

RUFORUM MONTHLY

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

RUFORUM Holds Strategic Reflection Meeting in Bellagio

RUFORUM held its Strategic Reflection Meeting in Bellagio, Italy 13-15 April, 2010. The objective was to review progress in implementation of the RUFORUM Strategic Plan. The meeting brought together 19 participants (see below) from 13 countries around the globe to reflect on the RUFORUM strategic focus for next 5-year phase. This was to ensure that RUFORUM continues to improve the quality and relevance of its graduate education.

The meeting reviewed operational thrusts of RUFORUM in the light of current challenges of capacity development in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (ECSA) and explored emerging resource mobilization opportunities to support the RUFORUM mission.



Front Left to right: Leif Christofferson (Independent Consultant, Norwegian); Emmanuel Kaunda (University Representative, Southern Africa); Kaarli Sundsmo (USAid, East Africa); Judith Francis (CTA); Katherine Namuddu (Rockefeller Foundation, Africa); Rukudzo Murapa (Ex-Vice Chancellor, Africa University); Ann Sorenson (DDRN, EFARD); Kay Muir Leresche (Chair, RUFORUM, Technical Committee); Ann Conroy (Independent Consultant, Malawi); Joyce Mook (Ex-Associate Vice President, RF, Currently, Independent Consultant, USA)

Back left to right: Moses Osiru (RUFORUM); Malcolm Blackie (Independent Consultant, UK); Howard Elliott (Canada); Faniel Tagwira (VC, Africa University); George de Hooijer (Netherlands); Khalid Bomba (Gates Foundation); Adipala Ekwamu (RUFORUM); Patrick Okori (Representing Universities, Eastern Africa) and Washington Ochola (RUFORUM).

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- **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 on the last week of every month ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

RUFORUM/CTA ASTI Training. 5-9 July, 2010 Entebbe Uganda

RUFORUM Annual General Meeting. 5-7 August 2010 Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

Regional Conference on Building Capacity for improved Food and Livelihood Security in Africa. 13-17 September, 2010 Entebbe, Uganda

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

Online Registration for the Ministerial Conference on Higher Education in Africa. Please visit www.ruforum.org

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



RUFORUM Holds Strategic Refection Meeting in Bellagio

Specifically, the meeting sought to:

1. Realign RUFORUM's efforts to new and emerging African agricultural development needs;
2. Refine strategic focal areas to respond to the reflections on successes and challenges of capacity building;
3. Realign RUFORUM's resource mobilization strategy towards emerging funding opportunities and links to support the strategic operations; and
4. Enhance cooperation with development partners and networks to support the RUFORUM strategic focus. The meeting report with outcomes will be made available on the RUFORUM website, and circulated in due course. RUFORUM thanks all participants for their input towards building a stronger and more efficient RUFORUM. In addition, RUFORUM thanks the Rockefeller Foundation

for use of its Bellagio Center.

RUFORUM Core Activities will focus on:

1. Competitive Graduate Research Grant (GRG) Scheme supporting MSc training through research linked to addressing needs of smallholder farmers (GRG). These are 2 year grants.
2. Strengthening Universities engagement with Communities through Community Action Research Programme (CARP). These are 3-4 year grants.
3. Strengthening Networking between member Universities and the RUFORUM Secretariat
4. Advocacy for Resource Mobilization
5. Enhancing RUFORUM Secretariat's delivery

The Complimentary activities identified include:

1. Strengthening member universities postgraduate programs including PhD training
2. Strengthening Communication and Learning
3. Networking and Partnerships for relevance of Universities.

Rethinking Africa's Growth Strategy– Agriculture and Mining key to Growth



His Excellency President Jakaya Kikwete during the World Economic Forum

Agriculture and Mining have been cited in the recently concluded World Economic Forum on Africa as key sectors where urgent investment is required to spur the continent's economic growth.

Speaking at the three day forum in Dar-es-salaam, Tanzania, President Jakaya Kikwete, who hosted the forum said agricultural development was the only effective strategy to provide food security, promote sustainable development and generate economic growth in Africa.

Development efforts: It was however, observed that as much as Africa's potential lies in two sectors (Agriculture and Mining), efforts are needed to develop the necessary infrastructure if the continent is to realize faster economic transformation. "Africa's agriculture is plagued by low productivity and food insecurity. Three quarters of the population reside in

rural areas, living from hand to mouth," President Kikwete said adding that 'things' needed to be done differently.

