

RUFORUM MONTHLY

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

RUFORUM HOLDS SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

RUFORUM, the regional network of 25 universities in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa, held its sixth Annual General Meeting at Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe 26-27 August 2010. The meeting was attended by Vice Chancellors and Deans from the 25 universities and other Key stakeholders, including two Ministers, one from Zimbabwe and another from Uganda.



Above: Vice Chancellors, Deans and Ministers who attended the RUFORUM Annual General Meeting

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Rewarding Mentors - A Story from RUFORUM Alumni

On 24 / 7 / 2010 former graduate students at Moi University in Kenya, from 1994 to date, surprised two of their lecturers Prof. C.O. Othieno and Prof. Robert Okalebo. They secretly arranged to recognize the changes the two professors had made in their lives (about 55 of them) through teaching, research, supervision and recommendations for jobs. Then about 3 days to 24 / 7 / 2010, they invited the two professors to a party they were not aware of. They gave everyone enough to eat and drink and then presented them with gifts. Big framed photos of all the students they had supervised and big trophies (cups), sets of pens and boxes of kitchen utensils to recognize contributions from their wives. What was puzzling was how these students organized themselves in camera for one year. These students, all have good jobs at international institutions, some are consultants, lecturers and others work with research institution in Kenya and beyond to name just a few institutions. They said that when they were entitled to USD 200 p.m. stipend in their projects, Othieno and Okalebo gave them that figure. An eye opener is that students are like any other humans, they are watchful and appreciative.

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; or visit RUFORUM Website at www.ruforum.org.

- *RUFORUM Monthly* provides information on activities of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture.
- This *Monthly Brief* is available on the last week of every month ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Regional Conference on Building Capacity for improved Food and Livelihood Security in Africa. 20-24 September, 2010 Entebbe, Uganda

Ministerial Conference on Higher Education in Africa. 15-19 November, 2010 Speke Hotel Muyonyo, Kampala, Uganda. To register online, please visit www.ruforum.org.

CTA-RUFORUM Training Course on Scientific Data Management For ECSA, 16-27 August, 2010, Entebbe Uganda.

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

RUFORUM HOLDS SIXTH ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Above: Hon. Rukutana Minister of Higher Education, Uganda

The Annual General Meetings of the Vice Chancellors and stakeholders are to enable the universities review progress in implementation of joint activities agreed upon, especially towards reforming African Universities for greater development relevance.

The RUFORUM universities are strengthening efforts to train high caliber scientists to support key development sectors, especially those identified by the African Governments under the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP).

Officiating at the occasion, Hon. Tapele, the Zimbabwe Deputy Minister for Higher Education called on African Universities to strengthen quality of graduate training in African universities. This would save the continent a lot of money which is currently being spent on training students abroad. His counter part, the Ugandan Minister for Higher Education, Hon. Rukutana, challenged the universities to work with African Governments to devise more cost-effective mechanisms for financing higher education in the continent, which he admitted, was currently under funded. He used the occasion to invite the Vice Chancellors and other stakeholders to attend the

Ministerial Conference on Higher Education in Agriculture in Africa slated for 15-19 November, 2010 in Kampala, Uganda.

The delegates to the sixth Annual General Meeting welcomed the increased collaboration among African

Universities in terms of joint research, training and staff/students exchanges. However, more support was still needed for overall financing of Universities and support for especially post –graduate level training and research.

For the 2010/11 periods, the following were identified as the priority action points for the RUFORUM Secretariat;

- Strengthening systems at the Secretariat
- Developing the Second RUFORUM Business Plan (2011-2016)
- Conducting an impact assessment of RUFORUM as a Network.
- Organizing the Ministerial Conference on Higher Education in November, 2010
- Organizing the second Biennial Conference in September, 2010.



