RUFORUM Quarterly Report for the Period October-December 2016

Summary
This report provides a summary of activities undertaken by the RUFORUM Secretariat and achievements accomplished during the period 1st October to 31st December 2016. The main activity undertaken was the Convening of the Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016 that brought together 850 higher education stakeholders, including 248 graduate students from across the globe to showcase university research and training activities, and lay strategies for improving higher education quality and relevance in Africa. The overall theme of the Conference was “Linking Agricultural Universities with Civil Society, the Private Sector, Governments and other Stakeholders in support of Agricultural Development in Africa”. Representatives were from Universities (82%), Research Institutions (9%), Non-Governmental Organizations (5%), Private Sector (2%) and other government agencies (2%). The Conference included: Six (6) meetings of the RUFORUM statutory organs, 37 exhibitors, 230 posters presentations, seven (7) plenary sessions and 49 parallel sessions and side events. Other key highlights for the period were:

1. During the Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016, Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, formally announced the Committee of Ten African Heads of State and Government to champion Education, Science and Technology in Africa as part of the efforts to support the realization of African Union’s Agenda 2063. See https://blog.ruforum.org/category/5th-biennial-conference/.

2. Convened a meeting of technical experts from ministries of education, science and technology of the governments of Benin, Egypt, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, South Africa, and Uganda. The meeting Communiqué called for the key actions towards strengthening higher education in Africa including the need to escalate post graduate training and staffing in African universities.

3. Participated in high level policy meetings to stimulate science dialogue and policy support including: meetings with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the President of Mauritius and Ministers from various countries to discuss higher agricultural education in Africa prior to the planned meeting of the Committee of 10 African Heads of State and Government Championing Education, Science and Technology and the wider AU Heads of States Summit. The AUC Commissioner of Human Resources Technology (HRST) recommended that the agreed frameworks be implemented by African States and Governments to ensure funding to the Higher Education Sector in Africa. These engagements with African national governments to support higher education are part of RUFORUM’s role as a network that fosters university engagement in Africa’s agriculture and broader Science and Technology, and a voice for higher education in the continent.

4. Conducted leadership and management reflection meeting for African Vice Chancellors leading to the formation of a Platform that brings together African universities’ leaders and managers to champion economic development in Africa. This platform will be used for continuous sharing of information, lessons and best practices in leadership to ensure that African Universities are strategically contributing to economic growth and development of the continent.
5. Expanded programmatic and geographical scope of RUFORUM Network to 66 member universities in 26 African countries with presence in each of the eight regional economic communities of the African Union. This programmatic focus is aimed at strengthening member universities to be more responsive to national developmental challenges in the Continent, especially in the agricultural sector.

6. Engaged African University Principals and Deans to enhance their awareness of gender issues and to initiate and promote strategies that promote gender equality in African Universities as part of the efforts to increase participation and voice of Women in higher education, research and development. This was done in partnership with African Women for Agricultural Development in Africa (AWARD).

7. Launched the RUFORUM Young Entrepreneurs Award (YEA) that was commissioned by H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Zuma, the Chairperson of African Union Commission (AUC). The inaugural award attracted 756 applicants from which 15 of the best entrepreneurial projects were selected, recognized and each provided with a seed fund of USD 2,000. The winners will continue to be supported by profiling and linking them to opportunities to support their growth. The call for applications was widely published on various online platforms across the continent.

8. Three requests for University membership of RUFORUM were received during the period. This continues to be a reflection point for the Secretariat as membership demand continues to increase. It will have implications for resourcing of the network.
Introduction
The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture is a network of 66 universities in Africa with mission to ‘strengthen the capacities of Universities to foster innovations responsive to the demands of smallholder farmers and value chains through the training of high quality researchers, the output of impact-oriented research, and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, market actors, national agricultural research and advocacy institutions, and governments’. RUFORUM Secretariat provides quarterly a report to summarise activities undertaken and achievements for the period. This report is for the period 1st October to 31st December 2016.

1. DEMAND DRIVEN TRAINING AND RESEARCH
   a) Competitive Research Grant (GRGs)
As part of the broad initiative to train innovative, employable graduates with practical research experience relevant to smallholder farmers, RUFORUM supported 248 students to attend the Biennial conference in Cape Town, South Africa. The Conference facilitated students to build social and professional networks and created space for interaction with senior researchers, academics and other stakeholders such as policy makers. The graduate students had opportunity to present their research to the platform through oral and poster presentation and prepare papers for the Conference Proceedings. This was aimed at building the capacity of these students in scientific scholarly writing and communication.

