

RUFORUM MONTHLY

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

RUFORUM'S FIFTH AGM HELD IN MOMBASA

"The graduates of today lack the value, innovativeness and commitment required to support agricultural development"

RUFORUM held its Fifth Annual General Meeting 26-29 August, 2009 at Serena Beach Hotel and Spa in Mombasa, Kenya. The Annual General Meetings are held in recognition of the need for efficient and effective governance of RUFORUM. The meeting was attended by Vice Chancellors from the RUFORUM 25 member universities and other Higher Education officials from within and outside Africa.

See full Story on Page 2.



Above: Prof. Wangari Maathai at the Meeting Opening

- *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

Climatic Change and Trans-boundary Animal Diseases (TADS) Meeting. Entebbe-Uganda. 13-16 October, 2009 organised by RUFORUM and ATPS-Nairobi

Launch of the Regional MSc Course in Research Methods at JKUAT. 19-23 October, 2009 Nairobi, Kenya.

CTA/RUFORUM Agricultural Science and Technology Innovations (ASTI) Workshop. 26-30 October, 2009 Addis Abba, Ethiopia

Global Consortium for Higher Education and Research for Agriculture (GCHERA) Meeting 23-26 November, 2009. Nairobi, Kenya

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

RUFORUM HOSTS FIRST IFS REGIONAL HUB IN AFRICA



Above: Prof. Ana Maria Cetto, IFS Board Chair

Established over 40 years ago in Sweden, the International Foundation for Science (IFS) has launched the first ever regional hub outside Sweden in Eastern Africa hosted in RUFORUM Secretariat, Kampala, Uganda. Since 1972, IFS has worked in developing countries to support young researchers to build their scientific capacity and to-date 6,800 grants have been awarded in more than 100 developing countries. However, with growing interests in quality and efficiency for individual researchers, and opportunities for local and regional partnerships and collaborations, a presence in the regions has become necessary.

(Continued on page 3)

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; Website: www.RUFORUM.org.



RUFORUM'S FIFTH AGM HELD IN MOMBASA

RUFORUM held its Fifth Annual General Meeting 26-29 August, 2009 at Serena Beach Hotel and Spa in Mombasa, Kenya. The meeting was attended by Vice Chancellors from the RUFORUM 25 member universities and other Higher Education officials from within and outside Africa. At the opening, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laurette stressed the following:



RUFORUM Board Members during the Annual General Meeting

1. The need to educate farmers on the negative impacts of poor farming practices on the environment;
2. The need to provide environmental education at primary level in African countries. This will ensure that all persons that could potentially hold higher office will have basic understanding of the environment;
3. The need to strengthen university involvement and engagement with rural communities to manage the environment and strengthen agricultural value chains and knowledge systems. In her own words, "We need to get our hands dirty".
4. The need to engage with policy makers and other stakeholders to ensure mass adoption and use of farmer management practices that are scientifically sound and protect the environments;
5. The need for Universities to speak out on political issues where evidence is clear that a new approach is required for the betterment of the resource poor peoples in Africa;
6. Universities and their partners to train students to be community oriented, to be problem analyzers and solvers and to instill fundamental values required for community service such as innovativeness, integrity, changed mind-sets and commitment.

During the Annual General Meeting, progress report of the

Secretariat was presented. Highlights of the Secretariat Report included;

- Funding for RUFORUM activities had increased from the annual budget average of US\$2.5 million to projected US\$ 7.4million in the 2009/10 financial period;
- The RUFORUM Board established an International Advisory Panel to promote activities of RUFORUM globally. The panel includes Dr. Monty Jones, FARA Executive Director and Dr. Gebisa Ejeta from Purdue University, USA; the ASARECA Executive Secretary, Dr. Seyfu Ketema; The former Vice President of the Rockefeller Foundation, Dr. Joyce Mook; Dr. Thomas Egwang, Executive Director of the African Academy of Science, Ms. Judith Francis; The Senior Programme Manager responsible for Science and Technology at the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA-EU, Netherlands); Dr. Leif Christoffson, Former Director, African Environment Division, World Bank; and one lady still to be identified;
- RUFORUM legal status changed from a Not for Profit Limited Company to an International Non Government Organisation as of January 2009;
- RUFORUM research grants to universities re-designed to support linking universities to rural communities and strengthening partnership with other actors in the agricultural value chain and knowledge systems;
- The staff capacity at the RUFORUM Secretariat had been strengthened by recruitment of 4 Program Managers, 4 Assistants and an accountant;
- The joint Regional PhD programmes had been launched; 80 PhD students are studying at Makerere University, University of Malawi, additional 40 will start in 2010;
- The Secretariat has also embarked on revitalisation of its national chapters to assure relevance and linkage to its national partners;