Above: Deputy Minister Tapela from Zimbabwe

African Women Forum for Science and Technology (AWFST) Climate Change Innovation Awards Proposals

Achiando Grace is a student under the Department of Crops, Horticulture and Soil Sciences, Egerton University who submitted a proposal entitled ***“Identifying Indigenous knowledge and effective communication systems for adaptation to climate change by smallholder farmers of Kilifi District, Kenya”*** Below are reviewers comment of her proposal which she is sharing to help other young researchers. She has been invited to the 2010 ATPS Annual Conference and Workshop and Annual General Meeting scheduled from 25 – 27 November 2010 in Cairo, Egypt.

Science Quality, Added Value/ Innovative Quality and Societal and Policy Relevance

- The general proposal is very good and relevant. The practicality of this concept whose significance lies in the exploration of indigenous knowledge and coping strategies for adaptation to climate change by smallholder farmers and development of indigenous technical knowledge (ITK) mainstreaming frameworks in agricultural information and communication systems is high. The policy implications are also very encouraging.
- However, the proponent needs to identify a scalable and incubatable project beyond development of the ITK mainstreaming framework. The proponent also needs to work more on bibliography.
- Also it is not clear in the write up whether project has been implemented or is yet to be implemented.
- Documentation of IT in marginalized areas like Kilifi would also add value to current knowledge based on Coastal Arid and Semi-arid Lands (ASALs).

Recognizing Young Professionals and Women in Science

The Africa-wide science competitions launched in 2008 seek to identify, recognize and reward the hard work and excellence of young professionals and women scientists who are engaged in innovative and pioneering research and communicating their outputs (knowledge, technologies, approaches) to improve agricultural productivity and the livelihoods of rural communities. The 2009/10 competitions was organized by CTA, FARA, RUFORUM, AGRA, ANAFE and NEPAD-NPCA. More information is available on www.ruforum.org and other partner's websites.

A total of 100 submissions were received for both competitions from which 41 top entrants were selected to develop their abstracts into full papers using standard guidelines. Following review, 18 young professionals and 9 women were invited to compete for the top 5 places in each category in a side event (19th-20th July 2010) during Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) 5th African Science Week in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

Criteria for Evaluation

- Logic and content including research design, statistical analysis and presentation of data, interpretation of results and conclusions;
- Communication: written and oral strategies for targeting stakeholders including policy makers and farmers;
- Impact (on productivity, livelihoods, farmer empowerment, women and youth); and
- Innovativeness and originality

Top Winners: Women in Science:

1st Prize: **Dr. Sarah Lubanga Mubiru** of Uganda for her work on the 'Development of 'ENDIISA' decision support tool for improved feeding of dairy cattle in Uganda'.

2nd Prize: **Dr. Theresia Luvuno Munga** of Kenya for her work on 'Breeding for Cassava brown streak disease resistance in coastal Kenya'

3rd Prize: **Ms Esperance Benedicte Zossou** of Benin for her work on the 'Technological and institutional innovations triggered by farmer-to-farmer rice parboiling video in Central Benin'

4th Prize: **Mrs Lalini Unmole** of Mauritius for her work on 'The sustainable approach for the management of the legume pod borer *Maruca vitrata fabricius* on bean in Mauritius'

5th Prize: **Ms Eunice Wamuyu Githae** of Kenya for her work on 'Genetic diversity of gum Arabic-producing *Acacia senegal* varieties in Kenya using inter-simple sequence repeats (ISSR) and chloroplast simple-sequence repeat markers'



Dr. Sarah Mubiru – First Prize Winner, Women in Science, receiving her prizes. She is flanked by Dr. Kyetere Denis (right), outgoing FARA Board Chair and Dr. Michael Hailu, CTA Director (left)

Top Winners: Young Professionals in Science:

1st Prize: **Ms. Sandrine Nguiakam** of Cameroon for her paper on 'Cours des matières premières, recettes budgétaires et croissance économique: Cas de la Cote d'Ivoire'.

