



19th RUFORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

ROUND TABLE DIALOGUE ON ACCELERATING INVESTMENT TO TRANSFORM HIGHER AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION IN AFRICA

Date: Tuesday 31st October, 2023

Time: 14:00-17:00 GMT+1

Venue: Meeting Room B, Palais des Congrès, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Register here to join meeting: <https://bit.ly/459fdnW>

Theme: Transformative Higher Education

Chart pathways for intensifying investments in the field of Agricultural Higher Education and agricultural development through cross-country and regional collaboration

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Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Africa (RUFORUM) is a pan-African network of predominantly agriculture teaching and research universities that was established by its Vice Chancellors in 2004 to meet three basic objectives:

1. Provide a **platform for training quality graduates** to support research, development processes and training future generations once they graduate, in Africa.
2. Provide a platform for **networking, resource mobilization and advocacy** for implementing training, research and development agenda for the continent.
3. **Rationalize resource** use and enhance economies of scale and scope to enhance value for money invested in higher education as a vehicle for delivering development impact.

Since then, the network has evolved and now operates in 40 of Africa's 54 countries in all five regions of the continent, with a membership of 163 universities. The network has also grown in its scale and scope of operations, that now include institutional strengthening, post-doctoral training, entrepreneurship and

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future of work activities. Accordingly, a new set of actors such as Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (TVET) institutions, farming communities, private sector and partners in the Global North and Global South have been on-boarded.

Currently, RUFORUM is implementing its [Vision 2030](#) the strategic plan for engaging African Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy (AHISTI). The strategy derives its mandate from development blueprints such as [Agenda 2063](#), the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) targets, and their midterm strategies (Vision 2030 and 2040) documents. Implementing such a broad regional agenda necessitates, among other things, concerted, strategically engaged collaborations with the objective of scaling up development effect that will change the face of Africa.

Following recent Ministerial meetings in Zimbabwe (2022) and Benin (2021), on expanding investments in higher agriculture and tertiary education, it is now recognized that there is an urgent need to speed efforts to concretize the important steps agreed upon. Of concern are the following key action areas:

1. The need to strengthen engagement with African Union Commission and other regional and continental apex bodies that support higher education, science, technology and innovation, as well as revitalise TVET education systems.
2. Strengthen capacity to train at graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral levels, build staff capacities in universities and agree on a road map for signing the RUFORUM Charter.
3. The need for a broader ecosystem approach towards strengthening agricultural higher and tertiary education where education sub-sector is integral and catalyses positive changes in the agricultural sector.
4. Reinforce the education ecosystem across universities and TVETs to leverage secondary and primary education to upgrade the skill levels of young people entering the labour force and ensure that university education is relevant to national development priorities.
5. The need for intentional actions to create wealth and jobs in an inclusive and equitable manner in order to meet the future-of-work opportunities for Africa’s young population.
6. The need to invest in youth programs that advance requisite technical and entrepreneurship skills that leverage the use of digital solutions to expand innovation, create businesses and employment.

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These six issues are key to enhancing the integration of agricultural education into agriculture in order to feed and create prosperity in Africa as envisioned in the [Lilongwe Declaration](#). Cognizant of the need for inclusion and equity especially in agriculture, a sector that accounts for 70% of the continent’s rural livelihoods, partnerships must focus on the needs of smallholder farmers, especially women and youth. Given the significance of these two demographic groups for agriculture and food security as well as the high rates of pre- and post-harvest losses, African Universities, the research community, and development actors must mobilize the necessary resources to improve Africa's food systems. Additionally, they must scale up best practices, such as, but not limited to, increased value addition and a decrease in post-harvest losses.

Objectives of the High-Level Policy Round Table

The main objective of the high-level policy roundtable is to map out effective pathways for intensifying investments in higher agricultural education and agricultural development through cross-country and regional collaboration. The specific objectives of the meeting to:

1. Engage leaders from the AUC Commission, Ministers, Senior Government leaders, development partners, apex higher education, and agricultural research bodies to discuss and agree on concrete steps of actioning the [Continental Education Strategy for Africa \(CESA\)](#).
2. Explore possibility of more countries accessing support from the World Bank through the ACE II AF funding window.
3. Discuss and agree on concrete steps and potential investment actions for intensifying the digitisation of Africa’s higher agricultural education to unlock opportunities for underserved people across the continent to access quality education.
4. Scaling up proven models for university-industry partnerships that enhance the transformation of science knowledge into products, services and enterprises that create jobs for young people and wealth for the continent.
5. Explore avenues for endorsement of the RUFORUM Charter and its implementation at country level to intensify engagement of African universities in national development processes.

