

RUFORUM Quarterly Report for the Period October-December 2017

Summary

This report presents a summary of RUFORUM Secretariat activity progress and achievements made during the second quarter (October-December 2017) of the Financial Year 2017/18. The key highlights during the quarter were:

1. RUFORUM convened the 13th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting on 27th October 2017 at the Bingu International Conference Centre (BICC), Lilongwe Malawi. A total of 386 participants from over 40 countries including Vice Chancellors, Principals, Deans, University staff, students and key stakeholders in the agricultural and higher education sectors and Development Partners participated in the event. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is the supreme policy making organ of RUFORUM and is used to inform stakeholders about RUFORUM activities, and to agree on key activities to be undertaken in the following financial year. It is also used for lesson sharing and networking amongst the member universities and with other actors. The 2017 RUFORUM AGM was co-hosted by the Government of Malawi and the four public universities and a Technical College - *Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR)*, *Mzuzu University*, *Malawi University of Science and Technology (MUST)* and *University of Malawi (UNIMA)*, and *Nalikule College of Education*, respectively. The meeting approved the RUFORUM Vision 2030 Strategy; “*The African Universities’ Agenda for Agricultural Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (AHESTI)*”. An implementation plan is currently being developed to support the new Strategy. A functional analysis is also underway to restructure the Secretariat to ably service the Network in line with the Vision 2030 Strategy.
2. In line with the new Strategy, RUFORUM expanded membership from 66 to 85 member universities in 35 countries with significant growth in Central, North and West Africa. RUFORUM now operates in all the five geographical regions of the continent.
3. During the Malawi October 2017 AGM, the World Bank announced a commitment of US\$250 million towards Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa (SHAEA) initiative. The SHAEA Initiative will support establishment of anchor universities in 6-8 African countries to foster agricultural transformation, promote academic mobility across the continent and support strengthening university engagement in policy dialogues. RUFORUM is working with the World Bank on implementation modalities and engaging key strategic institutions in and outside Africa to support the SHAEA initiative. Follow-up meetings have since been held with a number of African governments, the Association of Public and Land Grants Universities in Washington DC, private sector (including YARA

and OCP Group in Morocco), National Research Foundation (South Africa), NUFFIC, NORAD, and a number of African regional Networks.

4. During the Quarter, RUFORUM Secretariat organised leadership and management training workshops for 79 Vice Chancellors and senior managers from African Universities as well as for 84 Principals and Deans. A number of staff from the RUFORUM Secretariat attended the training workshops. The trainings focussed on leadership and management capacity development for transformation, motivating diverse university stakeholders and talent management through identification and effective mentoring.
5. The Secretariat convened a Development Partners' meeting on 25th October 2107 in Lilongwe, Malawi as a follow up dialogue amongst Development Partners that was initiated in Cape Town, South Africa in October 2016 and continued at a meeting hosted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, USA in May 2017. The convening provided opportunity for agricultural development and capacity building stakeholders to build consensus on joint support mechanisms for developing human capital to address Africa's high-level skills constraints.
6. Ten outstanding achievers in different categories were recognized during the RUFORUM October 2017 Annual General Meeting: five (5) role model farmers, two (2) young scientists and three (3) university leaders (the IMPRESSA Award). The list of awardees is presented in the main report.
7. Eighteen (18) Discussion Papers on youth unemployment, entrepreneurship, funding Higher Education, Policy, Science, Technology and Innovation and Agricultural transformation were developed as part of the design of the RUFORUM Vision 2030 Strategy and to catalyse dialogue during the RUFORUM Malawi October 2017 Annual Meeting. These are available at <https://blog.ruforum.org/category/annual-general-meeting-2017/>. In addition, various stories (13), documentaries (18) and press releases (4) describing RUFORUM activities and their impact on beneficiaries were published. Further, 11 RUFORUM Weekly Newsletters were produced to share up to date information on opportunities (scholarships, Calls for Proposals etc.) and news related to agricultural higher education in Africa.

Introduction:

This report presents a summary of RUFORUM Secretariat activity progress and achievements made during the second quarter (October-December 2017) of the financial 2017/18. The details of progress made during the quarter are presented based on the RUFORUM strategic areas.

