

Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture Secretariat Quarterly Report

1st April- 30th June 2019

Summary

This report is a synthesis of key achievements and progress made during the period 1st April - 30th June 2019 (the last quarter of the Financial Year 2018/19, and year-one implementation of the [operational plan](#)-2018-2022 of RUFORUM [Vision 2030](#) strategy. The Operational Plan is designed around four (4) flagship programmes underpinned by activities to support regional collective action and learning to give impetus to achieving the RUFORUM vision for *vibrant transformative universities catalyzing inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa*. The four flagship programmes include:

- Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningfully contribute to Africa's Growth and Development (TAGDev) seeks to transform African agricultural universities and their graduates to better respond to developmental challenges through enhanced application of science, technology, business and innovation for rural agricultural transformation.
- Cultivating Research and Teaching Excellence (CREATE) seeks to realign universities' research and teaching functions into a more integrated model with a focus on problem solving and enhancing the capacity of the entire university academic practice and outreach system mainly
- Regional Anchor Universities for Higher Agricultural Education (RANCH) seeks to escalate the setting up of a network of linked universities as African anchor universities/African Centres of Excellence and academic leadership in higher education and learning.
- Knowledge Hub for University Networking, Partnership and Advocacy (K-Hub) builds on RUFORUM's convening power and facilitates the creation, capture, organising, sharing and refining of information and content across teams and geographic locations – thus increasing access to the latest, up-to-the-minute, evidence based information and knowledge.

Below are the highlights of progress made:

1. The Republic of Sierra Leone signed the RUFORUM Charter becoming the first African Country to recognise RUFORUM's continental role in Higher Agricultural Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. The RUFORUM Secretariat has intensified engagement with various African Governments to secure the endorsement of the RUFORUM Charter. Discussions with Governments of Liberia, Mali, Namibia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe are at an advanced stage.
2. In partnership with Egerton University and Gulu University, the RUFORUM Secretariat continued with the implementation of the rigorous student recruitment process to identify economically disadvantaged yet intellectually deserving students from across Africa. The process was used to shortlist 158 applicants from 20 countries in Africa for Bachelors and Masters Degree programmes at Gulu University in Uganda and Egerton University in Kenya under the support of Mastercard Foundation.

3. RUFORUM Secretariat participated in the First Annual General Meeting and launch of the Eastern Africa Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (EAPA FSN) held 15-17 April 2019 in Arusha, Tanzania. The goal of the Alliance is to position food security and nutrition at the highest level of political and legislative agenda so as to contribute to the achievement of development objectives of the individual countries and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in the Eastern Africa region.
4. RUFORUM Secretariat participated in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Joint Meeting of Ministers responsible for Education and Training, Science, Technology and Innovation in Windhoek, Namibia (17-21 June 2019) that discussed the implementation of the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP) 2015-2020 and Industrialisation Strategy (2015-2063) priorities in relation to Education and Training and Science, Technology and Innovation. The Ministers adopted (under SADC/ET-STI /1/2019/1C) the resolutions of the Ministerial Meeting held in October 2018 during the Sixth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference.
5. RUFORUM Secretariat awarded the second and last round of 20 PhD research scholarships under the Social and Environmental Trade-offs in African Agriculture (SENTINEL) Project.
6. RUFORUM Secretariat developed a proposal to the BRIDGIN Foundation for the construction of RUFORUM Secretariat headquarters with support from the Government of Uganda. The US\$ 65 Million proposal is part of a bigger proposal (US\$ 560 Million) to the BRIDGIN Foundation for the development of high technology centres in three RUFORUM Member Universities in Uganda.
7. In order to bolster RUFORUM Secretariat capacity to deliver the Vision 2030, two Deputy Executive Secretaries have been recruited including: Deputy Executive Secretary-Programme Development & Implementation ([Dr. Alice Mweetwa](#) from Zambia); and, the Deputy Executive Secretary- Planning, Resources Mobilisation and Management ([Dr. Florence Nakayiwa](#) from Uganda).

INTRODUCTION:

The narrative below shows details of RUFORUM Secretariat's progress and achievements made during the period 1 April- 30 June 2019, the last quarter of the financial year 2018/19. The report is arranged by Flagship Programmes of the RUFORUM [Vision 2030 Strategy](#).

