

Concept Note
Recognition of Outstanding Achievers:
IMPRESSA, Young Scientists and Model Farmers, 26th October, 2017
Venue: Bingu International Conference Centre, Lilongwe, Malawi
Hosted by: RUFORUM member Universities in Malawi and the Malawi Government

Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) strives to contribute to the wellbeing of small scale farmers and the economic development of countries throughout the sub-Saharan Africa region. This contribution is made through training of high quality, relevant graduates for the rural development workforce and through the production and dissemination of demand-driven, development oriented research that is defined and applied through participatory processes linking researchers, farmers, and policy makers. RUFORUM recognizes that there are many senior and junior professionals in African Universities who are dedicated to strengthening higher education in Africa, in terms of university leadership and management, teaching and carrying out research focused on improving rural livelihoods in Africa. As a token effort to recognize some of these achievers and to promote excellence, RUFORUM awards outstanding university scientists who have made a significant contribution (with an emphasis on impact) to agricultural research and capacity building for development in Africa as well as outstanding model farmers. This year winners in the following 3 categories will be recognized: 1) Impact Research and Science in Sub-Saharan Africa (IMPRESSA), 2) outstanding young researchers, and 3) outstanding model farmers.

Category 1 : IMPRESSA AWARD

Once every two years RUFORUM organizes IMPRESSA competition awards. These awards were launched in 2009 following a decision made by the RUFORUM Board of Trustees. This year's award is the fourth round of the IMPRESSA series. The Objective of the IMPRESSA Award is to;

- Recognizes outstanding university led contributions to development through agricultural research and science, human and institutional capacity building; promote the awareness of challenges and prospects in agriculture, which remains the mainstay of most economies of sub-Saharan Africa states.
- Promotes the awareness of the unique social conditions of agricultural communities and the global dynamics affecting agriculture, food and nutrition security in Africa.

- Promotes awareness of the potential contribution of African universities in Africa's development through agriculture and related sciences, technology and innovations.

Category 2: Young Scientists AWARDS

Moreover, RUFORUM recognizes outstanding emerging researchers as a way of encouraging them to be more proactive in searching for solutions to the problems that are daunting farmers. The awards are competitively bestowed upon outstanding young (≤ 40 years) scientists who have demonstrated a wide variety of achievements directed towards practical applications of Agriculture, Science, Technology, Innovation or engineering.

Category 3: Outstanding Model Farmers AWARD

Since 2013, RUFORUM recognizes outstanding model farmers who have contributed significantly to the transformation of the agriculture sector in their respective countries. The farmer award aims at Inspiring African farmers to reach new heights and positions agriculture as an attractive lucrative, worthwhile and noble profession for the next generation.

Rationale of the Side Event

Formal recognition of excellence can improve and catalyze quality of contributions from researchers and farmers in transforming Africa. Unfortunately, there are few arrangements that provide for appropriate recognition of achievements of champions along the various components of the agricultural sector spectrum. This lack of substantive recognition of excellence within the field does a great disservice to the professionals and practitioners serving within it. The profile of tangible awards by RUFORUM Network to university-based researchers and farmers is aimed at covering this gap.

Approach and Methodology

The recognition of outstanding achievers will be the climax of a competitive and transparent selection process. This year IMPRESSA overall winner and 2 runner ups were selected from among seven nominees by an independent panel of 6 reputable international evaluators following criteria listed in the call widely advertised.

A similar selection process was followed by the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Sciences, in collaboration with its stakeholders, at a national level for the selection of outstanding young researchers and outstanding farmers. The event will be conducted during closing ceremony of the AGM. There will be a Master of Ceremony to ensure the smooth running of the programme.

**Venue and
Participants**

The event will take place on 26th October 2017 at the Bingu International Conference Center (BICC). It will be open to all participants of all the events associated with the 2017 RUFORUM AGM.

**Side Event
Organizers and
Contact**

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