2nd Prize: **Mr. Kevin Zowe Mganga** of Kenya for his work on 'Reseeding – a gateway to rehabilitation success, food security and sustainable rural livelihoods in drylands Africa'

3rd Prize: **Dr. Aneza Soobedar** of Mauritius for her work on 'Looking at wastes as valuable resources – an example from the sugarcane industry in Mauritius'

4th Prize: **Dr. Robert Kajobe** of Uganda for his work on the 'Development of appropriate surveillance systems for honeybee pests and diseases for improved production of honey and other bee products in Uganda'

There was a tie for the **5th place** with:

Mr Michael Kwabena Osei of Ghana for his work on the 'Morphological characterisation of African egg plant (*Solanum* species) in some African countries, and **Ms Wendkhoumi Sabine Marie Flore Doamba** from Burkina Faso for her work on 'Variation de l'activité biologique dans les parcelles aménagées en cordons pierreux de la province du Kouritenga au Burkina Faso'



Ms. Sandrine Nguiakam – First Prize Winner, Young Professionals in Science receiving her trophy and prizes from Dr. Hailu, CTA Director and FARA Executive Director, Dr. Monty Jones

News and Events

International Foundation for Science gives grants to Makerere University Students



Above: Langa Tembo, A student from Zambia

Two students doing their PhD in Plant Breeding and Biotechnology at Makerere University got a boost in their research after receiving additional funding from the International Foundation for Science (IFS). Mr Langa Tembo, from Zambia doing research entitled “Genetic analysis for resistance of ear rot pathogens (*Stenocarpella maydis* and *Fusarium moniliforme*)

in tropical maize and farmers’ perception to these ear Rots In Uganda” will supplement his objective on “Linkage of Molecular Markers For Resistance To Ear Rots

(*Stenocarpella maydis* and *Fusarium moniliforme*) in Tropical Maize”. Mr Mcebisi Maphosa from Zimbabwe is doing research entitled “Enhancing Genetic Resistance to Soybean Rust” The IFS fund will supplement his objective “Pyramiding soybean rust resistance genes *Rpp2*, *Rpp3* & *Rpp4*”. The budget ceiling for IFS is US\$12000. Langa can be contacted on email langatembo@yahoo.com and Maphosa on mmaphosa@agric.mak.ac.ug.



Above: Mcebisi Maphosa, A student from Zimbabwe

New Dean-Faculty of Forestry and Natural Resources, Makerere University



Dr. Nabanoga Nsubuga Gorettie a Senior Lecturer, is the new Dean of the Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation at Makerere University. Nabanoga holds a BSc. Forestry-(Makerere University-Uganda), MSc. Natural Resources Management- (Norwegian University of Life Sciences-Norway) and a PhD Social Sciences-(Wagenigen Agricultural University-The Netherlands). She has a long teaching, research and outreach experience. Nabanoga is a specialist in gender and natural resources management with emphasis on gendered rights to natural resources and participatory research approaches. She has vast experience in community development and local livelihoods improvement, indigenous knowledge and traditional resources management practices, gender issues in natural resource management and participatory resource conservation. She can be contact on email: nabanoga@forest.mak.ac.ug

New Dean - Faculty of Agriculture, University of Nairobi



Prof. Solomon Igosangwa Shibairo is the new Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at University of Nairobi (UoN), Kenya. He holds a PhD in Plant Science from the University of British Columbia, Canada. He has served University of Nairobi for 21 years as Assistant-Lecturer, Senior-Lecturer, Associate Professor and Section Head of Crop Science in the Plant Science and Crop Protection Department. He is a member of the Horticultural Association of Kenya (HAK). Prof. Shibairo has served as external examiner for undergraduate and postgraduate programs for many Universities in the Region. He has published scientific papers and presented papers in conferences in the area of plant science and is a reviewer of several journals. His major area of interest is postharvest biotechnology of perishable plant products and olericulture. Shibairo is married to Rhoda and has five children. He is a Christian and a leader in church. He can be contacted on email: shibairo@uonbi.ac.ke; solomonshibairo@yahoo.com

