



## 2<sup>nd</sup> RUFORUM TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE

### CONCEPT NOTE

### TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE PRE-LAUNCH WEBINAR

**Date: Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2024 Time: 14.00-16:00 CAT (15:00-17:00 EAT)**

**Register here: <https://bit.ly/3XMzvCW>**

### BACKGROUND

Although African Agriculture has made significant progress over the last thirty years, Africa remains food insecure. This has been exacerbated by the effects of climate change, population growth, increased urbanization, Covid19 pandemic, cross-border trade restrictions, high insecurity, and the war in Ukraine, among others. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals No1 – No Poverty and No2 – Zero Hunger under such conditions requires Africa to build resilient agrifood systems geared towards creating impact for the economy and the lives of rural communities representing the bulk of Africa’s population. The transformation of African agriculture into a globally competitive, inclusive and business oriented sector that creates wealth, generates gainful employment and improves quality of life will help to revitalize the rural areas (where the majority of Africa’s population resides) and catalyze their move out of a long lasting poverty.

Through the Malabo Declaration on Accelerated Agricultural Growth and Transformation for Shared Prosperity and Improved Livelihoods, the African Heads of States, gathered in Malabo Equatorial Guinea on June 26-27, 2014 reconfirmed their commitment to allocate at least 10% of the public expenditure to agriculture. The Heads of States also committed to end hunger and malnutrition by 2025, that will be achieved by increasing agricultural productivity through increased access to quality and affordable inputs (for crops, livestock, fisheries, amongst others); supply of appropriate knowledge, information, and skills to users; efficient and effective water management systems notably through irrigation; increased agricultural mechanization and energy; and reduced postharvest losses among others. The African Heads of States can rely on agricultural research, technologies and innovations to accelerate agricultural growth and transformation and universities have a role to play.

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Co-organisers:





The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), a Network of 170 universities from 40 countries across all the five regions of Africa was established in 2004 by ten (10) vice chancellors in five countries in eastern and Southern Africa. RUFORUM is an Africa owned and Africa operated organization. It envisions by 2030, vibrant, transformative universities catalyzing sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa.

RUFORUM’s mission is to strengthen the capacities of universities to foster innovations responsive to the demands of smallholder farmers through the training of high quality researchers, the output of impact-oriented research and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, national agricultural research institutions and governments.

In July, 2014, RUFORUM signed a cooperation agreement with the African Union to support the implementation of the African Union Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy (STISA 2024). In February 2024, AUC launched its second decade acceleration plan of the Agenda 2063, “the Africa Want” which envisions a prosperous, peaceful, and integrated Africa by 2063. This acceleration plan is a call to action for all stakeholders including the African governments, Regional Economic Communities, Research institutions, the African academia, and the diaspora among others to come together and work together to enhance regional integration, economic diversification, innovation, and competitiveness, as well as social inclusion and cohesion.

Strategic partnerships within and outside its network are essential for RUFORUM operations and for achieving 2030 SDGs. Thus, RUFORUM holds annual convenings that offer opportunity for its network members to come together to network, lessons-share, and build relationships towards successful mission delivery to contribute to the achievement of the Malabo Declaration, the SDGs and acceleration of the Agenda 2023, “The Africa we want” - prosperous, peaceful, and integrated Africa.

This year, RUFORUM will organize its second Triennial Conference to be held in Windhoek - Namibia, from 12<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup> August 2024. RUFORUM’s convenings are hosted on a rotational basis between the countries of its member universities. This year, the Triennial Conference and RUFORUM 20<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly are hosted by the Government of Namibia, and co-organized by the RUFORUM member universities in Namibia (UNAM and IUM). The theme for the second RUFORUM Triennial Conference is **“Operationalising Higher Agricultural Education**





*and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialisation and Economic Development in Africa: A Call for Action*". Over 1,000 participants representing Policymakers, African Governments, African Union Commission, Universities and universities' networks, Higher Education Leaders, Students and Alumni, Researchers, Regional Research Organisations (SROs), Private Sector Leaders, Agricultural Knowledge, and Innovation Systems (AKIS) Stakeholders, Development Partners, ICT stakeholders, Farmers and Farmer Organisations, Innovators and RUFORUM Staff are expected.

## OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of this pre-launch webinar is to bring together RUFORUM and the Triennial host country Government (The Namibian Ministry of Higher Education, Technology and Innovations – MHETI), RUFORUM member universities in Namibia (University of Namibia and the International University of Management) as well as other key stakeholders of Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) to initiate discussions around the Conference main-theme; and pave the road towards a successful Triennial Conference in Namibia.

## SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss the key imperatives for Operationalizing Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialization and Economic Development in Africa.
2. Integrating African Universities into National Innovation Systems: Imperatives, Gaps, and Opportunities.
3. Private sector linkage for Operationalizing Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialization and Economic Development in Africa: What are the imperatives, Gaps and Opportunities?
4. Discuss innovative ways and strategies to assess beyond numbers, the impact of operationalizing Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialization and Economic Development in Africa.





## APPROACH

The pre-launch webinar will take place in a form of plenary presentations and discussions, facilitated by a moderator. There will be a moderated panel discussions as well. The webinar is placed under the high presidency of the honourable Minister of Higher Education, Technology and Innovations. Eminent personalities of the agricultural academia and agricultural knowledge and innovation system stakeholders will present background papers and discuss key issues. The webinar will begin with an opening ceremony and end with a closing ceremony.

## DATE AND VENUE

This webinar will take place virtually on Thursday July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2024 from 14:00 – 16:00 PM, Namibia Time (Central African Time). Register here ([link](#)) to participate to the webinar.

## EXPECTED PARTICIPANTS

The RUFORUM 2nd Triennial Conference pre-launch webinar will bring together Higher Education and Agricultural Leaders from Namibia, the SADEC and other parts of Africa. Students and alumni, policymakers (including Ministers and Technical Experts), Development Partners, Private Sector Leaders, Researchers, Innovators, and Farmer Organizations, among others are invited. Other actors concerned by the webinar are sub - Regional Organizations (SROs), and key players in the Agricultural Knowledge and Innovations Systems in Africa and beyond.

## EXPECTED OUTPUTS

1. Key imperatives for Operationalizing Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialization and Economic Development in Africa discussed.
2. Imperatives, Gaps, and Opportunities for integrating African Agricultural Universities into National Innovation Systems / development processes presented and discussed.
3. The imperatives, Gaps and Opportunities for Private sector and universities linkage for Operationalizing Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialization and Economic Development in Africa discussed.





4. Innovative ways and strategies to assess the impact of operationalizing Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialization and Economic Development in Africa discussed.





## PROGRAMME

Director of Ceremony: Dr Marius Kudumo

Time (CAT)	Activity	Speaker / Responsible
13:30-14:00	Log-in and video of RUFORUM moving forward Video	Evaline Acan
14:00-14:05	Introductory statement - House-keeping issues and setting the scene	Prof Nelago Indongo, UNAM
14:05-14:10	Welcome remarks from RUFORUM Executive Secretary	Prof. Patrick Okori, RUFORUM Executive Secretary
14:10-14:15	Remarks from RUFORUM Board Chair	Prof Theresia Nkuo-Akenji
14:15-14:20	Introducing the guest of honor	Prof Kenneth Matengu, Vice Chancellor, University of Namibia
14:20-14:40	Official opening address	Honorable Dr Itah Kandjii-Murangi (MP) Minister of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation Republic of Namibia
14:40-15:10	<p><b>Key Note Address:</b></p> <p>Key imperatives for Operationalizing Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialization and Economic Development in Africa</p>	Dr Alfred Adriaan Van Kent, Executive Director, MHETI, Namibia
15:10-15:45	<p><b>Moderated Panel Discussion</b></p> <p>University of Namibia – Prof Ndeyapo Nickanor</p> <p>International University of Management, Namibia (IUM) – Mr. Sioni Ikelala</p> <p>Namibia University of Science and Technology <b>TBD</b></p> <p>National Commission on Research Science and Technology – NCRST Namibia - Dr Nhlanhla Lupahla</p> <p>Namibia Biomass Industry Group NBiG - <b>TBD</b></p>	Moderator Dr Marius Kudumo, UNAM
15:45-15:50	Facilitated Open Dialogue	Dr Marius Kudumo, UNAM
15:50-15:56	Wrap up	Dr Marius Kudumo, UNAM
15:56-16:00	Closing Remarks	Prof Osmund Mwandemele, Vice Chancellor, International University of Management

