

Remarks by Prof Adipala Ekwamu, RUFORUM Executive Secretary, during Webinar 7, 13 August 2020

- Your Excellency Prof. Sarah Anyang Agbor, the Commissioner for Human Resources, Science & Technology of the African Union Commission
- Dr. Amit Dar, Africa Regional Director for Human Capital Development at the World Bank
- Hon Dr. Itah Kandjii Murangi, Minister of Higher Education & Training, Namibia
- Hon. Prof. Dr. Eleonore Ladekan Yayi Minister of Higher Education & Scientific Research, Benin
- Hon. Dr. Brian Mushimba, Minister of Higher Education, Zambia
- Prof. Aiah Gbakima, Minister of Technical and Higher Education, Sierra Leone
- Prof. Theresa Nkuo Akenji, Vice Chancellor, University of Bamenda, Cameroon & RUFORUM Deputy Board Chair, our moderator
- All participants who have joined us: THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Ladies and Gentlemen: To set the stage for this Webinar, *I invite us all to watch this brief [video](#) by the World Bank Group on investing in Higher Education in Africa.*

Africa critically needs high-end Science, Technology and Innovation capacity to achieve its development goals enshrined in Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want. This will require putting in place the Centres of Excellence highlighted in the World Bank documentary and other education and skill development infrastructures. To achieve this we must have the foundations right and

interconnectedness across the education value chain. Hence, this Webinar seeks to address the fundamentals for transforming education across the educational value chain in Africa. Why? Because, Education, Science, Technology and Innovation are the fundamentals for development of any nation globally. Indeed no nation has development without the requisite skilled human resource, backed by a strong science culture yet this is a key weakness across our continent. This is recognized in the call for Action to achieve Our Africa Agenda 2063. *We need collaborative action to build our Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity.* Therefore, this Webinar will address, among other issues:

- (i) How Africa should eliminate the ‘learning poverty’ using home grown approaches that are attuned to the political realities of each country, socio-cultural realities, national and regional growth disparities as well as historical injustices;
- (ii) How Africa may ensure a meaningful and seamless transition and throughput across the educational value chain-from primary school, secondary school, tertiary to university;
- (iii) How Africa may achieve greater efficiency and better outcomes in skills-building that delivers both productivity growth and skills for today’s workforce and tomorrow’s labour market promise and expectation;
- (iv) How African public and private education institutions may play a greater role in driving science, technology and innovation capacity development; and
- (v) What policy and financing modalities are needed to enable the African education sector better respond to the current and

emerging needs especially the aftermath of the COVID 19 pandemic?

Ladies and gentlemen

RUFORUM was formed primarily to foster collaboration and Networking amongst Universities in Africa to help the continent develop the requisite human capital to drive its development agenda and to generate technologies and innovations to increase competitiveness of our continent. To do this well RUFORUM and other Education Institutions and Networks need support from African Union and its organs, our Governments and partnership within and outside the continent. Consequently, we must listen to perspectives from these bodies hence the purpose of this convening.

Ladies and gentlemen

Today, we are privileged to listen to the distinguished panelists who will be sharing their knowledge, experiences and expertise on how best to address the challenges inhibiting skills advancement in science, technology and innovation across the educational value chain in Africa and in their respective countries.

I thank each one of them, and our Moderator, the Vice Chancellor, University of Bamenda, Cameroon and RUFORUM Deputy Board Chair, for accepting to be part of this high level discussion.

I also thank you distinguished participants for joining the Webinar. Please do participate actively in the dialogue through the Chat box and Q&A session. We are recording the Webinar and it will be available through all our media outlets.

As I conclude, I once again invite you to watch this [short documentary of an example of what RUFORUM is doing to train the next generation of scientists for Africa.](#)

Thank you and I wish you good deliberation