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 1: TRAINING, RESEARCH AND VOCATIONALIZATION

1.1 *Provide strategic oversight and technical backstopping support for implementation of RUFORUM sub-awards including FAPA, GRGs, CARPs and CARP+;*

During the reporting period, RUFORUM convened a meeting for 14 (10 males and 04 females) Principal Investigators (PI) to provide technical backstopping support for new projects that aim to enhance university community engagement and partnerships with Tertiary Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions under the RUFORUM Community Action Research Programmes (CARP+). The event provided opportunities to reflect, share lessons and experiences on how to enhance student practical skills and how universities could work more closely with TVET institutions. In addition, RUFORUM Secretariat continued to support through field visits and remotely the implementation of ongoing Graduate Research Grants (GRGs) awarded in 2014 and 2015. Accordingly, field monitoring visits were made to member universities in Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland and Tanzania.

Further, a new Call for Proposals for the Field Attachment Awards (FAPA) was issued with support from the United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). This round of FAPA recipients will be interned within FAO Projects across Africa. The Call attracted 33 applications from 11 females and 22 males. The majority of the proposals were from students at RUFORUM member universities in Uganda, Kenya, and Benin (33%, 24%, and 15%, respectively). The screening process is ongoing and successful applicants will be announced in February 2018. More information about the call can be found at <https://blog.ruforum.org/2017/10/31/special-call-for-applications-ten-ruforum-community-based-field-attachment-programme-awards/>.

Under this Action Area, during the RUFORUM October 2017 AGM, 10 recognition awards were given to outstanding achievers; five (5) role model farmers, two (2) young scientists both from Malawi, and three (3) IMPRESSA Awards to outstanding University leaders from across the continent.

- a) The two outstanding Young Scientist Awards from Malawi went to Dr. Chomora Mikeka and Dr. Tiwonge Davis, both from Chancellor College, University of Malawi
- b) Five recognition awards for model farmers went to the following;
 1. Mr. Dupo Mhlanga of Dika Mhlanga Village, TA Mtwalo, Mzimba
 2. Ms. Grace Malikebu of Malonje Village, GVH Chopi, TA Malemia, Zomba
 3. Ms. Ruth Kalima, of Roseberry Farms, Michiru, Blantyre
 4. Mrs. Ngabaghila Chatata of Thanthwe Enterprises
 5. Arnold Kasumbu, of Chakhuntha Village, TA Chiseka, Lilongwe
- c) The IMPRESSA Award went to the following;

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1. Prof. Bruce Sinsin, Rector, Abomey Calavi University, Benin (overall winner and he received US\$20,000)
2. Prof. Peter Mbatia, Principal and Vice Chancellor of University of Venda who was the first runner up and received US\$15,000
3. Prof. Fetien Abay Abera, President of the Research and Community Services, Mekelle University, who was the third runner up and received US\$10,000

1.2 Develop and implement a scaling strategy for the CARP+ to the wider RUFORUM network and award six new CARP+ Projects

The draft strategy for scaling out the Community Action Research Programme was developed to guide the scaling up process for wider participation from member universities outside the initial two focal universities in Kenya (Egerton University) and Uganda (Gulu University). In addition, a Call was issued to scale out the CARP+. Selected projects will be announced in February 2018.

1.3. Prepare a book on the status of Agricultural Tertiary Education in Africa

The Second authors' workshop for preparing a book on tertiary agricultural education in Africa was held on the side-lines of the 13th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting Week with the purpose of advancing the book development from the structured chapter outlines to full chapter drafts. The meeting developed a detailed scheme providing a comprehensive guide to authors on each of the book chapters.

1.4. Place 120 academic staff for PhD training through the Graduate Teaching Assistantships at Member Universities

RUFORUM Secretariat continued to facilitate the placements of University staff for PhD training in different universities under the Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) scheme. A cumulative total of 97 GTAs have been placed across the network since the inception of this initiative. During the October 2017 AGM, the RUFORUM Board endorsed the recommendation that GTA extends beyond Agriculture disciplines to cover Science, Technology and Innovations (STI) fields where there is dire capacity deficits. In this respect, a total of 150 Graduate Teaching Assistantship nominations were received from member universities and the Secretariat is engaging with prospective host universities for placements of the applicants. This is towards fulfilling the commitment of the Network to train 425 PhDs by the year 2022.