The Annual General Meeting and RUFORUM Board agreed on the following targets, amongst others for 2009/2010;

- Holding a Ministerial conference for Higher Education in Africa in 2010;
- Strengthening capacities of the RUFORUM Universities to harness ICTs for research, training and outreach;
- Strengthening engagement of Universities with farming communities.

RUFORUM HOSTS FIRST REGIONAL HUB IN AFRICA



Dr. Specioza Kazibwe, Former Vice-President of Uganda, addressed the delegates at the Launch

Since 1972, IFS has worked in developing countries to support young researchers to build their scientific capacity and to-date 6,800 grants have been awarded in more than 100 developing countries. However, with growing interests in quality and efficiency for individual researchers, and opportunities for local and regional partnerships and collaborations, a presence

in the regions has become necessary.

The establishment of the Eastern Africa hub is, therefore, part of a new IFS decentralization process aimed at enhancing the functional role of IFS at individual and strategic/institutional research levels but with special emphasis on supporting women scientists. The hub will serve ten countries in the Eastern Africa region namely: Burundi, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Madagascar, Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Uganda.

Eastern Africa represents one of the regions with the majority of IFS grantees (about 500 grantees awarded as of June 2009). The IFS hub in Eastern Africa hub is, envisaged to:

1. Bring IFS closer to the community of the many young scientists in the region

2. Position IFS in the context of the African research landscape
3. Facilitate contacts between IFS and African Science and higher education institutions
4. Intensify IFS presence by arranging meetings and workshops

In these activities, the Eastern African hub will prioritize supporting of women scientist to pursue scientific career. The meeting which was attended by over 100 women from different parts of Africa and beyond including Leading personalities such as the former Vice President Dr. Specioza Kazibwe; the Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development of Uganda, Hon. Gabriel Opio; and the IFS Board Chair Prof Ana Maria Cetto attended the event.



Participants who attended the IFS Launch 2nd October 2009 Uganda

RESEARCH GRANT OPPORTUNITIES AT IFS

IFS offers research grants of up to USD12,000 (equipment, supplies, literature, local travel and manpower) to citizens of developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa under 45 that completed their last academic degree (M.Sc. and above) in the last five years. Candidates must be attached to a national or regional research organization in a developing country. For more information, please visit www.ifs.se or write to Dr. Jane Bemigisha (j.bemigisha@ruforum.org).

RUFORUM RECIEVES FUNDING FROM IDRC

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC), based in Ottawa, Canada has provided a research grant to RUFORUM for US\$497,276 to support PhD students registered at the University of Nairobi Dryland Resource Management Programme, Sokoine

University of Agriculture Soil and Water Management Programme, and the University of Malawi Aquaculture and Fisheries and Agricultural Resource Economics Programmes. A total of 28 PhD students will benefit from this support. The funds will also support skill enhancement in the areas of proposal development, scientific writing & data management and attendance of conferences for staff and students.

RESHAPING AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES FOR RELEVANCE



Judith Francis (CTA), Dr. Clesensio Tizikara (SADC) and Prof. Didier Pillot at the Meeting of Deans and Pro-Vice Chancellors

A meeting of African Pro Vice- Chancellors and Deans of faculties of Agriculture and related sciences was held 31st August to 4 September in Mombasa, Kenya. The meeting was organized by the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), the African Network for Agriculture and Agroforestry Education (ANAFE) and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM).