Under the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)–RUFORUM partnership, six pilot students successfully completed their field Attachment with International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dryland Areas (ICARDA) and developed recommendations from their research and experiences during the attachment. The students’ research addressed key constraints along value chains of key agricultural commodities in dry land ecologies (finger millets, barley, and sorghum).

Three thematic clusters were established to facilitate joint and cohort learning among Principal Investigators of RUFORUM supported Research. These clusters were; (a) livestock and Livelihoods, (b) Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and (c) Crop Production Technologies, Products and Value Chains. This process provided member universities with opportunity to reflect on their training delivery as well as engage non-academic stakeholders. Further, during the reporting period, RUFORUM initiated the development of a Master’s Degree program in Agri-Food Entrepreneurship at Gulu University. This is envisaged to be an innovative postgraduate program that will facilitate training and research to address the entrepreneurial challenge in agricultural systems and value chains faced by smallholder farmers.

   b) Community Action Research Programs (CARPs)
During the reporting period RUFORUM continued to engage with Member Universities and other stakeholders, including private sector to reflect on models for community action research that would catalyze adoption of innovative approaches and processes of re-aligning curriculum and delivery in tertiary agricultural education (TAE) while at the same time strengthen agricultural value chains. Below are the specifics of what was accomplished during the reporting period;
i. Developed CARP+ call for project proposals. The CARP+ seeks to enhance collaboration between universities and Tertiary Vocational Education Training Institutions (TVETs) institutions to achieve greater impact at smallholder level.

ii. Provided mentoring support to a research team on a livestock CARP at Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST). This CARP is leveraging on on-going initiatives, namely, Living lab and Arusha Eco-lab to facilitate community engagement. Through these engagements, the university attracted a 6-year grant of Euro 1.5 million from the Government of Belgium. Overall, these CARPs are leading to an emerging demand for scaling up university-community engagement actions and stimulating regional conversations on how universities can effectively support the delivery of agricultural extension and advisory services to the benefit of smallholder farmers.

c) Collaborative Regional MSc and course-based PhD Programs

The following are the key activities during the period:

i. In November 2016, fourteen (14) students (7 Males; 7 Females) successfully completed and graduated with Master’s Degrees in Research Methods from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. This brings to 100 the accumulated number of graduates who have so far graduated since the launch of the Master Program in 2009. The students were from Ethiopia, Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

ii. Facilitated and conducted cross-cutting skills enhancement training for 254 students in food security analysis and research dissemination for graduate students. The training exposed and equipped students with skills and broader understanding and conceptualisation of complexities affecting agricultural rural innovations.

iii. Organised dialogue meeting for 70 Deans and Principals of African universities in partnership with the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Governance on the needed reforms in Africa Higher Agricultural Education. This dialogue resulted into articulation of curriculum leadership requirements which were highlighted as: (a) building vision and setting direction; (b) understanding and developing people; (d) redesigning the organisation; and (c) managing the teaching and learning programs. The following recommendations were made if the needed proposed reforms were to occur: (a) reviewing curriculum implementation challenges in the agricultural sector in Africa; (b) developing strategies for effective agricultural curricula implementation in Africa; and (c) developing a collaborative framework for feedback in curriculum implementation in the RUFORUM Network.

iv. Convened three reflection events to assess progress of initiatives supported by DAAD, iAGRI and Carnegie Corporation of New York aimed at enhancing doctoral training in Africa. The outcome of these reflection events was the identification of factors such as leadership skills that have been helpful and making impact in career and professional development of graduates.

v. Brokered partnerships and collaborations among three member universities namely; Makerere University, University of Eldoret and Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) to constitute a team to review the curriculum of a regional programme, PhD in Aquaculture and Fisheries hosted in Malawi.

vi. Provided platform for the Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACEs) projects from Phase 2 to profile their planned training and research programmes and foster collaborations. The proposed interventions of ACEs were packaged and published as part of the RUFORUM working
2. INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING

a) Institutional Strengthening Grants (ISGs),
RUFORUM conducted a capacity gap analysis that led to the identification of critical areas that needed institutional support. In the process, 16 institutional strengthening grants were awarded to facilitate training of 100 MSc graduate students in Benin, Burundi, Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda. In addition, Makerere University in Uganda continued to support Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources to establish a Veterinary School.

b) A Graduate Teaching Assistantship Program (GTA)
Under GTA program additional 10 PhD placements were secured bringing the total number to 40 PhD placements since the inception of the program in 2014. The 2016 RUFORUM AGM committed to train additional 325 PhDs in the next five years under this arrangement.

c) Gender and enhancing the participation of women
RUFORUM in partnership with African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD) conducted a training for 58 Deans and Principals (ten females and 48 males) to promote gender equality in African universities so as to increase participation and voice women.