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 2: SERVICING THE NETWORK

2.1 Develop a RUFORUM Strategic Vision 2030 that outlines strategies for higher education's contribution to agricultural transformation by 2030 and RUFORUM's role;

During the reporting period, the Secretariat undertook wide stakeholder consultations and developed the RUFORUM Vision 2030 strategy that was approved by the RUFORUM Board and endorsed by the Annual General Assembly (AGM) in Lilongwe, Malawi. The RUFORUM Vision 2030 Strategy demands RUFORUM to reconfigure its initiatives into flagship programmes with deepened engagement with other higher education actors to achieve transformative results in the sector. The flagship initiatives are aimed at consolidating RUFORUM's functions of; (a) developing quality human resources and capacity required to intensify and increase Africa's agricultural productivity; (b) ensuring the products, processes and knowledge developed through university research reach down to value chain actors in the agri-food system to catalyse transformation; and, (c) marshalling resources and strategically allocating them to enable universities to transform into viable institutional entities responsive to national aspirations and conditions through intensive knowledge-sharing and collective action. In the next quarter the operational plan of the RUFORUM Vision 2030 will be finalised.

2.2. Strengthen ICT platforms to facilitate programme monitoring and evaluation, information access and knowledge management functions

The RUFORUM Secretariat continued to strengthen the use of information technology to support effective, decentralised learning, knowledge management and communication. RUFORUM in partnership with IFPRI/ASTI is developing an online portal on African Agricultural Higher Education Capacities (AgHed). During the Principals and Deans Business Meeting held on 24th October 2017 in Lilongwe Malawi, a session was organised to solicit feedback from the Principals and Deans from 85 member universities on their vision of the online portal in tracking and profiling Africa's Agricultural Higher Education capacities. Critically, the Principals and Deans observed the need to recognise the diversity of agriculture as a discipline to allow for uniform comparison within universities and across geographical regions. Currently, there is on-going field validation of data collected in the last quarter of the Financial Year 2016/17. Pretesting of the portal will commence in the upcoming quarter –January-March 2018 and subsequently, the portal will be launched during the October 2018 RUFORUM Biennial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya.

In the continuous efforts to increase organization's visibility and accountability, the following products were produced;

1. Eighteen (18) thought pieces highlighting issues on youth unemployment, entrepreneurship, funding Higher Education, Policy, Science Technology and Innovation and Agricultural Transformation. These
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are available at <https://blog.ruforum.org/category/annual-general-meeting-2017/>. A booklet of the complete series is available in English.

2. The first issue of the RUFORUM Impact stories entitled “*Bringing Science to Communities: Voices from the Field*”. This issue highlights stories from 13 RUFORUM Alumni whose work has had direct, positive impact on particular communities or industries
3. Four (4) Press Releases were issued:
 - i. New Publication: Part Two of the RUFORUM Working Document Series Vol. 14: <https://blog.ruforum.org/2017/10/04/new-publication-part-two-of-the-ruforum-working-document-series-vol-14/>
 - ii. Announcing Recognition Award Winners 2017: <https://blog.ruforum.org/2017/10/29/press-release-announcing-recognition-award-winners-2017/>
 - iii. FAO and RUFORUM Sign a New Partnership to train the Next Generation of Agricultural Change Agents: <https://blog.ruforum.org/2017/11/03/fao-and-ruforum-sign-a-new-partnership-to-train-the-next-generation-of-agricultural-change-agents/>
 - iv. Save the Date: The RUFORUM Sixth Biennial Conference, Confirmed for 22-26 October, 2018: <https://blog.ruforum.org/2017/10/27/save-the-date-the-ruforum-sixth-biennial-conference-confirmed-for-22-26-october-2018/>
4. Thirteen (13) story lines related to the 2017 RUFORUM Annual General meeting. These are available at <https://blog.ruforum.org/category/news/> and <https://blog.ruforum.org/category/annual-general-meeting-2017/>
5. Eighteen (18) Videos documentaries on Young Agri-Leaders (to be published), four documentaries - on the FAO and RUFORUM new partnership (<https://youtu.be/LtDstJaCqf4>), AGM 2017 Highlights (<https://youtu.be/fr1ZOO2kxmU>), a Focus on the Intra ACP training (<https://youtu.be/YvPxaKTwkGk>), and Leadership training for University Staff (to be published). These documentaries are available on our impact platform at <http://ruforum.org/impact/>

Further, the number of online followers continued to increase as follows: Mailing list – from 10,981 to 12,318, Twitter – from 5,320 to 5,456 followers, Facebook – from 21,849 to 21,721 followers (slight decline), and the Blog news portal at 8,190 subscribers. Top subscriber locations include Uganda at 40.0% (possibly due to location of Secretariat), USA at 16.2% and Kenya at 8.6%. Top countries accessing our news portal (<http://blog.ruforum.org/>) include Uganda, United States, Ghana, Sudan, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, Japan and Benin. Social Media engagement, Weekly digest and Networking meetings played a critical role in this increase. Eleven (11) editions of RUFORUM Weekly digest were released during the reporting period and shared through the blog at <http://blog.ruforum.org/>.

