

RUFORUM MONTHLY

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

Women in Science and Young Professionals Competitions

The Women in Science and Young Professionals competitions were held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from the 20 -21 April 2009 to coincide with the African Ministers of Agriculture Meeting. The competitions were co-organized by the Center for Technical Cooperation in Agriculture (CTA), the African Policy and Technology Studies Network (ATPS), Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and RUFORUM. The 2008 Science Competitions sought 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 the outputs to improve agricultural productivity and the livelihoods of rural people.



The top five in the Women in Science category were: 1) Prof. Abukutsa Mary Onyango (Kenya); 2) Dr. Andrea Rother (South Africa); 3) Dr. Brigitte Nyambo (Kenya); 4) Dr. Jolly Kabirizi from Uganda; and, 5) Dr. Abay Fetien from Ethiopia.

The Special Award for Ground Breaking Science and Innovative and Pioneering Research was won by Dr. Astre Gebekirstos from Ethiopia, while the award for Outstanding contribution to science and role model for African women scientists was awarded to Professor Ameenah Gurib-Fakim from Mauritius

The top five in the Young Professionals category were: 1) Joel Nwakaire from Nigeria; 2) Edmore Gasura from Zimbabwe; 3) Frank Mwenechanya from Malawi; 4) Joseph Macharia from Kenya; 5) Emilienne Lionel Ngo from Samick – Cameroon. The Special Award in the Young Professionals category was Originality and Communication and it went to Namuene Ngando from Cameroon and Charles Lagu from Uganda

For additional information on the competitions, please visit the RUFORUM website at http://www.ruforum.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=66&Itemid=58

- *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 by the last week of every month ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Project Inception Planning Workshop** will be held at the Ranch on the Lake on the 2-6 April, 2009

Web 2.0 Training for E-content Development is scheduled for 22-26 June 2009 at the Imperial Botanical Hotel, Entebbe Uganda.

Call for Proposals: RUFORUM has issued calls for proposals for various undertakings. Please visit www.ruforum.org for more information.

RUFORUM /FORUM Alumni are invited to join the Association Group on Facebook. Visit <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=73960179454&ref=nf> to register and participate.

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

More News Inside →

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NEWS & EVENTS

SADC Training Workshop



Group Photo of participants and trainers during the Workshop

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Implementation and Coordination of Agricultural Research and Training Project supported a training workshop on Proposal Development, Scientific Writing and Communication Skills Enhancement for National Agricultural Research Systems staff. The Workshop was implemented by RUFORUM and held 24 -26 April, 2009 at the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI) Conference Room in Arusha Tanzania. A total of 28 participants attended the workshop. The Workshop was a followup workshop to a previous one held in Gaborone, Botswana with similar objectives.

The workshop was officially opened by Prof. Adipala Ekwamu in a speech delivered by Prof. Robert Obura. He gave a detailed presentation of RUFORUM activities. Ms. Jane Alumira informed participants on the expectations from the Workshop.

The workshop was facilitated by Dr. Paul Nampala, Dr. JS Tenywa and Prof. Robert Obura (resources person) and Ms. Irene Birungi and Ms. Joan Apio. Enthusiastic participants from the SADC region promised to brief their colleagues about the knowledge that they had attained from the workshop, develop competitive proposals targeting SADC –ICART and other Calls, and most importantly train others in PPD & publications and network with each other.



Above: Dr. John Steven Tenywa facilitating the group

“RUFORUM thanks all participants who were able to attend the Training workshop and for making it a great success”



Above: Jane Alumira from SADC briefing participants



Prof. Tagwira Appointed Vice Chancellor at Africa University

Professor Fanuel Tagwira was appointed as the substantive Vice Chancellor of Africa University, effective 1 April 2009. Professor Tagwira succeeded Professor Murapa who retired at the end of 2007. Subsequent to joining Africa University in 1992, Prof. Tagwira rose through the ranks of Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture. Africa University is one of the member universities of RUFORUM located in Mutare, Zimbabwe. We congratulate Professor Tagwira on this appointment.

Congratulations to Prof. R. Okalebo on delivery of his Inaugural Lecture at Moi University on 26th March, 2009. A copy of the Lecture abstract is presented below.

Recognising the Constraint of Soil Fertility Depletion and Technologies to Reverse it in Kenyan Agriculture

Moi University's 6th Inaugural Lecture



The agricultural Sector is central to most African economies and it is a key for the daily survival of human populations. In Kenya, the sector contributes up to 25% of total gross domestic product (GDP) and about 60% of the export earnings, mainly in form of cash crops (tea, coffee, pyrethrum, horticultural products). It also accounts for 80% of the income and employment opportunities for many livelihoods, especially the rural areas.