3. SERVICING THE NETWORK

a) Communication and Technology
As part of service provision to the Network, RUFORUM relies on communication and technology through multi-channel communications. The following activities were conducted during the quarter:

i. Trained 210 Social Media Reporters on the use of social media (Facebook, twitter, blogging, YouTube and photography) to facilitate reporting and dissemination of science outcomes in the agricultural sector and stimulate regional and continental online debate on higher agricultural education. A video of the training and its impact was produced and is available at https://youtu.be/tQUS_Mfeebo.

ii. Implemented a social media campaign on higher agricultural education that reached over six (6) million people.

iii. Strengthened the secretariat’s ICT platforms with the expansion of the internet bandwidth capacity to 6Mbps and installing a bandwidth management and monitoring system (Squid and Zibbax based on Linux platform).

iv. Developed a website for The MasterCard Foundation Project at RUFORUM (http://www.ruforum.org/MCF/)

vi. Participated in the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) and Makerere University joint agricultural and dissemination conference held 21-24 November, in Kampala. The four-day event attracted over 400 participants. RUFORUM supported 18 students to attend the Conference and make both oral and poster sessions. Mr. Boris M. Alladassi from Benin, an MSc Student of Plant Breeding and Seed Systems from Makerere University emerged as the best presenter of the Oral presentations. See link below for details. [https://blog.ruforum.org/2016/11/28/ruforum-student-wins-award-during-the-naro-mak-conference-2016/](https://blog.ruforum.org/2016/11/28/ruforum-student-wins-award-during-the-naro-mak-conference-2016/)

b) Knowledge hub for Agricultural Higher Education
Enhanced the availability of research outputs from member universities under the open access policy for all grantees. To date, 1,876 scholarly publications have been made accessible through the RUFORUM institutional repository thus meeting the demand of scientific community and development partners

c) RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016
Convened the Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016 with the theme “Linking Agricultural Universities with Civil Society, the Private Sector, Governments and other Stakeholders in support of Agricultural Development in Africa”. The Conference attracted well over 850 Participants with representation from Universities (82%), Research Institutions (9%), Non-Governmental Organization (5%), Private Sector 2% and Other Government Agencies (2%). The core business of the conference involved; Six (6) meetings of the RUFORUM statutory organs, 37 Exhibitions, 230 Posters presentations, Seven (7) plenary Sessions and 49 Parallel sessions and side events. Download the RUFORUM Biennial 2016 Conference communique’ on this link [RUFORUM 2016 Biennial Conference Communique’](https://youtu.be/N7yoK90IOKY), and the Documentary on this link [https://youtu.be/N7yoK90IOKY](https://youtu.be/N7yoK90IOKY).

d) Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
During the reporting period, RUFORUM continued to strengthen systems aimed at enhancing program quality through ensuring quality data collection and analytical capacities to enhance organization, learning and forward accountability.

i. Monitoring visit was conducted in Tanzania to assess the on-going implementation progress of the GRGs and CARP projects. The visitation team established that the GRG project is on track, while for the CARP, a number of recommendations were made including to enhance engagement between the research teams and the participating farmer associations in the innovation platform.

ii. Conducted the post Biennial Conference evaluation that revealed that the event a) stimulated critical thinking, (b) engaged on policy (c) enhanced networking among higher education practitioners and key stakeholders, and (d) raised awareness on the issues affecting Africa’s Higher education

iii. Developed an online platform for tracking and dissemination of RUFORUM impact. See the link [www.impact.ruforum.org](http://www.impact.ruforum.org)

iv. Produced four documentaries showcasing the impact and relevance of the African universities to small holder farmers. These are listed below and can be accessed on the adjacent links; “Farm
4. **NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND POLICY OUTREACH**

New partnerships were initiated with various agencies in line with RUFORUM Agenda and to bring on board expertise not resident at the Secretariat to implement the Strategic Business Plan.