The Association for African Universities supports e-content development for the RUFORUM Regional Training Programs

The Association of African Universities with support of DFID has funded the development of e-content for two RUFORUM Regional training programs at Egerton University (Kenya) and Bunda College of Agriculture (Malawi). The support is geared at using ICT innovations to change the way that content is delivered to the learners. A writing retreat was organized from 2nd-6th August, 2010 for staff at Egerton University who are running MSc. training in Agricultural Information and Communication Management. It was facilitated by Ms. Nodumo Dhlamini and Miss. Joan Apio with support from Prof. Bockline O. Bebe, Dr. Joshua Ogenko and Dr. Justus Om-bati of Egerton University. The writing retreat was attended by 8 lecturers. The training as resulted in;

- A draft policy and strategy on e-content development for Egerton University and
- AICM course modules development and transforming into e-learning resources.

There are still some issues to deal with internet connectivity which is a challenge in several African Universities.



With the transformation of teaching and learning, it is vital to have such facilities in place to ensure growth of online collaboration platforms. A similar training course was organized for the faculty staff that are engaged in PhD training in Aquaculture and Fisheries at Bunda College, University of Malawi. Please visit the project blog for more details on the e-content development retreat at <http://mrci315.wordpress.com>

AAU facilitates Meeting Between Universities and Other Stakeholders

The Association of African Universities has provided a grant of Euro 99,000 to help link RUFORUM universities to the demand side: end-users of the university products (technologies, processes and graduates). In a meeting of about 40 key stakeholders from across the region held at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe in August, 2010, stakeholders agreed to re-vamp activities of the National Forums (National Multi-stakeholders platform of universities, research institutions, Advisory and private sector delivery services and policy makers) to provide input into university R&D processes, including providing internship opportunities for both undergraduate and postgraduates students. Annual review meeting will be held in each of the 15 RUFORUM member countries to review progress.

The Readers views and comments.....

"Thanks for the Newsletter. I treasure the information given as it keeps me updated on the RUFORUM activities. Keep up the good work, and Long live RUFORUM!" *From Professor Florence K. Lenga*

"Thank you Joan, Your newsletter is always so informative and inspiring. Your team is very dynamic. Well done! EXCELLENT Newsletter and great work by RUFORUM. Congratulations to the team." *From Mukhebi, Dorothy (G&D-AWARD)*

"Thank you for the latest version of the RUFORUM Newsletter. That was fast work to include an article from Nodumo on the University of Greenwich Conferences!" *Dr. Tim Chancellor, University of Greenwich*

"Many thanks for the October and November 2009 RUFORUM MONTHLY. It's inspiring to hear about the many activities of RUFORUM." *From B V Maasdorp, University of Zimbabwe*

"Adipala, WOW! RUFORUM is truly going from strength to strength. Congratulations and best wishes for continued success." *Ralph Von Kauffman, Forum for Research in Africa.*

"First may I congratulate you on your prestigious and well deserved award! Thank you also for the promotion of GenStat within your newsletter. I hope the arrangement is working well for you and if you have any problems, please let me know and I will try and help." *From Stewart Andrews, VSN International Ltd to Prof. Adipala the Regional Coordinator*

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE & VETERINARY SCIENCES
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE
PHD PROGRAMME IN DRYLAND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Background

Drylands cover about 40% of the earth's land surface, and are home to more than 38% of the world's population. In Africa, 43% of the land area is classified as dryland and supports approximately 40% (268 million) of the continent's population. Unfortunately, however, over 73% of these lands are severely degraded and highly unproductive. This situation is likely to be further exacerbated by factors such as the high population growth rates, increasing poverty levels, slow economic growth rates, climate change. The latter scenario notwithstanding, these lands continue to make significant contributions to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of many nations, in terms of livestock products, wood products, food grains, tourism and related economic activities.

