



RUFORUM 19th Annual General Meeting (AGM) To be held in Yaoundé – Cameroon 2023 October 28th – November 2nd, 2023 Concept Note

THEME “Transforming Higher Education to Sustainably Feed and Create Prosperity for Africa”

Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is an umbrella organization of universities in Africa. The RUFORUM Network was founded in 2004 by the Vice Chancellors of ten (10) universities in Eastern and Southern Africa and registered in Uganda as an International Non-Governmental Organization. RUFORUM’s Vision is “**vibrant, transformative universities catalysing sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa**”. To achieve its vision, RUFORUM aims at transforming African universities through transformation of the mode of leadership, training, research and outreach. Currently, RUFORUM has 163 members in 40 African countries (see www.ruforum.org). RUFORUM Secretariat is hosted by the Government of Uganda at Makerere University main Campus in Kampala.

RUFORUM outcomes influence agriculture and allied sectors of the economy while recognizing that national and continental economies are integrated mechanisms for creating wealth and prosperity. A new cadre of workforce as well as innovations that foster integration among stakeholders in agriculture and allied sectors are required. Thus, RUFORUM’s programmes involve catalytic actions that:

- 1) Train the next workforce generation of young people who are skilled and lead research and innovation processes;
- 2) Strengthen universities’ capacities to effectively and efficiently implement graduate training and research that delivers a competitive workforce and innovations for development;

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- 3) Develop and support utilization of science-based solutions to feed and create prosperity for Africa. University capacity to work with research, business and development partners to transform ideas into innovations is also enhanced;
- 4) Generates data and knowledge to inform evidence-based policy making, and
- 5) Serves as an anchor and envoy for policy dialogue through annual convenings that enable national to continental integration of higher education and research for development with policy.

These actions are geared at transformative changes leading to high performing African universities that produce skilled, proactive graduates, demand driven research outputs and innovation in response to national and continental development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In order to increase national capacities for global competitiveness in the higher education and agricultural sectors, African universities and partners co-design and implement RUFORUM programs. To ensure that its interventions are relevant, RUFORUM aligns its agenda to continent-wide policy frameworks, especially the African Union Agenda 2063, the African Union Science Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024, the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and National Development Plans and Strategy Papers of the States and Governments in which the member universities are found. RUFORUM’s agenda is also informed by continental to global trends that inform and impact the higher education and agriculture sectors.

In 2010, RUFORUM held a Ministerial Meeting, called the Conference on Higher Agricultural Education (CHEA), in which African Ministers requested that the Network regularly debrief governments on progress made on higher education on the continent. This is the basis for holding high level policy dialogues that is part of RUFORUM’s annual convenings including the Annual General Meeting (AGM). High level policy convenings bring together university leadership and government leaders to dialogue and forge next steps for Africa’s higher education. This is critical given the rapid expansion in the number of universities and student enrolments on the continent, coupled with several development challenges and opportunity that are rapidly manifesting at continental and national levels that require engagement with policy makers at the highest level.

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RUFORUM network operations are annually reviewed and guided by strategic governance organs and partnership engagements through convenings such as the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is organized and hosted on a rotational basis amongst member universities and their respective countries. The AGM is the supreme decision-making organ of the Network that brings together member universities, policy makers and partners to prioritise, seek guidance, share lessons and experiences on building Africa’s human capital, generation of STIs and relevant policy information to underpin development on the continent. In 2023, RUFORUM will hold its 19th AGM that will be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Cameroon and member universities in Cameroon from 29th October to 3rd November 2023 in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Theme

The 19th RUFORUM AGM has a particular focus on engaging governments and development partners to support Higher Education in Africa and is organised under the theme **“Transforming Higher Education to Sustainably Feed and Create Prosperity for Africa”**.