The meeting was opened by the Vice Chancellor Kenyatta University, Prof. Olive Mugenda, who made a special plea for support for Higher Education in Africa and showcased efforts being made to transform an African University into a world class University with development orientation. The overall objective of the meeting was to develop an agenda for reshaping agricultural tertiary education in African universities to better contribute to improvement in African agricultural performance, employment as well as food and nutrition security. More specifically, the meeting set out to:

1. Facilitate dialogue and information and knowledge exchange amongst African and non-african universities;
2. Identify priority policy interventions and strategies for strengthening tertiary education, training, research and outreach in agriculture and science;
3. Strengthen inter and intra-regional partnerships and international alliances to advocate for increasing investments in tertiary education for agricultural and rural development; and
4. Develop a plan responding to Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) for reshaping tertiary education for agricultural and rural development in Africa.

The Meeting provided an excellent opportunity for RUFORUM, the Deans and other stakeholders to present to the international knowledge platform their initiatives or contribution in agricultural development in Africa through responsive training, research and outreach programmes. At the end of the meeting, a joint communiqué was released to underscore and point critical action points to address priority issues related to reshaping African universities for relevance to societal needs. **See full Meeting Communiqué on Page 6.**

The participants made individual and institutional commitment to the meeting agreements and called upon Governments, private sector, civil society, development partners, Vice Chancellors, Rectors, Governing Boards and Senates of African universities to facilitate and support the calls for action set out in the meeting.



Above clockwise: Dr. Isaac Kosgey (Dean, Egerton University); Dr. Julius Ochuoduo (Dean, Moi), Dr. Rufaro Madakadzi (AGRA) and Dr. Matia George (Dean, Bunda College of Agriculture) during a group work session



Prof. Daniel Rukazambuga (Dean, FA, University of Rwanda) listens attentively

News and Events



Mr. Wagaba Henry is a Ugandan PhD student registered at Makerere University (REG. NO: 2008/HD02/14644U) holding an MSc. Molecular Biology (K.U.Leuven) (2006-2008) and BSc. Biochemistry (Makerere University) (2001-2004). His MSc. thesis was titled "Activity of native promoters in back-transformed transgenic banana lines". He has experience in tissue culture and plant transformation systems. His current PhD research is on developing resistance to cassava brown streak disease in cassava (*Manihot esculenta*) using RNA interference and coat protein mediated approaches. He worked under IITA-Uganda from 2004 to 2006, on transformation of East African Highland Bananas (EAHBs) for resistance to *Xanthomonas Campestris* bacterial disease. hwagaba@gmail.com or hwagaba4@yahoo.com



Dr. Jane Bemigisha is the Programme Manager at the RUFORUM secretariat, handling IFS Eastern Africa hub activities. She holds a PhD in Natural Resources Management/ Production Ecology and Resource Conservation from the International Institute for Geo-information Science and Earth Observation (ITC)/Wageningen University, The Netherlands. Her research was on the use of hyper-spectral Remote Sensing and Participatory GIS for mapping livestock grazing intensity and vegetation in Transhumant Mediterranean conservation areas (2008). As part of her PhD and previous research, she has integrated scientific, expert and local indigenous knowledge at Lake Naivasha Animal Sanctuary, Kenya; the Drakensburg area, Kwazulu Natal, South Africa; Majella National Park, Italy and various research in Uganda. She has undertaken various consultancies including the development and delivery of tailor-made courses in the field of natural resources management and use of geo-information tools. She can be contacted at: j.bemigisha@ruforum.org

SADC-RUFORUM Proposal Training and Impact on Research



Above: One of the participants sharing attained Skills with Colleagues at Kabwe Research Station

Mashuta Kalebe from Zambia Agriculture Research Institute Kabwe Research Station attended training in proposal writing organized by RUFORUM

and SADC at ESAMI in Tanzania managed to share his training in Proposal writing skills with colleagues at Kabwe Research Station. He is now conducting more hand-on training for other research scientist in Zambia. He is also engaged in techniques of Soil Mapping on a 100,000 hectares work program in Lufwanyama District, in Copperbelt Province. 30 day field using GPS and GIS is

being done to derive a soils map for Investment Planning and Land Demarcations. Thereafter Mr. Mashuta will train the Officers in report writing and will make a presentation of the Land Use Capabilities of the land and submit the reports and maps to the District Council for Land allocations and infrastructure layout. He can be contacted at mashutak@yahoo.com



RUFORUM participates in the Africa Consultation of the Global Consortium for Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD)

RUFORUM participated in the just concluded face to face Africa consultation of the Global Consortium on Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD) held 5 -7 October in Accra Ghana. GCARD was created as a platform for strengthening the contribution of agricultural research towards meeting the Millenium Development Goals on a global scale by improving its re-sourcing, impacts and accountability of agricultural research to intended beneficiaries.