Flagship programme: TAGDev-Transforming African Agricultural Universities for Africa's Growth and Development

- a) *Support Community Action Research Teams at each university to engage with communities and strengthen commodity value chains for smallholder farmers and agribusinesses*

RUFORUM Secretariat undertook a Principal Investigators Orientation Training of the recently [awarded](#) Community Action Research Programmes (CARP+) research teams from the following member universities: University of the Free State (South Africa); Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Botswana); and, University of Namibia (Namibia). These research projects are made possible with the support from the Mastercard Foundation. The orientation training involved 31 participants (11

female; 20 Male) and was aimed at supporting the Principal Investigators develop a focused roadmap for project implementation as well as a dedicated engagement with the private sector and Tertiary Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. The event resulted into capacitating Principal Investigators in innovative delivery for impact and community transformation as well as a clear articulation of guiding rules for the smooth project implementation. RUFORUM Secretariat further continued to support the implementation of ongoing CARP+ projects through the [RUFORUM Information Management System](#) monitoring platform.

Mastercard Foundation-supported [students](#) were facilitated to undertake [field attachments](#) with various communities and organizations for experiential learning and application of knowledge and skills acquired. Following these attachments, RUFORUM Secretariat assessed the community-engaged learning experiences of the students and established that students appreciated community engagement as an effective strategy for imparting real and applicable skills including technical, management & planning, communication, people and cognitive skills. The report is ready for publication in the RUFORUM working document series (forth coming).

b) Develop and pilot an agricultural business/entrepreneurship incubator program at selected universities to advance the adoption of new models of agricultural education

As part of support towards the development of agricultural enterprises through entrepreneurial skills development, RUFORUM Secretariat oriented nine Principal Investigators (8 Male, 1 female) that were awarded the RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Program (RECAP) projects under the support of Mastercard Foundation (7 RECAPs) and the African Development Bank (2 RECAPs). The team leaders came from the following universities that will be implementing the RECAP projects: Muni University and Uganda Martyrs University (Uganda), Université du Sine Saloum El-Hadj Ibrahima NIASS (USSEIN) (Senegal), University of Eswatini (Kingdom of Eswatini), University of Juba (South Sudan), South Eastern Kenya University (Kenya), and Africa University (Zimbabwe). Additional RECAP projects with financing from the African Development Bank include those to Mbarara University of Science and Technology (Uganda) and Haramaya University (Ethiopia). The orientation was aimed at re-aligning respective projects to capture research, business and development impact interface. The projects will develop a focused implementation roadmap with specific attention to incubation and engagement with non-university actors particularly private sector.

The [nine](#) (9) on-going RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Program projects used as learning points for the new RECAPS continue to engage the 339 students (122 female; 217 male) in agribusiness incubation through [developing](#) and [exhibiting](#) prototypes, [engaging](#) the private sector, conducting [study trips](#), and receiving mentorship in business plan development and [financial management](#).

c) Recruit BSc and MSc students and train a pool of early career scientists and development practitioners (TVETs)

The [call](#) for applications for MCF@RUFORUM Scholarships 2019 received 1279 applications (669 applications to Gulu University from 20 African nations and 610 applications to Egerton University from 22 African nations). These applications were screened for eligibility for admission at the universities resulting into 42% and 51% admissibility rate at Gulu University and Egerton University respectively. One hundred and fifty seven (157) applicants (73 at Gulu University and 84 at Egerton University) were

shortlisted for home validation (See Figure 12 and Figure 2). Results of the final selection process will be made available during the next reporting period.

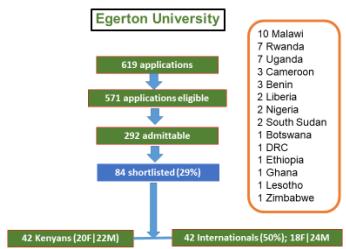


Fig.1 Number of applicants shortlisted at Egerton University

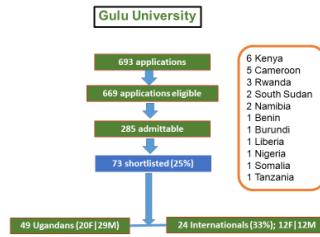


Fig.2 Number of applicants shortlisted at Gulu University

Assessments of Cohort I and Cohort II (30 Masters and 60 undergraduates) students supported under the partnership with Mastercard Foundation was undertaken to establish student-supervisor satisfaction in the academic processes at the respective universities. The study established that 80% of the supervisors rated the overall performance of students as “good” due to demonstration of several competences including problem-solving; team work; autonomism; English language proficiency; ability to learn; and, an enterprising spirit. On the other hand, 79 % of the students were satisfied with their supervisors due to attainment of expectations from the supervision experience; ease of getting help from the supervisor when needed; reliability of supervisors; and commitment of the supervisor in the supervision process. The study recommended timely feedback to the students by supervisors and retooling of students in scientific principles particularly in scholarly writing, research design and data analysis.