Encourage business: The forum organized under the theme "Rethinking Africa's Growth Strategy" sought to explore opportunities to define a continental development and growth agenda to ensure a more conducive business climate to encourage local and international investment.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Mr. Meles Zenawi said that though agriculture is critical, the challenge still remains in overcoming policy and institutional barriers that impede agricultural productivity. "We need agricultural policies to reach the grass roots and successful solutions to be scaled up for agricultural transformation," Mr. Zenawi said.

This Story has been reproduced from the World Economic Forum Website. For more information on this story, Please visit www.weforum.org and The Daily Monitor of May 13, 2010.

E-Agriculture, Gender and ICTs: the role of information in agriculture and rural development



Janet Achora is the Senior programme Officer at WOUGNET

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) accelerate change and agricultural development. They can speed up the extension of development services in areas such as health-care, education and agriculture and can be efficient tools for reaching out to rural and remote communities. ICT interventions can have significant direct and indirect impacts on enhancing agricultural production, marketing and post-harvest activities – therefore contributing to poverty reduction and the improvement of rural livelihoods.

The Lango Forum on e-Agriculture is a bi-annual event held by Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) in Apac district, Northern Uganda. The forum is one of the activities of the project “Promoting and improving access to agricultural information using ICTs in Northern Uganda”. The event attracts policy makers, the district local government officials, farmers, the project’s partner organisations and the general public. Simultaneous broadcast on the local community radio takes place, which helps the event to attract a lot of interest. This is one of the strategies WOUGNET uses to publicise the opportunities that can be tapped using ICTs.

The objective of the Lango Forum is to sensitise rural women, policy makers and the community on the role of ICTs in agriculture and rural development. Some of the themes that have been discussed during these foras include:

- Integrating innovative ICTs and ICM techniques in agricultural and rural development
- The role of information in agricultural and rural development
- Improving information access for agricultural and rural development

Understanding the role of ICTs in an agricultural setting:

Mr Eria Bwana-Simba, the Question and Answer Service expert from the Agriculture Research Information Services (National Agricultural Research Laboratories, Kawanda), reasoned that understanding the place and role of ICTs in an agricultural-based developing country depends on recognising that:

- knowledge is an increasingly significant factor of production;
- all actors in the agricultural sector are part of an evolving agricultural knowledge system;
- ICTs accelerate agricultural development by facilitating

knowledge management;

- ICTs are essential coordinating mechanisms in global trade.

He also argued that expanding the use of ICTs in agriculture will demand a more active and empowered role of rural intermediate organisations so that they can increasingly act as local knowledge brokers and can provide feedback on the quality of existing agricultural knowledge services.

The practical use of ICTs in agriculture: Mr Bwana-Simba also highlighted how the use of ICTs in rural areas can help farmers to access, store and share information, using multiple devices and media. Some of the examples he gave included;

Accessing information on potential buyers for farm produce: ICTs were already linking farmers’ groups or agricultural cooperatives to larger markets and assisting farmers to standardize their prices. The potential of using ICTs to promote rural development through agriculture lies largely in sourcing for markets through information provision and access.

Access to markets and market information through ICTs like mobile phones was also improving choices for the sale of agricultural produce, both on local and international



Above: Participants that attended the Lango Forum on e-Agriculture

markets. This was mainly due to enhanced information on prices and comparative supply and demand for products.

ICTs were also facilitating access to information on economic trends in terms of prices and demand for particular farm products. With the widespread liberalisation of markets, farmers are thus more protected against exploitation by unscrupulous dealers. The Lango Fora on e-Agriculture will therefore continue to raise awareness on the benefits of e-tools in development and in agriculture.

For more information, Please contact Janet Cox Achora at Email info@wougnet.org

SCARDA Holds a Wide Strategies and Lesson-learning Workshop

Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research and Development in Africa (SCARDA) is a DFID-funded programme of FARA. The purpose of SCARDA is 'to strengthen the institutional and human capacity of African agricultural research and development systems to identify, generate and deliver research outputs that meet the needs of poor people'. More information is available at www.fara-africa.org.



Participants at the SCARDA Programme Workshop in Ghana

As a pilot programme, the underlying provision was that a future intervention would more rigorously build on lessons learned. Consequently, a SCARDA Programme-wide Strategies and Lesson-learning (PSL) workshop took place at the FARA Headquarters from 26th to 29th April 2010. The workshop sought to provide a forum for face-to-face experience sharing, documentation and strategic sharing of key lessons with key stakeholders, validation of the SCARDA approach, and development of a scaling-up strategy.

