



19th RUFORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

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

Date: Sunday, 29 October, 2023

Time: 11:00-16:00 GMT+1

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

Concept Note

Theme: Chart pathways for intensifying investments in the field of Higher Agricultural 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 increase value for money invested in higher education as a vehicle for delivering development impacts.

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 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.

1

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Currently RUFORUM is implementing its [Vision 2030](#) the strategic plan for engaging African Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy (AHESTI). 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 others, concerted strategically engaged collaborations with the objective of scaling-up development impacts to 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.

Education, Agriculture, Science, Technology, and Innovation Ministries are key to implementing all the six above measures. Accordingly, RUFORUM relies on the Senior Government Leaders attending this meeting to deliberate on the six measures clustered around two meeting objectives.

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Objectives of the Senior Government Leaders round table

The main objective of the Senior Government Leaders roundtable is to consider proposals for deeper engagement of Africa’s universities and tertiary education institutions in their respective country education and development processes and practice. Specifically, the leaders will deliberate on areas that intensify the role of universities through their networks in national development processes (RUFORUM Charter); define measures for engagement of African universities in delivery of inclusive and equitable development visions of Africa (feed and employ young Africa). These two areas are highlighted in the sub objectives below.

1. Explore avenues for endorsement of the RUFORUM Charter and its implementation at country level to intensify engagement of African universities in national development processes.
2. Receive, consider, and provide recommendations/guidance on the next steps to develop and implement inclusive and integrated higher agricultural and tertiary education agendas that to address Africa's current future human capital demands and growth trajectories.

Approach

To provide a broad background to the meeting, lead presentations on each of the two objectives will be made by the RUFORUM Secretariat. Subsequently the Senior Government Leaders will discuss each of them and agree on the major actions and next steps to be taken for recommendation to the high-level roundtable that takes place during the AGM.

Expected outputs

The following outputs are expected to be produced from the Senior Governments meetings

- a) A common position and roadmap for delivering a transformative higher agriculture education that creates highly skilled and entrepreneurial human resources. The roadmap will focus on how to balance Africa’s human resources pyramid by integrating university education with Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
- b) Higher agricultural and tertiary education transformations that are required to make training inclusive and effective in job creation and stimulation of economic growth.
- c) A roadmap with clear steps for endorsement of the RUFORUM Charter that is in line with procedures of different governments.
- d) Clarification and recognition of the role of the African Union Commission in the implementation of the Charter.

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Meeting Venue

The meeting will be held on **Sunday**, 29th October 2023 from 11:00 to 16:00 GMT+1 at Palais des Congrès. The Session Chair will be the Secretary General, Minister of Higher Education, Government of Cameroon. The meeting will be held in French, Portuguese, Arabic and English.

A draft programme of the Senior Government Leaders Dialogue is attached below:

Programme

Master of Ceremonies: TBC

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

Time	Agenda item	Responsible party
11:00-11:15	Arrival and registration	Cameroon Local Organizing Committee (LOC)
Session Chair: Secretary General, Ministry of Higher Education, Government of Cameroon		
11:15- 11:25	Welcome Remarks	RUFORUM Board Chair
11:25-11:35	Setting the scene	RUFORUM
11:35 – 11:55	Transformative higher agricultural education in Africa: Rebalancing the human capital pyramid to create jobs and prosperity in Africa	
11:55 – 12:15	Plenary discussion on models and mechanism for transformative higher agricultural education in Africa	
12:15 – 12:35	Plenary discussion on ecosystem support structure, especially at policy level required to reap benefits of transformative higher education	
12:35 – 13:00	Outline of key messages to be included for presentation to the High Level Policy Dialogue	
Lunch/Health Break		All
14:00 – 14:20	Presentation of the RUFORUM Charter	Prof. Patrick Okori
14:20 – 14:40	Review and update Charter Articles to reflect the current state of the RUFORUM Network and ease of understanding and approval by different Governments	
14:40 – 15:00	Discussion of procedures required for approval and endorsement of the Charter in each country	
15:00 – 15:20	Next steps to achieve signing of the Charter by at least 70% of the RUFORUM member countries	

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15:20 – 15:40	Packaging of presentation of next steps on the Charter endorsement to submit to the High-Level Policy Dialogue including propositions on the relationship with AUC	
15:40 – 16:00	Consolidation of outputs into the communique	
16:00 – 16:10	Meeting closure	

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