



African Higher Education Week & RUFORUM Biennial Conference
Plenary Session 11

Venue: Kenyatta International Conventional Centre (KICC)

Contact person: Dr. Paul Nampala
Email: p.nampala@ruforum.org

Session Name: Building Foresight Capacity to Guide Africa's Development

Date: Friday 26 October, 2018

Time: 11.00 – 13.00 hrs

Room and Venue: Abardares, KICC Nairobi, Kenya

Background

Foresighting in the context of this side-event refers to methods and techniques used to develop viable and sustainable futures for communities. The strength of foresighting is in its proactive development approach towards desired futures. It is a departure from short term incremental planning, which typically focuses on how to solve present problems. Foresighting focuses on what can be and then directs efforts towards systematically developing the desired futures¹. The purpose of foresight is to provide the ability to cope with a rapidly changing world characterized by emerging and re-emerging issues in the development context. Emerging and re-emerging issues in different sectors have a significant impact on Africa and it is expected of the academe, particularly universities to play a lead role in foresight undertakings.

Universities are expected to play a key role in the generation future data which will assist the actor(s) to prepare for possible changes. In applying foresight, data is systematically gathered from the operational environment and future images and visions from the mid- and long-term future are formulated. The mere collection of available data and specialist opinions, systematic analysis and the calculation of probabilities does not ensure an adequate standard for futures information. An effective foresight system represents an information generation and management process which in addition to data contains creative innovation, strategic evaluation and the rendering of proactive futures. It includes data, evaluation, innovativeness, networking, strategic decision making and the proactive creation of the future. In addition to information on the possible changes in the operational environment, a foresight system tells us how we may impact matters and with whom to engage in cooperation to achieve the future desired condition.

¹ Holman, P. & Devane, T. (1999). The Change Handbook. Group methods for shaping the future. Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc.





Foresight capacity in Africa is limited, and it is based on this realization that the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture proposes a parallel session during the 6th African Higher Education Week to initiate dialogue on modalities for building such capacity.

Objective of the Session

The objective of this session on “Building Foresight Capacity to Guide Africa’s Development” will be to mobilize key stakeholders in the Agricultural and Higher Education sectors to proactively participate in efforts towards building and streamlining foresight capacity for sustainable development impacts.

Specifically, the session will:

- Provide basic information on methodologies in foresight undertakings
- Share and illustrate good practice in foresight systems development and management, and,
- Identify key foresight themes/ gaps for capacity development agenda

Format of the session and roles of participants

Often in the foresight system participatory methods are emphasized, from a perspective of change, in an attempt to promote the synergy and networking of pivotal key actors. The Session Moderator will use participatory approaches to engage all participants. The Lead Speaker will provide information on foresight, including commonly used approaches such as scenario planning, Delphi questionnaires and future wheels, future-tables and system methods. The panelists will provide further insights on the subject and each panelist will be assigned one specific issue to which they will be required to present their perspectives. Participants will have opportunity to interact through a plenary question and answer arrangement with the Moderator, Lead Speaker and Panelists. The Session will conclude with key “Take-Home Messages and Recommendations” for different stakeholder segments engaged in the Food and Nutrition Security for Africa.





Session Agenda

Time	Activity	Expectation
11:00 – 11:10	Session Moderator Prof. Emmanuel Tanyimbu, University of Buea, Cameroon	Introduce session by highlighting the importance of foresight in development context
11:10 – 11:20	Lead Speaker: Isabelle Resiss, Clarivate Analytics	PowerPoint presentation addressing the topic “Building Foresight Capacity to Guide Africa’s Development”
11:20 – 12:00	Panelists and suggested questions to be addressed	
	<p>1. Dr Pierre Grard, Cirad Regional Director for Eastern Africa <i>Why is Africa considered to have the highest growth prospects out of any continent in the world?</i></p> <p>2. Prof. Nelson Torto, Executive Director, African Academy of Science <i>What should African countries pay close attention to with regard to building functional foresight systems?</i></p> <p>3. Lucas Rutting, CCAFS Scenarios for East and West Africa <i>What are the key areas of opportunity to leverage and accelerate Africa’s development?</i></p> <p>4. Prof. Goolam MohamedBhai, Former AAU President <i>“How can African higher education be empowered to build foresight capacity for Africa's development?”</i></p>	
12:00 – 12:45	Plenary Q&A	
12:45 – 13:00	Take Home message from the Moderator	

Expected session Output: (a) A detailed session report with strategies and modalities for building foresight capacity in Africa; and, (b) List of priority thematic areas for foresight undertaking in support of Africa’s development.