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 3: NEW PARTNERSHIPS AND POLICY OUTREACH

3.1. Hold at least one Development Partners' meeting to explore funding for RUFORUM

During the Quarter, the Secretariat convened a Development Partners meeting on 25th October 2107 as a follow on dialogue amongst partners that was initiated in Cape Town, South Africa in October 2016 and continued at a meeting hosted by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Seattle, USA in May 2017. The convening provided opportunity for agricultural development and capacity building stakeholders to build consensus on joint support mechanisms for developing human capital to address Africa's high-level skills constraints. Follow-up visits were made to; a) The Hague to discuss partnerships between RUFORUM and the Dutch Government; and b) Norway to hold discussions with NORAD.

3.2. Prepare at least 20 university teams to respond to calls for proposals to support research, education and training at member universities:

RUFORUM trained 33 faculty from 22 universities from 13 countries in transformative training and research. The training objective was to enhance faculty skills to develop and manage university and community transforming initiatives. Eleven (11) project ideas were developed for submission to the upcoming Intra Africa Mobility Programme of the European Commission. The areas of interest were Education, ICT, Agriculture, Environment Management, Engineering, Data Management, and Science. The Intra African Mobility Program promotes cooperation in the field of higher education to provide opportunity for MSc and PhD training across the continent; it also supports staff exchanges. More information is available at <https://youtu.be/YvPxaKTwkGk>.

RUFORUM in collaboration with AWARD formed multidisciplinary teams of students and faculty drawn from four member Universities in Malawi and trained them in proposal development. The write-shop provided opportunity for a focused engagement of participants to identify and initiate drafting concept notes in response to active calls. Further, 18 teams have been constituted to respond to DAAD in-region and in- country scholarship call expected to be announced during mid-2018. The scheme aims at supporting MSc and PhD training within the student's home country or in a university in another country. The coming call targets the East African Community countries and Ethiopia.

3.3. Develop and submit at least 5 proposals to support RUFORUM activities

During the period RUFORUM Secretariat engaged potential funding agencies including the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, OCP Morocco, World Bank, NUFFIC, JICA and NORAD, and develop Concept Notes highlighting the existing challenges and potential for universities in Africa to play a catalytic role in

agricultural transformation. Following these efforts, RUFORUM secured US\$ 1.5m grant from the Carnegie Cooperation of New York to provide post-doctoral training. Further, the network received £606,467 for PhD training, staff retooling and convening networking events for scientists and students from African universities for a period of five (5) years (2017-2021). This is part of a £6.2 Million grant from the Global Research Challenge Programme of UK to a consortium of UK and African partners led by International Institute for Environment and Development to develop the knowledge, relationships and research capacities needed to address food shortages while conserving agro-ecosystems in Africa.

3.4. Together with the World Bank facilitate the development of the SHAEA Project

The Secretariat co-hosted a consultative meeting involving the World Bank, RUFORUM, American Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) and other stakeholders on 28/10/2017 in Lilongwe LUANAR. Among others, the session aimed to provide a brief to potential university partners from Africa, North America and Europe on the current plans on the SHAEA project that is being developed by the World Bank and RUFORUM; and to provide opportunity for reflection on the types of partnerships and experiences on university-university partnerships based on lessons over the recent years and experiences from universities present. The Secretariat has also held discussion with the National Research Foundation (South Africa), OCP Morocco and with the Dutch Government to seek their participation in the SHAEA initiative. In addition, the Secretariat held consultations with Government representatives in Benin, Ghana, Cameroon, Cote D'Ivoire, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda on their possible participation in SHAEA initiative.

3.5. Jointly with the African Union Commission and Government of Malawi hold consultations, develop background papers and convene a Summit for the Committee of 10 Heads of State Championing Education, Science and Technology development in Africa

During the quarter, RUFORUM convened a planning meeting for the Summit of the 10 African Heads of State (C10) championing Education, Science and Technology development. The meeting brought together the Africa Union Commission (AUC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS-CEEAC), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), Southern Africa Development Cooperation (SADC), African Development Bank, Pan African University, Association of African Universities, Le Conseil Africain et Malgache pour l'Enseignement Supérieur (CAMES), Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) and Vice Chancellors. The taskforce noted that;

- a) While the mandate of C10 rests with the African Union Commission, RUFORUM should continue to play a catalytic role to provide input and engagement of all key HAE actors to contribute their knowledge and experience to the C10 agenda;
- b) Promoting Science, Technology and Innovation is key in expediting the transformation of agriculture capacity development.