The PSL workshop brought together the sub-regional organizations, the Lead Service Providers, some service providers, the focal institutions, FARA staff and the Natural Resources Institute, UK.

The workshop mainly focused on sharing achievements, challenges and lessons from the three SCARDA sub-regions. At the end of each presentation, the Sub-regional Organizations (SROs). SROs gave their insights on how things could be done differently in future, towards realizing the in-



One of the group sessions during the Workshop

tended impact of SCARDA. On the final day of the workshop, participants focused on the next steps after the PSL workshop.

The full proceedings and synthesis of key outputs from the workshop will be processed and shared widely by FARA. All partners will further share within their networks and partner organizations. Key highlights from the discussions are presented below:

Achievements/ Outputs

- Produced 34 MSc. graduates in 2-2.5 years
- At least forty (40) scientific papers articulating results of targeted research addressing regional challenges in agriculture
- Contributed to strengthening of Focal Institutes (NARIs)
- SCARDA Approach catalyzing change in Faculties e.g. increased flexibility and closer interaction between NARIs and Faculties
- Enhanced regional collaboration among young scientists

Challenges

- Planning, reflection, sensitization prior to start of SCARDA was not adequate
- Innovative nature of SCARDA need more resources and effort than was envisaged
- Long gestation period taken by Universities and FIs to internalize SCARDA Approach
- Intermittent disbursement of funds
- At the start some students experienced challenges in using English as language of instruction

Lessons Learnt

- Adequate planning and consultation is key to the success of innovative regional initiatives such as SCARDA
- The successful implementation of SCARDA depended so much on goodwill, flexibility, and dedication
- Capacity for quality graduate training exists in the ECA region, but requires harnessing and managing to fully unlock the potential
- The current costing of training programmes by universities only reflects national realities
- The cost of delivering quality graduate courses is currently under-estimated

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RUFORUM at the Global Conference on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD)

This first ever GCARD was created to provide a platform for strengthening the contribution of agricultural research towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals on a global scale by improving its resourcing, impacts and accountability of agricultural research to intended beneficiaries. GCARD will now service the functions previously undertaken by the Triennial Conference of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) and the Annual General Meeting of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). The objectives of GCARD are to ensure that:

- Agricultural research outputs are accessible and relevant to the poor in developing countries
- Research focuses on the right questions and is driven by the development needs of the resource-poor
- Knowledge generation through scientific research is embedded in development thinking and practice
- Funding systems are aligned between research and development
- Effective innovation pathways are developed between diverse stakeholders
- International agricultural research systems are effectively integrated with national partners (NARS, public, private and civil) and respond to national and sub-regional demands to help ensure development impact.

The GCARD process provides a consultation mechanism for wide stakeholder group to enhance the global AR4D system. To enhance the effectiveness of the Montpellier GCARD event, a series of consultations were conducted at regional and global levels to capture contributions of all agricultural research and development (ARD) actors towards achieving GCARD's objectives. The consultation process comprised the following elements: (a) regional reviews; (b) electronic consultations (regional and global); (c) regional face-to-face meetings, (d) the CGIAR strategy and results framework process and, (e) pre-event meetings prior to GCARD. RUFORUM participated in the electronic consultations, the regional face to face reviews and pre-event meetings that were coordinated by FARA for Africa. The regional and thematic outcomes converged in Montpellier to provide impetus for a global agenda to martial support at global scale.

One of the key recurring themes of the meeting was the importance of capacity building in the developing countries –the capacity to reach the poor, the capacity for the national systems to play a national role, the capacity for them to collaborate with others to be the recipients of new developments and to be able to build partnerships with stake-

holders without being fragmented. In this framework, capacity building would require a sound policy and investment in:

- Human resources, institutions of excellence and, institutions to reach the developing country population, particularly the extension institutions.

Similarly, the regional review of agriculture in Africa, undertaken by Prof. Uzo Mokuonye concluded that “Two major challenges must be overcome for the successful implementation of an agriculture-led growth. Firstly, the practice of underinvestment in agriculture, especially in agricultural research, must be reversed. Secondly, African policy makers must wake up to the fact that lack of human capital for both research and extension is the greatest obstacle to agricultural growth and Africa's capacity for innovation”. The report called upon the CGIAR to revive the old practice of “using core funds to support capacity building in Africa.”

