member universities.

Exhibited at the 2<sup>nd</sup> NARO-MAK Scientific Conference, 12 – 15 November, 2018 at Speke Resort Munyonyo under the theme “*Research for innovative agri-food systems and nutrition*”. The exhibition attracted follow up actions from the Minister of State for Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Republic of Uganda- Hon. Christopher M. T. Kibanzanga who made a follow meeting to the Secretariat on the 4th December 2018. The visit of the minister to the RUFORUM Secretariat resulted into developing key areas of collaboration between MAAIF and RUFORUM, particularly to support human capital development in the National Agricultural Research System with focus on field-level technicians.

### ***Support university partnerships***

Convened the Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa (SHAEA) event on 21 October 2018, in Nairobi-Kenya to support potential anchor universities build strategic partnerships for training trans-disciplinary students to support agri-food system transformation in Africa. The event recommended sustainable partnerships as well as involvement of private sector in preliminary discussions to inform the institutions on the need for collaborative participatory approach to respond to the agriculture sector demands.

### **Flagship programme: CREATE-Cultivating Research and Teaching Excellence** ***Establish of Research Chairs***

The Sixth Africa higher education and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2018 strongly recommended the need to strengthen research excellence in African universities through establishment of Research Chairs and promotion of cross-country research teams in critical gap areas such as data management, nutrition, soil and water management, and foresight studies to guide policy decisions in the continent. Since then, several proposals have been developed by RUFORUM in partnership with member universities to address this critical need.

### ***Advance quality training through Post- Doctoral Fellowships***

RUFORUM in partnership with African Women in Agricultural Research and Development AWARD held a leadership and management training on 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> October 2018 at the African Institute for Capacity Development (AICAD) in Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) to build the capacity of the fellows by providing leadership based on values of inclusiveness, transparency, integrity, and efficiency. A total of 38 participants benefited from the training, 19 of whom were RUFORUM- Carnegie supported Post-Doctoral fellows. The meeting provided post-doc fellows with opportunity to share ongoing research activities with each other to sharpen their research outputs and deliverables. The post docs submitted a total of 57 abstracts and review articles and 19 posters for review and oral presentations in the technical sessions. This added into the pool of knowledge they generated during their research project implementation stages.

### *Academic Staff Development and Mobility Schemes*

African Universities resolved to exploit academic mobility to accelerate the training of a critical mass of well qualified faculty in Africa and ensure that they are retained locally to support teaching and research, taking on the example of the RUFORUM Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) that needs to be supported. This was further endorsed by the Ministerial round table meeting held 23 October 2018, Nairobi-Kenya which recommended capacity building in accreditation to ensure that the education system is compatible with other systems to promote mobility. The conference further recommended the need to increase ‘academic mobility schemes’ and strengthen Centres of Excellence to enhance mobility, regional level training and economies of scope and scale.

During the reporting period, RUFORUM received nominations from several Universities to pursue PhD studies in other RUFORUM Member Universities, including six nominations from the University of Namibia and eight nominations from the University of Malawi. The prospective students are currently applying for admission for the 2019/2020 intake. RUFORUM further received admission letters from two Sudanese universities including Peace University and University of Gezira to pursue PhD studies at Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology (NMAIST) and the University of Nairobi respectively.

### *Promoting participation of women in Science, Technology and Innovation*

As part of efforts of increasing participation of Women in Science, Technology and Innovation, RUFORUM supported the second convening of the Forum for Women Vice Chancellors in Africa (FAWoVC) as a side event during the Sixth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference, 2018. The session was aimed at providing insights for good leadership and strategies of supporting women Vice-Chancellors in African Universities. The Forum deliberated on a wide range of issues ranging from leadership; mentorship; intellectual property rights and patterns among others. The event was central to providing a platform for networking and addressing key issues pertaining to the low number of Women in key leadership and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) courses. The Vice-Chancellors acknowledged the opportunities that this forum brings in bridging the gap of women in leadership in Africa.

### **Flagship programme: K-HUB-Knowledge hub for university networking, partnership and advocacy**

#### *Enhance systematic access to information*

During the quarter, the Higher Agricultural Education Capacity Indicators (HAECI) platform was launched in Nairobi-Kenya. The portal provides detailed time series data on various demographic characteristics of teaching staff and student populations in the different RUFORUM Member Universities’ pages. The portal also includes information on degree programs offered, research focus by major commodity area, and number of peer-reviewed publications. The platform is now available online (see [link](#)). Further, during the period, African Universities resolved to enhance the sharing of knowledge, lessons and experiences with international and regional partners to facilitate and accelerate university transformation for relevance in Africa.

As part of showcasing the visibility of RUFORUMs’ interventions, facebook likes of the RUFORUM platform have grown from 21,984 to 22,000; Twitter followers increased to 6,263 from

6000 and the RUFORUM Mailing list subscribers increased from 14,934 to [15,351](#) as of 30 August 2018.