- c) Research infrastructure and equipment are critical and national governments should invest in research to prevent brain drain from the continent.

The planning committee further recommended that;

- i. Other partners including UNESCO with expertise in Science and Technology be engaged to minimise duplication of work and ensure a closer collaboration between the AU, RECs and the universities in strengthening the seemingly weak working relationship between these three components for a vibrant higher education sector.
- ii. RUFORUM should clearly generate empirical evidence to be presented to the C10 articulating that investment in higher agricultural education has the potential to address the youth unemployment challenge, ensure food and nutrition security and ultimately avert malnutrition. The evidence should ground the notion that investment in universities create several outputs and outcomes that will render Africa to be more competitive on a global scale.

RUFORUM also convened a Policy round table dialogue involving Ministers of Education, Science and Technology from Liberia, Malawi, Uganda and representatives from Mozambique to provide broad direction to the various initiatives being supported/backstopped by RUFORUM and to provide further guidance in the development of RUFORUM Vision 2030 Strategy. The meeting recommended that:

- a) National government should increase investments in higher education institutions
- b) Remove policy barriers that limit access and use of information and communication technology to stimulate creation of knowledge assets
- c) Support local and international partnerships that address critical capacity needs for sustainable agricultural development
- d) National governments to participate in the World Bank initiative- Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa (SHAEA)

STRATEGIC ACTION AREA 4: STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

4.1. Convene statutory meetings of the RUFORUM Governance organs including the 13th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting in Malawi

The 13th RUFORUM AGM was held on 27th October 2017 resulting into the approval of RUFORUM reports for the Activity Year July 2016 – June 2017, and the 2017/2018 Annual Work plan and Budget. Key highlights of the meeting and recommendations are contained in the meeting communique in [English](#) and [French](#). The next AGM will be held in Nairobi, Kenya hosted by the University of Nairobi in partnership with other member universities from Kenya.

During the period the Secretariat organised other mandatory statutory meetings. The meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee was held 2 October 2017 and was followed subsequently by a meeting of the Board Executive Committee on 3 October 2017. The 14th RUFORUM Principals and Deans Business Meeting was held on 24th October 2017 to dialogue on matters affecting the network that needed the attention of the Board. The Principals and Deans meeting appointed a new Chairperson Dr. Beston Maonga from Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) as the Chair for the next Principals and Deans Meeting. The meeting recommended the need to, among others, widen the implementation of the academic mobility program and the GTA. Further, the 11th RUFORUM Technical Committee was held on 24th October 2017 to provide input into the Draft RUFORUM Vision 2030 Strategy. This was followed by a meeting of the RUFORUM International Advisory Panel on 25th October 2017 that reviewed the strategic engagement of RUFORUM with other organisations and networks, the Secretariat funding status and the engagement with development partners as part of the Resource Mobilisation efforts.

The 15th RUFORUM Board meeting was held on 26th October 2017 to review reports from the various Board Committees and to review the External Audit report for 2016/17 and the proposed budget for 2017/18. The Board also reviewed applications for membership of RUFORUM and recommended to the AGM admission of 19 new member universities, raising the membership from 66 to 85 universities in 35 African countries. The Board also recommended adoption of the draft Vision 2030 Strategy and agreed to strengthen the GTA programme. The Board recommendations were presented to the AGM on 27 October 2017. Subsequently, a special Board Executive Committee meeting was held 2nd December 2017 to review the recommendations and decisions of the 15th Board and 13th AGM deliberations.