Objectives

- 1) Provide a forum for the RUFORUM Governance organs and partners to reflect on progress made on the implementation of various transformative training, research and development programmes of the Network;
- 2) Provide a platform for the RUFORUM Secretariat to sensitize the Network members and partners about the second Operational Plan for RUFORUM’s Vision 2030 Strategy that consolidates and builds upon the achievements of the first Operational Plan;
- 3) Led by the Government of Cameroon, profile and inform African Governments, Development Partners and other Stakeholders about RUFORUM’s continental initiatives¹ in higher education that strengthen science, technology and innovation (STI), women engagement, and youth entrepreneurship and work transitions in Africa;

¹ (i) BASTIC: Building Africa’s Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity for Economic Growth, (ii) SASTIE: Strengthening Africa’s Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capacity, (iii) RISCW: Regional Initiative to Strengthen Staff Capacity and Increase the Pool of Women Scientists in African Universities, (IV) AfriDAP: African Digital Agricultural Programme: Digital technologies for agricultural transformation, and (v) SHAEA: Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa. TAGDev: Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningfully contribute to Africa’s development

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- 4) Provide opportunity for researchers and students to share their findings and innovations for solving Africa’s and global development problems, and
- 5) Provide a platform for RUFORUM members to establish partnerships and/or teams to respond to various opportunities.

Approach and Methodology

RUFORUM AGM will take place through different convenings. These include pre-AGM events, side events, the Business Meeting, capacity building sessions, scientific conference, poster sessions and exhibitions by member universities and other partners. Additionally high-level policy dialogues such as the Ministerial Roundtable is held.

Pre-AGM meetings will be held to ensure that inputs to the AGM are well prepared. As a result, a number of meetings will be planned before the AGM to support achievement of RUFORUM’s mission and goal. The Business Meeting reviews documents generated in advance by respective Governance Organs and advisory committees. This process provides for feedback and guidance to the Secretariat and enables lesson sharing among university leaders and their partners.

During the scientific sessions, oral presentations and facilitated discussions will be conducted in a blended manner. The AGM will be officially opened and closed by senior Government Leaders of Cameroon. Guest speakers and leaders will engage with the AGM to discuss strategic issues affecting higher education and development in Africa. A meeting of Ministers of higher education, agriculture, and science, technology and innovation as well as development partners will be held.

Additionally, a visit to one of the five member universities or one research institution in Yaoundé will be included as part of learning and exploration opportunities for joint activities in the network. Awards in recognition of outstanding achievers including model farmers and young scientists from Cameroon as well as young innovators from Central Africa will be made.

Participants

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The AGM event will bring together policy makers (including Ministers and Technical Experts), Higher Education Leaders in Africa, Development Partners, Private Sector Leaders, Researchers, Innovators, Students, and Farmer Organizations, among others. Approximately 600 participants are expected to attend the RUFORUM 19th AGM.

Expected outputs and outcomes of the AGM

- 1) The achievements and key lessons learned by the RUFORUM Network for transforming higher and tertiary education in Africa are profiled to support reform and investments in best practices to solve common problems;
- 2) The RUFORUM corporate financial statements and reports for 2022/2023, as well as the fiscal year work plans, budgets, and external auditor for 2023/2024, approved, and guidance provided to the Secretariat;
- 3) Clarity and convergence on investment opportunities within the network and with partners to strengthen higher education and catalyze African economic development processes;
- 4) African governments identify and agree on key actions to be undertaken to support higher and tertiary education transformation processes in order to equip universities with capacity to build Africa’s human capital and generate development solutions;
- 5) The member universities and their partners present innovations and lessons learned in the application of science to activities that provide solutions for sustainable and profitable agri-food systems;
- 6) The network and partners identify strategic areas and actions that ensure cost leverage and competitiveness in training, research, innovation and entrepreneurship activities;
- 7) African talent and accomplishments are recognized and used to inspire others while also providing lessons for scaling up new ideas and innovations across the continent, and
- 8) Students and faculty at member universities are trained in critical science, management, and entrepreneurship skills in order to improve research, teaching, and learning, as well as development initiatives.

Date and venue: The 2023 AGM will take place at the Palais des Congrès, in Yaoundé, Cameroon from October 29th to November 3rd.

AGM Organizers and Contacts

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RUFORUM
19TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
28 Oct- 02 Nov. 2023
CAMEROON



The AGM will be organized by the Government of Cameroon and RUFORUM member universities in Cameroon, under the coordination of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Bamenda and RUFORUM Board Chair Prof Theresa NKuo-Akenji (wifon@yahoo.com). The list of the fully constituted Local Organizing Committee will be communicated in due course.

The RUFORUM Secretariat will provide support to the LOC. For this purpose, RUFORUM Secretariat has put up a RUFORUM Organizing Committee (ROC) which can be contacted at s.dagnoko@ruforum.org (Dr Sokona Dagnoko, RUFORUM Organizing Committee - ROC Coordinator) and at secretariat@ruforum.org with copy to agm@ruforum.org.

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