

Building Africa's Human Capital for Accelerated, Sustainable and Inclusive Rural Development

Partners' meetings to discuss the Gaps and Opportunities for Enhancing Higher Education in Africa: Promoting Synergies with RUFORUM in Transforming Science, Technology and African Agriculture

25th October, 2017 hosted by RUFORUM in Lilongwe, Malawi
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"I am convinced that the social and economic transformation of the African continent will happen only when higher education, and greater emphasis on knowledge, becomes central to the development debate"
President of Mauritius Ameenah Gurib-Fakim, 2016

In October 2016 and May 2017 small meetings of Development Partners were held at the [RUFORUM Biennial Conference](#) in Cape Town, South Africa and at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation offices in Seattle, USA. These meetings discussed key issues related to support for Higher Education and Agriculture in Africa and the role of RUFORUM in working with member universities to lead their transformation¹. At these meetings it was agreed that the dialogue would be continued and broadened to include more development partners at a meeting to be held on 25th October, 2017 to coincide with the RUFORUM Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Lilongwe, Malawi.

[RUFORUM](#) (Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture) is committed to strengthening higher education for greater relevance to African society and meeting the demand for high-level skills. The 66 Vice Chancellors on the RUFORUM Board all believe in the need to strengthen the responsiveness of African universities to the needs of stakeholders and clients. [RUFORUM's work](#) has demonstrated (at pilot level working with farming communities²) that coordinated efforts around an African owned strategy for building university capacity for capacity development can yield great returns with potential to impact at scale.

RUFORUM is working with the African Union Commission and a Committee of Ten African Heads of State to Champion Higher Education, Science and Technology development in Africa. RUFORUM has also been consulting widely with its members, and other stakeholders to develop a broader vision for the transformation of agriculture in Africa, and the role of universities.

¹ Significant support has been received from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the MasterCard Foundation, Carnegie Cooperation and other partners, towards implementing RUFORUM's Strategic Business Plan (2015-2020) building on the lessons learnt over RUFORUM's two decades of implementation.

² Or you can watch a full length documentary <https://youtu.be/teMLEu8h8fU>

The planned meeting of the Development Partners with the RUFORUM International Advisory Panel, the Technical Committee and some members of the RUFORUM Board and Secretariat will provide an opportunity to present the progress and share ideas on how best to take these initiatives further.

Objectives

The overall objective of the meeting is to sustain the dialogue amongst partners 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. It provides an opportunity for agricultural development and capacity building stakeholders to work together to support African initiatives to build human capital addressing Africa's high-level skills constraints. The specific objectives of the meeting will be to:

1. provide a platform for informal and open sharing of experience and lessons and ideas on the emerging landscape related to human skills development in Africa;
2. meet with some of the members of the RUFORUM governance, quality enhancement and operational bodies and understand the role of RUFORUM and its member universities in transforming agriculture;
3. consider how to link RUFORUM initiatives in transforming university graduates and research for relevance and quality into a broader support framework for higher education in Africa;
4. consider priorities, challenges and opportunities for the integration of universities into the development of sustainable and inclusive local, national and regional eco-systems that support the African Agenda.

Approach

A Development Partners meeting will be held on 25th October 2017 in Lilongwe, Malawi to be hosted in conjunction with the RUFORUM Annual General Meeting (25-27 October 2017) which will bring together the 66 RUFORUM member Vice-Chancellors and some 150 Deans and Principals, together with invited senior policy, industry and civil society leaders.

This side-event to the AGM will provide an opportunity for the partners attending the AGM to discuss how the RUFORUM vision, convening platform, and their experience with facilitation and brokering partnerships for development, can be put to best use in support of the continental Agenda 2063 Vision, especially transformation of the agricultural sector.

Agenda

0700-0800 – Breakfast for Development Partners (to get Development partners to meet each other)

08.30-0900 – Welcome and introductions (to get partners to know each other, and also their own particular interest in being there)

0900-10.30: Presentation by RUFORUM on its Draft Vision 2030 and its core Flagship programmes. This will include the visioning process and the role that Secretariat, and RUFORUM membership will take to transform their universities and to stimulate the systemic change needed to reach the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Broad discussions on what is most required and on how RUFORUM can use its strong platform to

- **strengthen the role of universities in transforming African agriculture** to meet the aspirations of the AU Agenda 2063

10.30-11.00 – TEA Break

11.00-12.30: Strengthening Higher Education, Science and Technology in Africa – brief presentation of the process so far (STISA 2024, Committee of 10 African Heads of State (Co10)) and also the RUFORUM initiatives of linking universities more closely into the education value chain and what we need to do to support transformative change (Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa-SHAEA initiative & Possible joint AGRINATURA-RUFORUM Initiative)

Broad discussions on Partners' perspectives of what is most required and on how RUFORUM can use its advocacy strength to

- **build the tertiary education system**, harnessing capacity in universities and unlocking the potential of Africa's rapidly growing young population for sustainable development


13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.00

Two separate round Table meetings of Development partners with RUFORUM teams to discuss in more detail the key gaps and opportunities for strengthening:

- Investment in the Transformation of Higher Education (See Appendix One)
- The Role for RUFORUM in Building Partnerships to Transform African Agriculture (See Appendix Two)

15.00-1600 Report back to reconvened partnership meeting



16.00-16.30 Tea

16.30-1730 Development Partner Own Meeting