GCARD will now service the functions previously planned to be undertaken by the Triennial Conference of the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR) on one hand and the Annual General Meeting of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR).

The GCARD process provides a consultation mechanism for wide stakeholder group to enhance the global AR4D system. The first GCARD will be held in Montpellier, France from 28th to 31st March 2010. Its organisation is led by GFAR in collaboration with the Consortium and Independent Science and Partnership Council (now being formed) of the CGIAR.

To enhance the effectiveness of the Montpellier GCARD event, a series of consultations are being conducted at regional and global levels to capture contributions of all agricultural research and development (ARD) actors towards achieving GCARD's objectives.

This process is being undertaken worldwide and will converge in Montpellier to come up with a global agenda to gather support for the programme. The regional processes in Africa are coordinated by FARA.



Above: Participants who attended the Africa Consultation of the Global Consortium for Agricultural Research for Development workshop.

COMMUNIQUE ON RESHAPING AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES FOR RELEVANCE

Communiqué issued at Mombasa 4th September 2009 by The Meeting of Pro-Vice Chancellors and Deans from Agriculture and Related Sciences

We, the Pro-Vice Chancellors and Deans from Agriculture and allied disciplines of 37 African universities (Annex 1) met in Mombasa, Kenya from 31st August – 4th September 2009 to address priority issues related to reshaping African universities for relevance to societal needs:

Accepting that meaningful development is dependent on there being visionary leadership and sufficient political will to ensure that the necessary changes are effected

Recalling the important role of African universities in economic development and concerns that have been raised about inadequacies of human and institutional capacity that are, and will be, constraints on the development of the Continent's agricultural and rural sectors;

Noting the high population growth rates estimated to raise Africa's population to 1.8 billion by 2050, challenges such as hunger, unemployment, climate change and water scarcity and increased demand for higher education and the proliferation of tertiary institutions and that public investment in universities has not kept pace;

Noting the need to develop agriculture in the face of challenges from HIV and AIDS, declining land and water resources, climate change, changing disease patterns including the threat of emerging epizootics;

Emphasizing the need to respond to the calls from the African Union and NEPAD for urgent action to revitalize graduate and postgraduate agricultural education

to produce graduates who are dynamic, innovative, able to apply knowledge, confident, resourceful, ethical, and with communication skills and with hands on experience;

Believing that positive change actions taken by African universities must be supported by national governments, Africa's development partners, and overseas partner universities;

Stressing the universities commitment, not only to promoting improved learning, but also to demanded research and open collaboration with other actors in the agricultural research systems including private enterprise to enhance Africa's capacity for agricultural innovation;

Reaffirming our commitment to collaboration between African universities, governments and partner institutions based on mutual interests and value adding capacities to contribute effectively to achieving national development;

Recognizing that the universities require partnerships with non-state actors and the private sector for ensuring relevance of their curricula and research for the production of knowledge that can address all aspects of sustainable development;

Acknowledging the essential role of universities in producing high-calibre human resource and conducting research that respond to economic, social and environmental priorities and the support that Africa's development partners, including the European Union, the United Nations and its Specialised Agencies and Programmes, bilateral agencies, charitable foundations, private sector and other organizations, have provided in the generation of knowledge for human and social development;

Appreciating the contribution of our partners who participated in the Mombasa meeting (Annex 2)

Concluded that reshaping African universities for relevance will require the following actions:

Re-establishing financial viability

Reshaping African universities for relevance is contingent on universities being perceived as relevant to society, governments, development partners and foundations achieving their development objectives and in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This is a prerequisite for increased and improved quality funding that is needed to restore standards of teaching, learning, research and outreach to interna-

tional standards making universities capable of delivering what is expected of them in the context of national and regional development and agricultural led growth

Management and leadership:

Universities must adopt more businesslike and business friendly management systems so as to be more competitive for high calibre staff and for investment in upgrading and maintaining efficient operations and quality facilities. To achieve and sustain that they must provide management and leadership training and refresher courses for senior and middle level managers and introduce leadership training into undergraduate curricula.