However, this sector is undergoing stress, being contributed by multiple constraints, such as climate variability or climate change with its resultant frequent and prolonged droughts that contribute to widespread crop failures. Soil degradation on the other hand, has resulted in huge losses of fragile unprotected surface soil which carry through erosion, the nutrients needed to produce healthy and high yielding crops. Under these circumstances, low and declining crop yields are evident on smallholder farms such as the common maize yields below 0.5 t ha⁻¹ per season (less than 6 bags ha⁻¹) frequently obtained from low input agriculture in western Kenya. To reverse this situation of food insecurity, there are proven and effective technologies which can restore soil fertility and hence improve maize yields up to 3 to 5 t ha⁻¹ per season (33 to 55 bags ha⁻¹) on the average. Adoption of these technologies will enhance food security.

9th African Crop Science Society Conference, Cape Town, South Africa

The African Crop Science Society and the local management committee cordially invite you to attend the 9th African Crop Science Conference to be held at the Southern Sun Cape Sun Hotel in Cape Town from September 28 - October 1, 2009.

Conference Theme

The conference theme is "**Science and technology supporting food security in Africa**". Aspects such as agronomy, horticulture, crop improvement and physiology, post harvest handling and food sciences, rural socio-economics and agricultural extension and education, agricultural economics, agricultural microbiology, crop genetics and biotechnology, agricultural chemistry, integration of livestock in crop production, soils and agricultural engineering sciences, water sciences, environmental sciences, biodiversity and natural resources management will, therefore, be covered.

Conference Venue

Southern Sun Cape Sun is located close to Cape Town City Centre. The Southern Sun Cape Sun offers majestic views of the glorious mountain, bustling harbor and Robben Island. This hotel maintains a traditional Cape hospitality of the highest standard, and perfectly captures the splendor of the surrounding city. The hotel has a shuttle service to the popular V&A Waterfront with its range of restaurants, wine bars and stores. Every detail exudes style, from the luxurious, elegant accommodation, fine restaurant and exceptional banqueting facilities, to the superb Le Lounge Café. The Southern Sun Cape Sun hotel is the perfect base from which to explore the beauty of South Africa and the "Mother City", and discover the many historic and scenic places of interest.

For more information on important dates, registration and submission of abstracts please visit <http://www.acss2009.up.ac.za/>

RUFORUM Secretariat Team Building Retreat

The RUFORUM Secretariat deems the wellbeing of its staff as being critical to its efficiency and performance. In cognizance, a team building workshop was held 2-4 April at Entebbe, Uganda. The Team Building Exercise sought to strengthen team skills, promote understanding of RUFORUM goals, objectives and overall mission of RUFORUM and most importantly, seek to enhance balancing of the different areas of staff lives (such work, family and religion among others).



Left: Dr. Ekaya Leading colleagues through a team building exercise. **Right:** Staff at one of the

RUFORUM will continue to review our progress in implementing the lessons learnt from this team building session and what areas need to be strengthened so as to enhance performance.

Work Life Balance

Staff are urged to balance work and social commitments so as to achieve a balanced lifestyle

RUFORUM GRADUATE RESEARCH GRANTS – CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Call ID: [RU/CGS/GRG/30/06/09](#)
 PROPOSAL DEADLINE: [JUNE 30TH, 2009](#); For selection in late August 2009

BACKGROUND

RUFORUM has received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support capacity building at graduate level and to link universities more closely with rural communities and research and development agencies. This call has very tight deadlines because we would like the research to be initiated as soon as possible. Thereafter there will be an open call for proposals to be presented to the biannual Technical Committee selection meetings. Also, consult the attached guidelines for writing Graduate Research Grants proposals.

For more information on RUFORUM, please visit www.ruforum.org

TIME FRAME for Call ID [RU/CGS/GRG/30/06/09](#)

Deadline for Proposal submission to RUFORUM Offices by **30th June 2009**; Compliance Review and send to External Reviewers by **6th July 2009**; External Reviewer to return proposals with comments to Secretariat by latest **27th July 2009**; Secretariat to return to PIs by **29th July 2009**; PIs to return to Secretariat by latest **14th August 2009**; Secretariat to compile proposals for review by Technical Committee meeting by **21st August 2009**; Results from the selection will be communicated to PIs by **mid September** at the latest.