During the quarter, RUFORUM held discussions with Elsevier on the possibility of using its Bepress platform (<https://www.bepress.com/>) to optimize visibility of resources in the RUFORUM repository and offer a platform to host publications of universities that do not have institutional repositories. Further held discussions with the Information Training and Outreach Centre for Africa (ITOCA) and the Albert Mann Library of Cornell University on collaboration to make agricultural knowledge more visible. Cornell and ITOCA have set up the AgriKnowledge platform (<http://www.agriknowledge.org/>) which provides full access to 1,782 resources produced by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), and the Ethiopian Agricultural Transformation Agency (ATA).

#### *Promote publication of Africa's research*

As part of increasing the visibility of Africa's research and documenting best practices, RUFORUM produced Volume 3, issue 2 of the African Journal for Rural Development (AfJRD). RUFORUM is thus providing prospects for African authors to communicate their unique research of relevance to African context and therefore make it available globally. It is also providing opportunity for universities and authors from outside Africa to share unique research outputs and outcomes of relevance to rural development. Through such outputs and outcomes, other universities have the opportunity to learn remotely at minimal cost and therefore adapt the results to their local context. To further promote access to and use of new publications representing RUFORUM supported research and experiences, they were shared in the in the network's Weekly news digest and in the RUFORUM Institutional repository which now stands at about 2,500 publications. This number is set to grow in the new calendar year as the RUFORUM repository links with repositories in other universities and relevant research institutions.

Further published several items including;

- Nine editions of the RUFORUM Weekly digest to disseminate news, scholarship opportunities and publications, especially from Africa, to stakeholders in the agricultural higher education sector informed.
- Two articles in mainstream media in Uganda including; the role of ICTs at Universities see [Link](#) and another following a meeting with the Minister of Education and Sports in Uganda.
- A special edition of the RUFORUM Biennial conference with 10 articles published by the World University News on a wide range topics. These articles included;
  - Academic freedom – A key to building science capacity. See [Link](#)
  - AU's development goals hampered by skills shortages. See [Link](#)
  - Partnerships – The key to harnessing HE innovation. See [Link](#)
  - South Korea announces US\$9 million scholarship grant. See [Link](#)
  - Ministers propose three-point plan to boost PhD numbers. See [Link](#)
  - Calls for greater role for universities in policy-making. See [Link](#)
  - TVET colleges fail to prepare youth for agricultural jobs. See [Link](#)
  - Women scholars urged to seize global opportunities. See [Link](#)
  - Two Ghanaians announced as part of winners of 2018 RUFORUM. See [Link](#)



- Ten (10) Videos produced by various media houses covered during the sixth African Higher Education Week in Nairobi, Kenya. These videos included;
  - Talk show on KUTV by RUFORUM staff. See [Link](#)
  - MCF students on KUTV Talk show. See [Link](#)
  - Ministerial Round Table at University of Nairobi. See [Link](#)
  - Ministerial Round Table 2. See [Link](#)
  - Harnessing the Energies of youth. See [Link](#)
  - KUTV News about Closing of Conference and press briefing. See [Link](#)
  - Closing Ceremony with Former Minister of Education, Nigeria. See [Link](#)
  - Morning Talkshow on K24 by LOC at University of Nairobi. See [Link](#)
  - Closing Ceremony by NTV Kenya. See [Link](#)
  - PAEPARD video interview with Prof. El Dukheri. See [Link](#)

#### *Support knowledge and building communities of practice*

During the quarter, RUFORUM conducted a review of the RUFORUM Moodle platform for its suitability vis-a-vis the e-learning strategy developed. Further developed a survey tool for e-learning requirements in Africa universities and data collection initiated in North Africa. As part of the sixth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference, 2018 RUFORUM convened a session entitled “Harnessing the digital potential to drive agricultural/Higher education transformation in Africa”. The meeting recommended the need for African Universities to establish measures of how best they can utilize the full potential of digital technologies, given the fact that African countries have very diverse ICT statistics (such as “in many countries, 90% of the adult population have access to mobile phones while for Chad, 90% of people are still without Internet”). The meeting further recommended undertaking the desired changes to incorporate the use of e-learning and transformation of pedagogy in Agricultural/Higher Education delivery using digital technologies.

During the reporting period, RUFORUM developed a draft plan to roll out non-academic trainings offered at the RUFORUM Secretariat to member universities to facilitate network-wide capacity development. In this regard, RUFORUM trained 231 students in social media for Academia with focus on videography and communicating with impact. Further, as part of efforts to foster the ability for Public Relations and Communication officers from the different RUFORUM member universities understand the importance of visibility for their universities; and further appreciate the role of new media and Web 2.0 technologies to source for use and disseminate information, 21 Public Relations Officers from RUFORUM member Universities underwent a retooling at the Sixth Africa Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2018. The retooling exercise provided them with skills in marketing, advocacy, branding and Communication in ways that reflects their University. African Universities further resolved to strengthen the use of ICTs to improve the decentralization of teaching and learning, enhance access to the wider public, and reduce the costs of education in Africa.