d) Synthesize emerging lessons and develop mechanism for scaling out emerging best practice to the Network

To instil and promote a culture of continuous reflection, learning and knowledge sharing within RUFORUM Secretariat, all RUFORUM Secretariat staff were engaged in developing extended abstracts capturing their experiences, reflections and lessons learned during implementation of their various roles. These abstracts focusing on digital agriculture, finance, procurement, community engagement and higher education in general will be peer reviewed and presented as part of proceedings of the 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting and published online in the RUFORUM Working Document series.

Emerging lessons and issues

- Attachment of students to communities is highly appreciated by students as well as communities and private sector. Students find it as an opportunity to challenge themselves to respond to development needs and understand the real issues at community level. The communities are finding it as opportunity to obtain knowledge as well as engage with the Universities. Meanwhile, the Universities are using this as an opportunity to increase their relevance and presence at community level.
- Practical oriented training through agribusiness incubation is a relatively new aspect among many university academics and, as such, it requires focused capacity strengthening and technical backstopping to ensure that university academics can think differently as well as exercise a paradigm shift in training approaches. Further, linkage with the private sector is still very minimal in many universities, it is hoped that through the RECAPs, university teams can gradually begin to have a focused engagement with the private sector through entrepreneurship.

- iii. The demand for academic scholarships supersedes the supply. Resource mobilization for the education of youth from disadvantaged communities continues to be highly critical. Further support from the Mastercard Foundation and other development partners will further strengthen the provision of opportunities to the disadvantaged students in Africa.

Flagship programme: RANCH: Regional Anchor Universities for Higher Agricultural Education

Facilitate universities to strategically pursue support and partnerships to scale out research innovations, technology transfer and commercialization

To support mentorship of recent graduates with integration into society for food security and community transformation in Northern Uganda, RUFORUM signed a Memorandum of Understanding with [CPAR](#) Uganda, a community level advocacy group. The initiative to be undertaken in collaboration with Gulu University will enable transition of Masters Students and scale out of innovations to wider communities in Northern Uganda.

Flagship programme: CREATE-Cultivating Research and Teaching Excellence

a) Escalate doctoral training to increase the pool of science leaders in Africa

During the quarter, the Secretariat extended mentorship support to doctoral students undertaking PhD training. Agricultural and Rural Innovation students (19 students, 3 female; 16 male) were supported to refine their research concepts, initiate development of publications at an early stage and ultimately foster timely completion of studies. The convening identified key issues in each of the student's concepts and recommended key actions for refining the concepts. Additionally, with support from the Mastercard Foundation, scholarly and scientific skills short course [training](#) was delivered to 49 Doctoral students (7 female and 42 male) from the University of Burundi. Additionally 33 students (15 female and 18 male) at Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (BUAN) received training in Scientific Writing for Research Proposal Development, Thesis Preparation and Journal Manuscript Preparation for Masters and Doctoral Students. The training was financed by BUAN.

b) Increasing opportunities for PhD training

Under the support of the Global Challenges Research Fund ([GCRF](#)) of the United Kingdom Government, RUFORUM [awarded](#) the second and last round of 20 PhD research scholarships under the Social and Environmental Trade-offs in African Agriculture (SENTINEL Project). Cumulatively, 27 PhD research scholarships (21 Male, 6 female) have been awarded to students from Democratic Republic of Congo (3), Ethiopia (9), Ghana (4), Kenya (1), Sudan (1), Uganda (3) and Zambia (6) to conduct research within the nexus of agriculture and environment. This will contribute towards addressing the challenge of achieving “zero” hunger, conserving the environment and reducing inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa.

c) Support the advancement of quality training and Basic and Applied research through Post- Doctoral Fellowships