a) **Research and training partnerships**

i. Partnership with Access Agriculture, to develop agricultural training videos in local languages. A MoU was signed and 139 students trained in integrating video mediated learning in higher education in Africa during the biennial conference held in Cape Town;

ii. Held side event to discuss systematic partnership between the CGIAR, universities, RECs and NARs partners. The recommendation of this discussion is being followed up with the CGIAR;

iii. Partnership with Enterprise Uganda and Restless Development was initiated to explore student mentorship and support for enterprise development;

iv. Hosted various visitors at the Secretariat including the ICRISAT Director General. See link for details; https://blog.ruforum.org/category/press-releases/.

b) **Engagement with the private sector**

i. Launched the RUFORUM Young Entrepreneurs Award (YEA) that was commissioned by H.E. Dr. Nkosazana Zuma, the Chairperson of African Union Commission (AUC). The inaugural award attracted 756 applicants from which 15 of the best entrepreneurial projects were selected, recognized and each provided with a seed fund of USD 2,000. The winners will continue to be supported by profiling and linking them to opportunities to support their growth. The call for applications was widely published on various online platforms across the continent. See links below for details

   a) https://blog.ruforum.org/2016/06/06/apply-now-young-african-entrepreneurs-competition/

   b) http://opportunitydesk.org/2016/06/03/young-african-entrepreneurs-competition-ruforum-2016/

   c) http://kasfarintheagropreneur.blogspot.ug/2016/06/participate-in-african-entrepreneurs.html

   d) https://tanzaniamun.blogspot.ug/2016/06/young-african-entrepreneurs-competition.html

Further, initiated dialogue with the Governments of Uganda, Kenya, Malawi, and Benin to explore possibilities supporting the young innovators that emerged among the top 139 finalists. See the following links profiling the young innovators from Malawi and South Africa: https://blog.ruforum.org/2016/12/06/new-publication-top-nine-young-innovators-and-entrepreneurs-from-malawi/; https://blog.ruforum.org/2016/12/05/new-publication-top-eight-young-innovators-and-entrepreneurs-from-south-africa/

ii. Held a consultation meeting with the South Africa Private Sector on 6th December at Lanzarac Hotel in Stellenbosch, South Africa. The meeting provided opportunities for dialogue between South
African private sector leaders, high net worth individuals, and other stakeholders on how African universities can enhance their responsiveness to private sector needs through improved partnership; and identified potential strategies for future engagement between the university and the private sector in Africa;

c) Policy and advocacy
i. RUFORUM continued to implement MoU with African Union Commission. The Committee of 10 Heads of State and Government championing education, science and technology was formally announced by Her Excellency Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on 18 December 2016 at the RUFORUM Biennial Conference. See link; https://blog.ruforum.org/category/5th-biennial-conference/
ii. Convened a meeting of Technical Experts from Ministries of Education Science and Technology of the Governments of Benin, Egypt, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, South Africa and Uganda to discuss governments’ response to higher education challenges and prepare for the Committee of 10. The Communique is available on this link; RUFORUM Biennial Ministerial Communique’ 2016
iii. Participated in various high level policy meetings to enhance science dialogue and policy support including: meetings with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the President of Mauritius, the Premier of Western Cape and Ministers from various countries to advocate for policy support to strengthen higher education in Africa

d) RUFORUM partnerships with global capacity building institutes
The Quarter saw a consolidation and operationalization of several efforts to broker partnerships with global Tertiary Agricultural Initiatives and institutions. Below are the highlights;

i. During the fifth African Higher Education Week and Biennial Conference, RUFORUM hosted the Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences (GCHERA) General Assembly and the World Agricultural Price Award ceremony http://www.gchera.com/gchera-laureate-2016-award-ceremony.

ii. Consolidated partnership with the European Alliance for Agricultural Research and Development (AGRINATURA) by co-convening four events including participation in the RUFORUM Annual General Assembly and joint meta learning for transformation of African Agricultural Higher Education. The two institutions have embarked on joint resource mobilization to operationalize the partnership initiatives.

iii. Organized a joint event in partnership with World Bank and the President of Mauritius to develop a collaborative Higher Education capacity development programme in Agriculture.

iv. Convened a meeting to initiate Russia-Africa Collaboration in the field of Soil Science, a new undertaking by the Eurasian Center for Food Security based at the Lomonosov Moscow State University and The World Bank. The meeting was attended by 36 participants from 18 countries. See this link below for details http://repository.ruforum.org/documents/russia-africa-collaboration-area-soil-science

5. STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT
a) Strengthening organization governance and management
Six (6) meetings of the RUFORUM statutory organs were held during the quarter as part of strengthening the organization governance and management. The meetings are:

i. The International Advisory Panel meeting was held on 16th October 2016 in Cape Town, South Africa

ii. The Finance and Administration Committee meeting was held on 16th October, 2016 also in Cape Town

iii. The Principals and Deans meeting was held on 17th October, 2016, where new leadership for Principals and Deans committee was elected

iv. The 15th RUFORUM Board of Trustees meeting was held on 17th October 2016 in Cape Town. The key outcome was the agreement among Vice Chancellors to train additional 325 PhD staff under the GTA arrangements.

v. The 12th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting was held on 18th October 2016 in Cape Town, South Africa where the assembly
   a) Accepted and endorsed the audit report for the financial year 2015/2016
   b) Formerly admitted 11 new member universities
   c) Agreed on the subsequent statutory meetings to be held as follows: 1) 2017 Annual General Meeting be held in Lilongwe, Malawi; 2) 2018 Biennial Conference be held in Nairobi, Kenya; 3) 2019 Annual General Meeting be held in Accra, Ghana;
   d) Approved Key target milestones for the 2016/17 financial period [http://wp.me/aUB9TW-GW](http://wp.me/aUB9TW-GW)

vi. In collaboration with Deloitte & Touche, the Vice chancellors held a one day reflection meeting on university leadership, management and Governance. This was on 15 October 2016 in Cape Town, South Africa.

b) Resource mobilization

To strengthen the financial position of RUFORUM, the following resource mobilization activities were implemented;

i. Officially launched the RUFORUM Alumni Network to support to resource mobilization

ii. Submitted proposals to the Government of Uganda to;
   a) Establish four additional African Higher Education Centers of Excellence in Ugandan universities,
   b) Establish a Programme to beef up staff capacity in Ugandan universities
   c) Establish a Research University in Uganda
   d) Provide Annual Subvention to the RUFORUM Network

iii. Submitted proposals to the Government of Kenya to;
   a) Establish additional four African Higher Education Centers of Excellence in Kenya
   b) Support a Programme to strengthen staff capacities in Kenyan Universities
   c) Provide Annual Subvention to RUFORUM

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During the reporting period, three new member universities from West Africa were admitted as member universities of RUFORUM. These are Institut Polytechnique Rural de Formation et de Recherche Appliqué (IPR/IFRA) in Mali; Federal University of Technology Owerri in Nigeria, and Université Sine Saloum El hadj Ibrahima NIASS (USSEIN) in Senegal. In addition, as part of strengthening RUFORUM’s presence in North Africa, University of Cairo from Egypt was also formally admitted. This brings the RUFORUM membership to 66 member universities in 26 African countries.
iii. Five teams were supported to submit Proposals to the Food & Business Applied Research Fund (ARF) of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Teams supported were from Mali, Benin, Uganda and Kenya.

iv. Supported teams to respond to the DFID Strategic partnerships for Higher Education reform (SPHEIR).

v. RUFORUM convened development partner meeting to share experiences on capacity building in higher education, building on RUFORUM’s experiences. The development partners agreed to meet annually with the next meeting scheduled to take place during the RUFORUM 13th AGM in Malawi (October/November 2017).

vi. Collaboration possibilities were explored between RUFORUM and the VLIR-UOS, a Belgium-based agency which supports partnerships between universities and University colleges in Flanders and the South looking for innovative responses to global and local challenges.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT QUARTER

In the next quarter, the following activities are planned:

i. Work with African Union Commission and Government of Malawi to convene a meeting of the Committee of 10 Heads of State championing Education, Science and Technology development in Africa

ii. Work with the African Union Commission and Government of Mauritius to host African Heads of State, Private Sector leaders, and Academne meeting to be held 19-21 March 2017 in Mauritius

iii. Facilitate the recruitment of academic staff to be trained at PhD level at different Member Universities under the RUFORUM’s Graduate Teaching Assistantship Program

iv. Recruit deserving students for training at Masters and undergraduate levels at Egerton and Gulu Universities under The MasterCard Foundation grant

v. Hold a Follow up reflection learning meeting for Vice Chancellors possibly during the Mauritius event of 19-21 March 2016

vi. Support teams to submit proposals to SPHEIR, Erasmus+ and Intra African Academic Mobility calls

vii. Launch the Fourth IMPRESSA competition to recognize three outstanding achievers from African universities in terms of leadership, research and training and contribution to society

viii. In preparation for the 2017 Annual General Meeting in Malawi work with Malawi institutions to identify and recognize three outstanding farmers/farmer groups and two young scientists (less than 40 years old)