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**Flagship programme: PROGRAM SUPPORT – Technical, Administrative and Logistical support**

***Convene of statutory meetings***

During the reporting period, Governance meetings of RUFORUM were held as stipulated in the RUFORUM Constitution, and amongst these included;

- The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual General meeting and the 17<sup>th</sup> Board of Trustees meeting was organized on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2018.
- 21<sup>st</sup> Finance and Administration Committee of the Board meeting
- 14<sup>th</sup> International Advisory Panel meeting held 21 October 2018
- 14<sup>th</sup> Technical Committee meeting held 20 October, 2018
- 15<sup>th</sup> Principals and Deans Committee meeting held 22 October 2018

***The Sixth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference***

The Sixth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference was organized from 22-26 October 2018 at the Kenyatta International Convention Center in Nairobi, Kenya. The overall objective of the Conference was to provide a platform for all key stakeholders to dialogue on important issues to guide Africa's higher education sector into the future, taking into consideration important challenges for the system as well as linkages with other components of the education system, including technical vocational education and training (TVET). The event was officially opened by Amb. Dr Amina Mohamed, the Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kenya. Invited keynote speakers included; Hon. Janet Kataha Museveni, the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sport, Uganda and Hon. Naledi Pandorm Minister of Higher Education, South Africa; Hon. Obiageli Ezekwesili, former Minister of Education, Nigerian; and, Hon. Prof. Marie Odile Attanasso, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Benin. See the [Conference Summary Report](#). The conference attracted 1107 participants drawn from over 50 countries; 20 preconference and side events; six (6) meetings of the RUFORUM statutory organs; 67 exhibitions; 414 posters; twelve (12) plenary sessions; and, eighteen (18) technical parallel sessions.

***Strengthening the RUFORUM Secretariat***

Following adverts for vacant positions at RUFORUM Secretariat, interviews were held for six positions including; Deputy Executive Secretary, Programme Development & Implementation (DES PD&I); Technical Specialist, Youth Services Development & Community Engagement (TS YSD & CE); Technical Specialist, Policy Analysis (TS-PA); Technical Specialist, Research and Development (TS-R&D); Internal Auditor (IA); and Systems Accountant (SA). The Secretariat is also recruiting for other staff positions of; Deputy Executive Secretary, Planning, Resource Mobilization and Management, (DES- PRM&M); Manager, Program Results Measurement & Learning (PRML); Technical Specialist, Staff Development & Academic Mobility and Technical Specialist, Graduate Training.

***Partnership, networking and resource mobilization***

As part of the effort to broker alliances and partnerships to assist universities in Africa establish delivery networks for scaling-up research outputs, knowledge products and innovations, RUFORUM signed an MoU with the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development (AOAD) to support

agricultural research in Africa. The tripartite agreement between RUFORUM, AOAD and African Union Commission, brings together the Arab league and African countries to conduct research, entrepreneurship development and wealth creation in the area of agricultural development and food and nutrition security. Further, RUFORUM partnered with Ghent University, Belgium to develop a network of Biotechnology and Plant Breeding to strengthen capacity in this specific field. This partnership will also draw expertise from CGIAR centres.

In response to the African Union Research Grants call for proposals 2018, five (5) proposals were selected for funding while one (1) was put on reserve list. The five projects amount to US\$ 5,429,786 raised to support activities of member universities. The thematic areas for the successful projects are; food fortification, bio-fortification, aflatoxin contamination, animal feed production, fisheries production and marketing, food processing, and marker assisted breeding in poultry.

#### ***RUFORUM investments over the last 15 years***

During the reporting period, RUFORUM finalized the Outcome Assessment of RUFORUM investments over the last 15 years. The report provides accountability for development partners' support and aid spending on RUFORUM and generate learning on why and how RUFORUM initiatives have been successful (or not). The assessment identified success factors that are anchored on leadership and structure of RUFORUM that is lean but with capacity to service the network member. The findings highlighted fears in respect to the expansion and whether the secretariat will cope with the widened scope amidst a diversity of demands from network members.

RUFORUM continued to engage Member Governments to establish a Charter for legitimization of RUFORUM as an implementation Agency for Higher Education training in Agriculture and STI in the member countries. In this respect the inter-ministerial convened on 24th October, 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya, agreed to consult on supporting RUFORUM Charter following country specific procedures.

#### **PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT QUARTER JAN-MAR 2019**

1. Undertake Tracer study of RUFORUM Alumni
2. Recruit BSc and MSc students and train a pool of early career scientists and development practitioners (TVETs)
3. Finalize a book on agricultural tertiary education in Africa
4. Plan for the 14<sup>th</sup> RUFORUM Annual General meeting Scheduled to take place in Cape Coast, Ghana, first Week of December 2019