Against this backdrop, sustainable development of drylands and improvement of livelihoods becomes a top priority development agenda for Africa, particularly in the Eastern, Central and Southern Africa. To this end, African universities have a key role to play in this. In response to this need, the University of Nairobi, in partnership with 24 Universities in Eastern and Central and Southern Africa under their umbrella organization the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) mounted a PhD programme in dryland resource management in 2008. Broadly, this programme aims to address the pressing regional issues of sustainable development of drylands and improvement of livelihoods through innovative interdisciplinary teaching approaches that integrate natural sciences and social sciences.

Specific objectives of the programme

1. To train a cadre of doctoral dryland specialists in academia, research and policy with knowledge and skills to deal with the challenges of Africa's drylands.
2. To build capacity for developing guidelines, policies and decision-support tools for sustainable management of Africa's dryland resources by communities, extension agents and development specialists.
3. To increase the productivity of dryland resources through prudent management based on sound understanding of Africa's dryland ecosystems.

Programme attributes

The programme consists of course work, examinations and thesis. The coursework is taken in the first year of study, while research and thesis writing are undertaken during the second and third year, respectively. Students go through seven carefully designed core courses and at least five elective courses. The programme is designed to take a minimum of 3 years and a maximum of 5 years.

The programme admitted its first group of students in 2008/2009 academic year and now invites applications for the second group of students.

Who can apply?

The following two categories of candidates can apply:

- a. Holders of a Master of Science degree in agricultural related disciplines, biological sciences, environmental sciences, natural resource management or an equivalent qualification from an institution recognized by the University of Nairobi Senate.
- b. Holders of Masters Degree in relevant social sciences recommended by the Faculty Board and approved by the University of Nairobi Senate or an equivalent qualification from an institution recognized by the University of Nairobi Senate.

How to apply

Application forms can be collected from the University of Nairobi's Board of Postgraduate Studies (BPS) upon payment of application fee. The forms can also be downloaded from the University of Nairobi Website: <http://www.uonbi.ac.ke>, and the application fee paid while returning the completed forms. The application should be filled in duplicate and mailed or physically delivered to **Director School of Graduate Studies, University of Nairobi, Box 30197-00100, Nairobi, Kenya.**

Application deadline

The application forms must be received by 15 September 2010 and classes commence on 25th October 2010.

For further information, applicants can contact:

Director Board of Postgraduate Studies *University of Nairobi, Box 30197-00100-GPO Nairobi, Kenya; Tel: +254318262 xt.28267*
E-mail: bps@uonbi.ac.ke



RUFORUM GRADUATE RESEARCH GRANTS – CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Call ID: [RU/CGS/GRG/15/10/10](#)

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE: [OCTOBER 15TH, 2010](#)

For selection in March 2011

BACKGROUND

This is to announce the Third Call for Proposals of the RUFORUM Graduate Research Grants (GRG). The purpose of the Call is to support capacity building at graduate level and to link universities more closely with rural communities and research and development agencies. Please consult submission guidelines for writing Graduate Research Grants proposals. Please stick closely to the guidelines provided.

For more information on RUFORUM and the Graduate Research Grants, please visit www.ruforum.org

TIME FRAME for Call ID [RU/CGS/GRG/15/10/10](#)

Deadline for Proposal submission to RUFORUM Secretariat by **15th October, 2010**.

Compliance Review and send to External Reviewers by **1st November 2010**

External Reviewers to return proposals with comments to Secretariat by **15 December 2010**

Secretariat to compile proposals for review by Technical Committee by **1st February 2011**

Results from the selection will be communicated to PIs in **April, 2011**.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

A soft copy of the complete application package must be submitted by email (all supporting documents, including from collaborators must be included in the same email from the PI). Where an applicant submits more than one proposal, each must be sent separately. Applications should be addressed to:

The Grants Manager

RUFORUM Secretariat,

[Call ID: *specify*]

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