With support from the Carnegie Cooperation of New York, RUFORUM Secretariat continued to implement the Post- Doctoral Fellowship programme aimed at increasing the critical mass of scientists to contribute towards the transformation of higher education in Africa and the global knowledge commons. As such, the 19 Post-doc fellows mentoring 41 PhD students, 67 Masters Students and 25 undergraduate students have continued to develop publications as part of creating knowledge and prosperity in the continent. These include;

1. [Social cognitive drivers of farmer learning behaviour in the student-to-farmer university outreach in Uganda](#)
 2. [Facilitating conditions for farmer learning behaviour in the student-to-farmer university outreach.](#)
 3. [Factors affecting change in rice production practices and technologies among smallholder farmers in Kamwenge District, Uganda.](#)
 4. [Untapped potential of livingstone potato, an indigenous and underutilised root crop in Zimbabwe: A review.](#)
 5. [Allelopathic effects of aqueous extracts of Sorghum \(*Sorghum bicolor* L. Moench\) on early seedling growth of sesame \(*Sesamum indicum* L.\) varieties and selected weeds.](#)
 6. [Study of pre and early post emergence allelopathic effects on selected weeds of several sorghum \[*Sorghum bicolor* \(L.\) Moench.\] and pearl millet \(*Pennisetum glaucum* L.\) cultivars in Zimbabwe.](#)
- d) **Facilitate Academic Staff Development (ASD) through Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) approach and other fellowships**

The RUFORUM Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) [call](#) 2019 received 228 GTA nominations (67 female, 161 male) from 25 member universities during the reporting period. By June 2019, eighty three (83) students were undertaking academic programmes under the GTA initiative, two hundred and seven (207) were awaiting admission, and seventeen (17) were awaiting contract signatures. The Graduate Teaching Assistantship programme is an initiative by RUFORUM member universities Vice Chancellors to increase the number of PhD trained staff in African universities.

- e) **Support Academic Mobility Scheme (RAMS) to promote access to quality academic programmes, strengthen inter-regional, inter-cultural exchange and collaboration in the field of higher education**

As part of skills enhancement activities for strengthening capacity of faculty to develop and manage university and community transforming programmes and projects, nineteen (19) teams from 35 member Universities were supported to successfully respond to the 2019 Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme (IAAMS) call for proposals; this was made possible through the TAGDev programme supported by the Mastercard Foundation and Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique (UM6P), Morocco. By the end of the writeshop, all the teams had managed to successfully submit proposals to the European Union Agency.

- f) **Increase the participation of scholars from small and/or fragile states in agricultural, science and technology-related training**

During the quarter, RUFORUM Secretariat continued to foster participation of students and staff from fragile and conflict-affected states in Africa in science, technology and innovation trainings. Consequently, forty (40) staff were nominated from West African Universities of University of Liberia (20 Staff) and Njala University in Sierra Leone (20 staff) for the Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA). Three (3) students from South Sudan are at the research phase of their doctoral programme under the GTA.

- g) **Increase the participation of women in science and technology-related training and research activities in all institutions benefiting from RUFORUM schemes**

Under the Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) programme of RUFORUM, member universities have been sensitized to enrol female GTA students in the programme. As a result of these efforts, 68

female GTA candidates have been nominated for Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) PhD programmes at four universities in Kenya: Moi University, University of Eldoret, Egerton University and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST).

RUFORUM Secretariat supported initial processes for the implementation of the Islamic Development Bank funded [project](#) under the Forum for Women Vice Chancellors in Africa (FAWoVC) (*Strengthening the Capacity of the Forum for African Women Vice Chancellors to promote gender inclusive participation in Science, Technology and Innovation*). This included; development of project management documents including the implementation plan, the monitoring and evaluation framework and the communications & knowledge management strategy. The project is hosted by Busitema University, a RUFORUM member university from Uganda.

Emerging lessons and issues

1. The RUFORUM Graduate Teaching Assistantship programme continues to be a vital mechanism for strengthening capacity in African universities. Commitment of universities towards this aspect is vital in enhancing human capital development across the African continent. However, there are still some challenges that need to be addressed in particular universities that have endorsed the contracts fully meeting their obligations.
2. Developing additional initiatives targeting women participation in Science, Technology and Innovation will generate a critical mass of female scientists on the African Continent. Participation of Women in agricultural higher education, Science, technology and innovation has been challenged by limited initiatives specifically targeting Women. Initiatives by RUFORUM including the Graduate Teaching Assistantship and engagement with the Forum for Women Vice Chancellors in Africa has multiplier effects of increasing the numbers of Women scientists spearheading agricultural higher education, science, technology and innovation on the African Continent.