4.2. Conduct four trainings for University managers and administrators in cross-cutting issues including gender and transformational leadership and management

With support from AWARD the Secretariat conducted gender training for Principals and Deans as a following up in implementing resolutions made during the 12th AGM, and collectively learn from the process. The training attracted 68 Principals and Deans. The half-day session covered four main topics: a recap from the previous year sessions, introduction to making programs, institutions gender responsiveness, and tokenism. The meeting provided opportunity for the Principals and Deans to provide feedback on the 2016 gender session, and they reported several intermediate outcomes including attitude changes in university leadership and management, changes in the recruitment of students such as under the at PHARMBIOTRAC ACE whereby the male and female candidates compete within themselves and not between gender; and the founding of the Namibia Association for Women in Sciences (NAWIS) by the University of Namibia with a purpose of encouraging and motivating women to take up science careers,

and to mentor women to aspire to develop and take up academic leadership positions. The session also discussed strategies for rendering programs and institutions gender responsive through adapting the Harvard Model that is essential for undertaking a quick scan of gender dynamics at community level, and assessing the performance of gender groups. Overall the participants learnt about tokenism in mainstreaming gender, and how to institutionalize gender in the institutions

RUFORUM in collaboration with the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) conducted two leadership training sessions for 84 Principals and Deans, and 31 Vice Chancellors and senior university management, respectively. The trainings focussed on leadership and management capacity development for transformation, motivating diverse university stakeholders and talent management through identification and effective mentoring. The participants made several recommendations for strengthening University management, and amongst these included; development of a culture of celebration through a rewards system for research in the faculty in order to motivate faculty staff; management of faculty budgets for efficiency; and, review of the general education curriculum to meet the market demands through training faculty members in teaching skills and adoption of new methodologies as well as strengthening student advising and mentoring.

In addition to the above training, 48 Deputy Vice chancellors and other senior University management leaders (Academic registrars and Directors) underwent a four-day intensive leadership and management training to nurture talents and build teams that will drive universities in Africa to be more innovative and transformational. The training was organised by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and facilitated by the hfp, a German based consulting firm. The four days training covered institutional management and leadership capabilities that most University leaders in Africa have grappled with and managed through trial and error and often lead to staggering of institutions. The immediate outcome of the training was attainment of skills by the university leaders in goal setting, negotiation, effective delegation both vertically upwards and downwards, and, approaches for attracting, recruiting and retaining quality staff. The training further provided opportunity for the participants to share experiences on how they manage, on daily basis, the confrontational issues in science based institutions; how to manage egos among faculty and importance of active listening; and, how to increase outputs from university faculty without causing conflict among group members.

4.3. Undertake Functional analysis of the RUFORUM Secretariat to align to the Vision 2030 Strategy implementation

A functional analysis of the RUFORUM Secretariat commenced and is being conducted by Dama Consultants, a reputable Human Resources and Organisational performance entity. The purpose of the

analysis is to align RUFORUM's Human resources to effectively deliver on the organisation's Vision 2030 for increased relevancy and impact. In this respect, to strengthen the knowledge management and communications technologies to improve the management of the Universities and the clients they serve.

4.4. Plan for the 2018 Sixth Africa Higher Education Week and Biennial Conference slated for 22-26 October 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya

Planning for the 2018 Biennial Conference was undertaken. During the period, RUFORUM;

- i. Developed and published a draft concept Note for the 2018 Biennial Conference
- ii. Developed sub-themes as well as guidelines for concept notes of the various planned side events for the 2018 Biennial Conference
- iii. Identified potential hotel venues for participants
- iv. Developed and currently pretesting the conference app. The app can be downloaded from <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=biennial.com.upload&hl=en>

4.5. Recruitment of new Staff for the RUFORUM Secretariat

RUFORUM recruited three new staff for the Secretariat which is located in Kampala in Uganda: Dr. Francis Otto, formerly working as a Senior Higher Education Officer with Uganda's National Council for Higher Education, as Manager of Information and Technology; Mr. David Martin Amitu formerly with Prime Telecoms as a Technical Consultant in IT Systems; and Ms Maureen Agena, formerly with the World Bank Group - Agriculture Global Practice in Uganda and Kenya as Information, Communication and Technology for Agriculture (ICT4Ag) consultant.

PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR THE NEXT QUARTER JANUARY –MARCH 2018

1. Finalise the functional analysis and implement the structural recommendations
2. Finalise the RUFORUM 2030 Operational Plan and retrospectively, align organisation operations
3. Host planning meeting for the SHAEA Project
4. Engage in broad activities for the purposes of mobilising resources for RUFORUM
5. Undertake an internal audit of ICT systems to strengthen organisational functions
6. Commission a Tracer Study to assess impact of RUFORUM Training and Research
7. Develop a RUFORUM Investment Plan and launch the RUFORUM crowd funding platform to support resource mobilisation for the network
8. Plan for the 2018 AGM and Biennial meetings