For the side event on Capacity Building, activities were segmented as follows:

- i) Focus on Investment: Responding to the crisis brought about by a chronic fall in investment in capacity building. The focus of the session was to discuss how to mobilise the US\$15 billion needed to deliver impact at scale.
- ii) The second section of the workshop was to follow up on outcomes of CIPGAD workshop held prior to GCARD that explored training requirements, skills needs and adult learning through network and interactions (north-south, south-south).

The Side event workshop concluded that in principle, investment arrangements were complex and there is a long term frame to adaptation. Three recommendations emerged:

- Set up common monitoring systems on research investments and returns
- Gather case studies of innovation systems and multi-stakeholder success to make case for AR4D investments
- Harness partnerships and ICT opportunities

We highlight that “Declarations and commitments do not feed hungry people” as noted by Prof. Ismail Serageldin from Alexandria, Egypt.

RUFORUM Secretariat was represented by Prof. Adipala Ekwamu, Dr. Wellington Ekaya and Dr. Moses Osiru. **For more information, please contact Dr. Moses Osiru at m.osiru@ruforum.org**

Follow up of the Capacities' Montpellier Action Plan (CAPMAP 2010-2020)

The institutional design

Prior to the March Montpellier GCARD meeting, a 3 day meeting on Capacity Development for ARD was held. The meeting agreed on broad framework for capacity development projects (CAPMAP). The CAPMAP projects should be projects that are defined by specific groups of ARD stakeholders to respond to the challenges defined during the GCARD 2010. These groups –consortia- define the projects, negotiate with the donors and are responsible for these projects.

Their commitment is to respect a number of common rules to use the “CAPMAP label”, to report and to share the results at the global level, so that the addition of a number of specific projects can make a programme.

The role of GFAR then (or the role of a Capacity Building Committee within GFAR) should be to encourage, coordinate, ensure visibility, hence manage and distribute a “label” rather than manage directly the projects.

Hence GFAR Should:

- Lobby towards the donors community to promote the programme and encourage them to support a few projects ready to start;
- Commission a study to define what should be the minimum rules for projects to be “labelled” as CAPMAP;
- Make sure that these rules are discussed at the GFAR governance level, and adopted after amendments.

We suggest that the official announcement of the launching of the programme could be done by GFAR at the *Ministerial Conference on Higher Education in Africa*, which is to be held

15-19 November 2010, in Kampala, Uganda.

Key projects to be launched immediately

In parallel with this institutional design, it is important to keep the momentum created in Montpellier by launching immediately a few key activities that could be included within the CAPMAP framework once this will have been validated. To ensure credibility of the whole process, it is needed to show that the recommendations brought forward in Montpellier are put into practice sooner rather than later.

One of these actions could be to bring into the CAPMAP a set of bilateral projects by European Member States which are currently “in the pipe” to support higher education in Africa.

The initiative could be carried by DANIDA who first started a project with FARA in this regard, while other EU Member States also have projects in the same domain. All these initiatives could be brought together so that they become a real programme, with a critical mass allowing capitalisation, communication, and exchanges. DANIDA could call a meeting of key donors in Copenhagen in September 2010 to exchange information and discuss possible coordination and collaboration, under the umbrella of the European Forum. If such a programme is built from these various initiatives, the presentation could also be done by European Forum on Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) at the Kampala Ministerial Conference.

Article by Prof. Didier Pillot, SupaAgro Montpellier, France; Chairperson, Organizing Committee, CIPCAD 2010; President of Agrinatura Email: didier.pillot@supagro.inra.fr

Announcement

MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON HIGHER EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE (CHEA) 15-19 November 2010, Speke Resort, Munyonyo, Kampala, Uganda

“African universities and other institutions of higher learning ultimately will be responsible for replenishing the stock of human capital in national research and extension services”As stated by NEPAD in the Framework for African Agricultural Productivity “...urgent action must be taken to restore the quality of graduate and postgraduate agricultural education in Africa.”

RUFORUM announces the Ministerial Meeting on Higher Education in Agriculture. We invite interested individuals and institutions to register online at www.ruforum.org

The meeting will serve to:

1. Review progress in implementing the Dar-es-Salaam meeting of Ministers and the Cape Town Declaration of Ministers responsible for Science and Technology;
2. Facilitate international networking to spur and sustain re-engineering of Higher Education Institutions in Africa;
3. Mobilize African universities to be more pro-active in engaging in Africa's development and in particular to make their due contribution to research and innovation; and,
4. Mobilize political and development commitment for increasing investments in Higher Education in Africa

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