Flagship programme: Knowledge Hub (K-Hub) for university networking, partnership and advocacy

- a) *Widen and enhance online and offline Information Technology platforms to facilitate and enhance systematic access to information through continuous analysis of Platform requirements*

During the quarter, RUFORUM Secretariat finalized the developmental processes of three websites on behalf of Member Universities as part of efforts to accelerate acquisition of knowledge by its members and partners. These included the final website for the [native chickens project](#) on marker-assisted breeding of selected native chickens in Mozambique and Uganda at University of Eduardo Mondlane; a draft website (www.dasmaize.org) for the University of Zambia on the diversity of aspergillus species and aflatoxin contamination along maize and groundnut value chains in eastern and southern Africa; and a draft website (www.fawovc.org) for Busitema University implementing a capacity building project on behalf of the Forum for African Women Vice Chancellors (FAWoVC) on gender inclusive development of STI in Africa. These await for confirmation on registration, hosting and maintenance from the respective project teams.

The Secretariat further shared outputs from Africa's research and practice both from within and outside the RUFORUM Network through the [RUFORUM news digest](#) (8 editions over the period) and regular

media monitoring reports (13 editions). Currently an audience of 16,527 users subscribe to the RUFORUM mailing list.

RUFORUM Secretariat published a request for proposals for the design, supply and installation of the RUFORUM information management system (RIMS) to support the implementation of the Vision 2030 strategy through collation, storage, verification and analysis of relevant higher education data in the different flagships critical to the RUFORUM Secretariat's operations. The first set of deliverables is expected to be complete by November 2019.

Other RUFORUM online platforms continued to attract traffic and connect the network. Online visibility increased to 53.8 million results (0.4 seconds) via google and appearance in the first 10 top results. The intensification of social media engagements continued with an upward trend in the social media following including; Facebook: 22,254 likes; Blog: 10,020 followers and 573,148 hits, and Twitter: 6,602 followers. The RUFORUM website registered 95% new visitors while the rest (5%) were returning visitors mainly from United States of America (57 %), Uganda (12 %), Germany (8 %), Japan (3.4 %), United Kingdom (3.2 %), China (2.6 %), Cayman Islands (1.5 %), Romania (1.06 %), Kenya (0.85 %) and Switzerland (0.64 %).

b) Improve the functionality of the RUFORUM Repository, linking it to google scholar and working on indexing RUFORUM papers

To increase visibility and accessibility of RUFORUM knowledge products by specialized online scholarly search engines, the RUFORUM Institutional repository is currently indexed by Google Scholar. To further enhance the visibility of African Agricultural research and enhance the functionality of the repository, RUFORUM in collaboration with the Mann Library at Cornell University and the Information Outreach and Training Centre for Africa (ITOCA), submitted a proposal for funding to the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

c) Promote publication of Africa's research outputs in the African Journal of Rural Development and other related publications

RUFORUM continued to support dissemination of research findings emanating from African Universities through the African Journal of Rural Development (AfJRD) by scheduling 18 papers for publication under Volume 3 (Issues 2 and 3) of the African Journal of Rural Development.

Other publications through popular and mass media included;

1. Blogs: Over twenty (24) publications in the form of blogs, calls for proposals, scholarships have been posted to the website including the following:
 - i. His Excellency George Manneh Weah the President of the Republic of Liberia Meets RUFORUM Delegation in Monrovia
 - ii. RUFORUM principal investigator Prof. Achille Assogbadjo from Benin wins 2019 young African researchers award
 - iii. Egerton University hosts 2nd National Forum for agriculture stakeholders in Kenya
 - iv. Pioneer RUFORUM student, Prof Patience Mshenga, appointed to ASARECA Board
 - v. Prof. Adipala Ekwamu awarded Honorary Doctorate by University of Gezira
 - vi. Collaboration for youth business incubation: Bishop Stuart University partners with PUM Netherlands

vii. [PASET RSIF PhD scholarships: 3-4 Year Doctoral Training Scholarship in PASET RSIF Priority Thematic Area](#)