Approach

1. A representative of the Senior Government Leaders will present the outcomes from the senior government leaders meeting on the status, progress and agreed actions to take the policy, university and other stakeholder process forward.

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2. Receive a statement from the African Union Commission on strengthening the education ecosystem in Africa.
3. Receive statements from Development Partners and representatives of apex higher education, and agricultural research bodies on accelerating investments in agricultural higher education and agricultural development.
4. Ministers present will make brief statements on the status of the education ecosystems in their countries, and provide insights on opportunities for engagement with the rest of Africa.
5. The high-level round table will draw participants from Ministries of Agriculture, Higher Education, Science and Technology in dialogue with Development Partners for the realisation of the efforts to build Africa’s higher agricultural Education, Science, Technology and Innovation capacity. Other participants expected include BADEA, World Bank, Inter-University Council of East Africa, Association of African Universities (AAU), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, the Arab Organisation for Agricultural Development (AOAD), Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), Sub Regional Agricultural Research Organisations, One CGIAR, Islamic Development Bank, Global Research Alliance for Agricultural Green House Gases (GRA), African Women in Agricultural Research and Development (AWARD), Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), AGRINATURA, among others.
6. The final output will be an action plan and a road map for engaging all stakeholders towards marshalling resources and investments in the field of Higher Agricultural Education and agricultural sector.

Meeting Venue

The meeting will be held on **Tuesday**, 31st October 2023 from 14:00 to 16:00 GMT+1 at Palais des Congrès. The Session Chair will be the Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, Government of Cameroon. The meeting will be held in French, Portuguese, Arabic and English.

A draft programme of the High Level Policy Dialogue is attached below:

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Programme

Master of Ceremonies: **TBC**

Session Rapporteurs: IUCEA and AAU nominees to be added to (Dr. Florence Nakayiwa, Mr. Okalany)

Time	Agenda item	Responsible party
14:00-14:15	Arrival and registration	Cameroon Local Organizing Committee (LOC)
Session Chair: Prof. Jacques Fame Ndongo, Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, Government of Cameroon		
14:15- 14:25	Welcome Remarks	Prof. Theresia Nkuo Akenji, RUFORUM Board Chair and Vice Chancellor, University of Bamenda, Cameroon
14:25-14:35	Setting the Scene	Prof. Patrick Okori, Executive Secretary, RUFORUM
14:35-14:50	Statement on behalf of Government of Cameroon	Prof. Jacques Fame Ndongo, Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education, Government of Cameroon
14:50-15:35	Statements by Partners (05 minutes for each partner)	H.E. Prof. Mohammed Belhocine, Commissioner, for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, AUC
		Dr. Peter Materu, Chief Program Officer, Mastercard Foundation
		Prof Gaspard Banyankimbona, Executive Secretary of the Inter-University Council of East Africa (IUCEA)
		Professor Olusola Bandele Oyewole, Secretary General, Association of African Universities (AAU)
		Dr. Roberta Malee Bassett, Global Lead for Tertiary Education, Education Global Practice The World Bank (TBC)
		H.E Dr. Sidi Ould TAH, President, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA)
		Dr. Aggrey Agumya, Executive Director, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)
		Dr. Christophe Larose, European Commission Directorate of International Partnerships (INTPA)
	Dr. Harold Roy-Macauley, Managing Director, Regions and Partnership, CGIAR	
15:35-15:50	Open discussion	All
15:50-16:05	Health Break	LOC to Guide

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16:05-16:25	Country Statements by Ministers (5 Minutes per country): Status of their education ecosystem	
16:25-16:35	General Discussions	All
16:35-16:45	Report from the Technical Experts Meeting of 30 th October 2023 and Action plan for accelerating investments in higher agricultural education in Africa	Prof. Wilfred GABSA NYONGBET, Secretary General, Ministry of Higher Education, Cameroon
16:45-16:55	Reactions to the draft report and action plan	All
16:55-17:00	Closing Remarks	His Excellency Gabriel Mbairrobe, Hon Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Government of Cameroon

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