Infrastructure

The universities must work more closely with their governments and other stakeholders if they are to increase impact and attract the investment they need to increase, maintain and equip facilities to achieve international standards for high quality training and research in support of national development. A most urgent need is to bring ICT infrastructure up to the standard required to make the universities effective in modern knowledge economies.

Pre-university teaching:

Universities should encourage interaction with primary and secondary schools both on and off campus to improve students interest in agriculture as a source of fulfilling careers and to improve science and agricultural teaching in schools. This requires improving students' understanding that agriculture is much more than hoeing and weeding offering career opportunities suited to a wide range of interests and capabilities.

Enrolment:

The universities must provide, and ensure that candidates for university entrance are aware of, opportunities for cutting edge learning experiences that will result in graduates being able to be self employed entrepreneurs or find jobs. This requires motivated and highly trained staff, well equipped facilities and modern approaches to promoting learning.

Curricular development:

In a rapidly changing world universities must become more adapt at changing their curricula to ensure that their graduates will be fit-for-purpose in the industry in which they will find themselves. To ensure that Africa will have the required human and institutional capacity for agricultural innovation all graduates should be supported

in learning to reach and keep themselves at the cutting edge of their disciplines and professions and that should be supplemented by training in the personal mastery and systems skills required for them to succeed in multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional innovation teams and systems.

Increasing the output and impact of research:

Universities must integrate themselves into national and regional agricultural research systems and agribusiness to be better positioned to fulfil their mandates for foresight and preparing their nations for the future and to collaborate on research on the basis of their comparative and competitive advantages and thereby raising impact of the innovation system as a whole.

After graduation support and engagement with industry:

Africa is in a paradox of having enormous agricultural potential and yet not having enough jobs for agricultural graduates. The solution lies in developing a new generation of entrepreneurs capable of turning opportunities into job creating enterprises. Critical to the success of young graduates is the support of experienced, well qualified and highly motivated mentors in academia, research and industry and opportunities for internships.

Merit and excellence

Every university should strive to be a centre of excellence by identifying its strengths and build on them to collaborate more effectively in multi-institutional innovation systems and well executed quality assurance, supported by adequate human and physical resources, is essential to the achievement of excellence. Provision should be made for retooling to keep staff current with advances in their subject areas and pedagogy.

Networking and linkages

The core characteristics of institutions and individuals who are successful innovators are openness, inclusiveness and willingness to share knowledge and resources and these principles must be adopted not only in the training provided but also in the behaviour of the university internally between faculties and departments and externally towards other training and research institutions, governments and private enterprises. The universities must also collaborate with each other and other training institutions, agricultural research organizations and agri-businesses to form cohesive and effective agricultural innovation systems.

Advocacy and outreach:

Universities, whether they are public or private institutions, must be absolutely relevant to societal needs. For public universities to be adequately funded they must be seen by Ministries of Agriculture, Education, Science, Commerce and Industry, Finance and other relevant authorities as being indispensable to agricultural development. In this regard the agricultural colleges and universities and allied faculties must be mainstreamed in national planning, implementation and research. Universities in countries committed to the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) must be mainstreamed in the roundtable planning and country compact processes to ensure adequate human and institutional resources for successful implementation of the compacts.

While we commit ourselves to responding to the above challenges with all the means available to us:

We call upon Vice Chancellors, Rectors, Governing Boards and Senates of our universities to facilitate and support the calls for action set out in this communiqué.

We urge them to take steps to ensure that universities are recreated for relevance so that they will be seen by policy makers and leaders of private and public enterprises as being essential to national and regional development.

We further urge them to encourage, enable and facilitate greater public awareness of not only what the universities are doing for society but as, or even more, importantly what the universities could and should be doing if they were properly resourced.

We pledge to initiate and support change for relevance and to engage with policy makers, development partners and foundations to improve the quality of teaching, research and outreach and complement their efforts to attract and mobilise investment in African universities for the purpose of building Africa's capacity to build capacity for agricultural innovation.

We ask governments, Africa's development partners, foundations and private firms and investors to discard the stereotype image of African universities and to be open to new mutually advantageous collaboration.