2. Four (4) [press releases](#) were published by June 2019

Emerging lessons and issues

- The K-Hub is critical in the generation, transfer and transmission of knowledge through education and training. The revamped RUFORUM Information Management System (RIMS) will enable RUFORUM analytics for use by stakeholders, establishing a long-term sustainable coordinating mechanism, and strengthening and linking existing activities and dialogue processes.
- New mechanisms for harnessing and sharing information that can be used in the member universities, Community Action Research Programme (CARP) communities and policy makers need to be designed and utilised. These may extend to open access software to provide complimentary agricultural extension and advisory services.

Flagship programme: PROGRAM SUPPORT – Technical, administrative and logistical support

- a) [Convene the Annual General Meeting \(AGM\), and other meetings of the Board and its committees, the International Advisory Panel \(IAP\), and the Committee of Principals and Deans to ensure that the network effectively meets the strategic objectives of the RUFORUM Vision 2030 Strategy](#)

During the quarter, RUFORUM convened the [17th Board Executive Committee meeting](#) in Monrovia, Liberia (22-26 April, 2019). The meeting recommended the need to enhance the visibility of West African States RUFORUM Member Universities especially in areas of strengthening agriculture and promotion of Science, Technology and Innovation in countries within the West African region. The Board Executive Committee also increased to admit new Member Universities into the RUFORUM Network, increasing Membership from 105 to 114 universities in 38 countries in Africa. The meeting further decided that the next Board Executive Meeting be held in Zambia.

The Board Executive Committee Meeting was parallel to the [Symposium](#) organised in partnership with the University of Liberia focusing on *Promoting Higher Education in Liberia*. Part of the activities included a courtesy call to His Excellency George Manneh Weah, the President of the Republic of Liberia at His Excellency Capitol Hill residence in Monrovia (See below).



The period was further used to convene the 25th meeting of the Finance and Administration Committee to update the Board Executive Committee on staffing, resource mobilization, financial performance for financial year 2018/2019, budget proposal for 2019/2020 and membership subscriptions. The meeting viewed the internal audit charter and recommended adjustments in the budget proposal for 2019/2020.

b) Recruit Staff for the Secretariat in line with the approved functional analysis to support delivery of the Vision 2030 Strategy

With the continuing expansion of the network to 114 Universities in 38 African Universities requiring an efficient and effective Secretariat to deliver on the **Vision 2030** strategy, the Secretariat recruited the Deputy Executive Secretary-Programme Development & Implementation ([Dr. Alice Mweetwa](#) from Zambia); and, the Deputy Executive Secretary responsible for Planning, Resources Mobilisation and Management ([Dr. Florence Nakayiwa](#) from Uganda).

c) Undertake Annual internal and external audits

RUFORUM prepared and presented the internal audit charter, the internal audit manual and the internal audit plan for the year 2019/2020 to the Finance and Administration Committee Meeting. These documents will guide the operations of internal audit within RUFORUM Secretariat.

d) Broker alliances and partnerships to assist universities establish delivery networks for scaling-up research outputs, knowledge products and innovations

During the quarter, RUFORUM Secretariat participated in the [joint meeting](#) of Ministers responsible for Education and Training, Science, Technology and Innovation in Windhoek, Namibia (20-21 June, 2019). The aim of the meeting was to advance the role of education, skills development and science, technology and innovation in supporting the implementation of the Revised Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan (RISDP 2015-2020) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

Industrialization Strategy and Roadmap (2015-2063). The major output of the meeting was the [Ministerial statement](#) which amongst several elements highlighted progress in the development of continent-wide programmes including Building Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity (BASTIC), Strengthen Agricultural Higher Education in Africa (SHAEA), Strengthening Africa's Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capacity for Economic Development (SASTIE), and escalating doctoral training and strengthen staff capacities in African Universities as well as increasing the pool of women scientists in Africa by RUFORUM.

