



19TH RUFORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

VICE CHANCELLORS FORUM

Date and Time: Thursday 2nd November, 2023 (08:30 – 13:00 GMT+1)

Venue: Huis Clos, Palais des Congrès, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/3QGling>

Concept Note

Theme: Positioning African Universities to promote inclusive and sustainable development on the continent

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BACKGROUND

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a 163-member pan African organisation that was founded in 2004 by Vice Chancellors. RUFORUM has membership in 40 countries (for details see www.ruforum.org). From its inception, the network has received strategic guidance and policy advice that has steered the organisation, to becoming a leader in higher agricultural education from its Board Members and leader, the Vice Chancellors. Indeed, during the two most recent RUFORUM convenings, Vice Chancellors guided on the how universities could engage Governments, Development Partners, and other agricultural higher education ecosystem actors to invest in education programmes.

In this post-COVID 19 period, some realities that are affecting operation across different sectors of the economy. Africa experienced a reduction in its foreign direct investments in the run up to and post-COVID-19 period [of 5.9% between 2019 and 2020](#). A major challenge is the reduction in funding opportunities, especially, as Governments and Development Partners turn their attention to investing in areas of the economy with faster returns and impacts on economic recovery. Predictions by the UNCTAD indicated that by 2021, Africa's FDI would grow [marginally](#). In fact, international project financing for large infrastructure projects across the continent reduced by up to 74% to \$32 billion according to the same report. Clearly, therefore, the continent has faced headwinds in investment, with foundational sectors such as education, taking a hard hit and therefore posing a threat to decades of economic and social development.

For Africa to realise a revamp of its renaissance journey, it must invest in its young people but must do so in a manner that gives them a competitive edge, first locally in their nations, regionally and globally. COVID-19 and other threats such as war and poverty affected Africa's young demographic most by

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reducing opportunity to access key factors of production. In that regard, universities, providers of knowledge and education, the natural equaliser for all human beings must reflect on how they implement their education agenda to enhance inclusion and diversity. This is important given the future-of-work opportunities that are increasingly changing. Studies by the [World Economic Forum](#) on the future-of-work subject, indicates the need for intensified focus on digitisation, entrepreneurship, technology adoption among others, as key for unlocking opportunity for young people in today's education system.

African university must therefore interrogate the challenges and opportunities that technology such as artificial intelligence (AI), the impact of insecurity that is increasing immigration and emigration within and out of Africa, and the endemic challenge of Africa's excluded female population especially in science, technology and innovation, are some of the grand challenges the continent must address.

The theme of RUFORUM's 2023 AGM is ***Transforming Higher Education to Sustainably Feed and Create Prosperity for Africa***. Through this theme RUFORUM recognises the pivotal role that its membership can play in reducing Africa's net food importation, while creating equal opportunity for prosperity. Agriculture, a central cog in development, is reportedly [2-4 times more effective](#) in moving millions out of poverty than growth in any other sector of developing economies, under which most countries in Africa fall. RUFORUM member universities must therefore catalyze the growth in agriculture to address inclusion, diversity and equitable growth and opportunity for Africans.

For this to be achieved there has to be an alignment between the expectations from the university, to the national, regional and global agendas. Public sector, private sectors, non-governmental organizations and the international community. At the same time, universities must ensure good governance practices that promote effective functioning and the quality of teaching, research, knowledge generation, transfer and utilization. These issues among others are the focus of this year's Vice Chancellors Forum.

OBJECTIVES OF THE VICE CHANCELLORS FORUM

The purpose of this year's Vice Chancellors Forum is to deliberate on emerging and contemporary issues in higher education to strengthen university systems, promote inclusion and enhance the relevance of universities in national and regional development. Specifically, the Vice Chancellors Forum will:

1. Identify strategies for promoting inclusion, safeguards and diversity in higher education.
2. Explore mechanisms for integrating universities into national and regional innovation systems
3. Discuss aligning African agricultural higher education to the future-of-work on the continent and globally.

APPROACH

The Vice Chancellors Forum will be held in person and virtually (<https://bit.ly/3QGling>). Different moderators will guide the conversations. Each objective will be addressed through panel discussions that involve experts, practitioners and university leaders. The Programme for the Vice Chancellors Forum is shown below.

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Programme

Session Chair: Prof Paul Mapfumo, Vice Chancellor, University of Zimbabwe

Rapporteurs: Dr. Florence Nakayiwa, Mr. David Ekepu and **Representative from LOC**

Time	Activity
Session 1: Opening and Setting the Scene	
09:00 – 9:15	Arrival and registration
9:15-9:20	Welcome Remarks: Prof. Roger Tsafack Nanfosso, Vice Chancellor, University of Dschang
9:20 – 9:25	Opening remarks: Prof. Theresia Nkuo-Akenji, RUFORUM Board Chair and Vice Chancellor University of Bamenda, Cameroon
Theme 1: Inclusion, Safeguards and Diversity	
Session Moderator: Professor Joy C Kwesiga, Vice Chancellor, Kabale University, Uganda	
09:25 – 9:40	Lead Paper: Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, Vice Chancellor, Makerere University: Promoting inclusion, Safeguards and Diversity in higher education
09:40 – 9:50	Discussant 1: Prof. Address Malata, Vice Chancellor, Malawi University of Science and Technology, Malawi
09:50 – 10:00	Discussant 2: Prof. Isaac Kibwage, Vice Chancellor, Egerton University, Kenya
10:00 – 10:10	Discussant 3: Dr. Patrick Awuah, President Ashesi University, Ghana
10:10 – 10:30	Discussion and concluding remarks by Session moderator
10:30-11:00	Health Break
Session 2: Integrating universities into national and regional innovation systems	
Session Moderator: Dr. Abdou Tenkouano, Executive Director, West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF), Senegal	
11:00 – 11:15	Lead Paper: Prof Bonang Mohale, Chancellor, University of Free State, South Africa: Impactful university-led research for development
11:15 – 16:25	Discussant 1: Dr. Stephen Onakuse, President, AGRINATURA
11:25 – 11:35	Discussant 2: Prof. M. Hicham El Habti, President, Mohamed VI Polytechnic University, Morocco
16:35 – 16:45	Discussant 3: Professor Cliff Sibusiso Dlamini, Executive Director and Head of Mission, Center for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA)
11:45 – 12:00	Discussion and concluding remarks by Session moderator
Session 3: Aligning African agricultural higher education to the future-of-work on the continent and globally.	
Moderator: Dr. Enock Warinda, Executive Director, Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa	
12:00 – 12:15	Lead Paper: Prof. Peter Kamwi Matengu, Vice Chancellor, University of Namibia: Future of work for a competitive Africa
12:15 – 12:25	Discussant 1: Prof. Peter Mbat, Vice Chancellor, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, South Africa
12:25 – 12:35	Discussant 2: Prof. Florence Uphie Chinje, Vice Chancellor, University of Ngaoundere, Cameroon

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12:35 – 16:45	Discussant 3: Prof. David Jambgwa Simbi, Vice Chancellor, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe
12:45 – 13:00	Discussion and concluding remarks by Session moderator

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