RUFORUM Secretariat further supported and participated in the [First Annual General Meeting](#) and launch of the Eastern Africa Parliamentary Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition (EAPA FSN) held 15-17 April 2019 in Arusha, Tanzania aimed at providing a platform for Parliamentarians and partners to discuss needed parliamentary actions for ending hunger and malnutrition in Eastern Africa. The meeting involving 57 participants from 10 countries including Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda as representatives from the East African Legislative Assembly and the Inter-Parliamentary Union of IGAD adopted the founding document and committed to leveraging their critical role as legislators to promote the Right to Food. RUFORUM facilitated a knowledge sharing and capacity building event on regional and global commitments for achieving food security and nutrition, gender and access to land, and linkages of governance of tenure with food security in Eastern Africa.

RUFORUM further engaged in the following partnerships;

- i. Renewed the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) and the European Alliance for Agricultural Knowledge for Development ([AGRINATURA](#)) to strengthen RUFORUM's work in policy analysis and increase its collaboration and partnership with Europe respectively in the area of agriculture and related sciences research and higher education.
- ii. Finalizing the development of Memoranda of Understanding with Association of Public and Land grant Universities (APLU) and the Belt and Road/ South-South Cooperation Agricultural education, science and technology innovation League (BRSSCAL) to intensify collaborations and partnership in higher education and agricultural research for development between Africa and the USA and China respectively.
- iii. Partnered with Association of Public and Land Grant Universities (APLU) to provide technical support to the Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BIFAD) of the United States Government.
- iv. Partnered with [AECOM](#) to apply for Technical Assistance to the Secretariat of the African Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) for the Management of the ACP-EU Programme to strengthen Research and Innovation capacity in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

e) ***Prepare and submit at least 20 proposals for university-based research teams and five for the Secretariat***

Under delegation from the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports, RUFORUM Secretariat coordinated the development of a proposal to the BRIDGIN Foundation to support the Uganda Higher Education Sector through a pilot programme. The proposal worth US\$ 560 million has seven sub projects including the construction of RUFORUM Secretariat Headquarters and construction of High-Tech Centres in three Ugandan universities: Makerere University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology and Kyambogo University. The BRIDGIN Foundation has indicated approval of the proposal.

The RUFORUM Secretariat submitted as a lead applicant, a proposal to the European Commission's Support for Civil Society Organizations piloting initiatives of the AU-EU Youth Cooperation Hub and also supported a consortium of three civil society organisations to apply to the same funding window.

f) *Engage Member Governments to establish a Charter for legitimization of RUFORUM as an Implementation Agency for Higher Education training in Agriculture and STI in the member countries*

The RUFORUM Board Executive Committee continued to engage governments towards the signing of the RUFORUM Charter. During the quarter, engagements were made with the Government of Liberia, and the Government of Sierra Leone to endorse the charter. The Government of Sierra Leone is the first Government to endorse the RUFORUM charter.

Commitments made by the Government of Uganda at the inception of RUFORUM continue to dominate dialogue with the Uganda Government. The RUFORUM delegations have engaged with different government officials including the Prime Minister and the Minister of Education and Sports and First Lady of the Republic of Uganda. Key areas of focus have been: the RUFORUM Charter, provision of annual budget subvention to RUFORUM, feedback from the engagement with Mastercard Foundation and, preparations for the hosting of a possible Heads of State Summit on Science Technology and Innovations. A cabinet memo has been drafted by the Ministry of Education and Sports for the next stage of engagement with the Government of Uganda.

Emerging lessons

- Engagement with all stakeholders especially with policy makers at the highest level in government is important in generating publicity and advocacy benefits for the network. However, it is time consuming and expensive endeavour.
- More effort is still needed to ensure hands-on skills for graduate students and for timely graduation
- The RUFORUM Secretariat needs to work with the Member Universities to refine implementation of the Graduate Teaching Assistant Programme, and to absorb the 228 staff nominated for PhD training under the GTA arrangement

Focus for the Next Quarter (July-September 2019) of the FY 2019/2020s

- Preparations for the RUFORUM 15th Annual General Meeting slated for 2-6 December 2019 in Cape Coast, Ghana.
- Placement of applicants for GTA training in different Member Universities
- Follow up on TAGDev Project field activities including Orientation training for the 3rd Cohort of Undergraduate and Masters students
- Convening a Development Partner meeting to forge partnership for implementation of the RUFORUM Vision 2030 Strategy
- Holding two Visibility events in Mali and Sierra Leone
- Convening two RUFORUM Governance Meetings (Finance & Administration Committee and Board Executive Committee) in Lusaka, Zambia