



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

### CONCEPT NOTE

#### WORK READINESS: TRANSFORMATIVE EFFORTS BY AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024 **Time:** 14:00-17:00 CAT

**Venue:** *Mercure Hotel, Grand Ballroom, Windhoek, Namibia*

**Registration Link:** <https://bit.ly/3UNg3Tj>

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#### BACKGROUND

The Africa Union's theme for 2024 is "Educate an African fit for the 21st Century: Building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning in Africa." This subject underpins the continent's aim to educate young Africans to drive development. Yet just 9% of the 98% of young people in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) who join primary school go on to university education, and 6% of them graduate. Compared to the average global enrolment in tertiary education, SSA only enrolls 3.4-fold students, curtailing the number of Tertiary Educated Graduates. Globally, the return on investments on the entire education ecosystem is highest with Tertiary educated graduates who earn 17 % more income than secondary (10%) and primary (7%) education according to the [World Bank](#). For SSA in the return on tertiary education is 21%, 3% higher than the global average. The demand for scientists remains high, SSA currently having 198 scientists per million compared to the global average of 1,150 according to [UNESCO](#). Clearly therefore, SSA must invest in tertiary education if its young population is to effectively engage in the economy.

In February, 2024, The [African Union Second 10-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063](#), (STYIP) was launched. The implementation plan leverages earlier investments to create prospects for the "The Africa We Want." Goal two of STYIP aims to deliver, "well-educated citizens and skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation (STI)". The STYIP aims to produce 100,000 African PhDs, a fifth of whom will be in Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) disciplines. While enrolment in higher education has tripled over the past two decades there is asymmetry between the different regions of Africa especially in PhD level training. Between 2000 and 2019 PhD enrolments, increased from 9% to 34%, but with 4 out of 10 students (40%) registered in South Africa<sup>1</sup>. To be sure the number of PhD Full Time Equivalent (FTEs) per 100,000 of agricultural populations remains low, less than 7, compared to Brazil that has 31 PhD FTE<sup>2</sup>. This limits SSA's ability for STI to underpin science led growth of the continent's agriculture sector.

<sup>1</sup> Van Schalkwyk, F. Cloete, N., Milandré. V-L 2021. Brain circuitry: The case of South Africa as a hub for doctoral education. South African Journal of Science. 117. 10.17159/sajs.2021/10674.

<sup>2</sup> Jayne, T.S. Zingore, S., Ibra Niang, I.A., Palm, C., Shah, S., Sanchez, P. 2023. Building twenty-first century agricultural research and extension capacity in Africa. *European Review of Agricultural Economics*, 50, (5) 1824–1846 <https://doi.org/10.1093/erae/jbad028>.



What then must be done during this second decade. The STYIP provides strategic direction requiring a balanced education systems that increases SSA ability to unlock opportunity for its young people. Such undertakings for a diverse continent with varied capacities requires among others that Africa leverage its continent-wide frameworks and flagship projects, are informed and involve the AU, African-Governments, Regional Economic Communities, the African Development Bank and Development Partners. The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Africa (RUFORUM) a network of predominantly 170 agriculture teaching and research universities, in 40 countries of Africa, now proposes to contribute to the development of a continental framework for skilling in agriculture and related STEM disciplines for Africa.

## ABOUT THE CONVENER

The 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.

More details about RUFORUM and its operations across Africa can be found at ([www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org)).

## MEETING PURPOSE

This policy round-table aims to create convergence on the implementation imperatives for transforming Africa's Higher Education Sector. It will provide a platform for Senior Government Leaders to co-create actions that enable deeper engagement of Africa's universities and Tertiary education production of well-rounded human capital for the continent.

## ROUND TABLE OBJECTIVES

The Senior Government Leaders attending will deliberate on imperatives for developing to delivery of transformative education required to underpin science led economic growth. The specific objectives will be framed by two objectives:

1. Receive, consider, and provide recommendations on next steps for an inclusive and integrated transformed higher agricultural and tertiary education agenda that addresses Africa's future labour and wealth creation demands.
2. Identify major implementation areas that will help to shape the development of transformative education initiatives and investments across the country and continent.
3. 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

To provide a broad background to the meeting, lead presentations will be made to guide discussions. Fire-side chats (moderated discussions) will be used to deepen understanding and engagement of participants. Subsequently, the Senior Leaders and selected participants engage in deliberation that will agree on the major actions and next steps to be taken.



## EXPECTED OUTPUTS

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

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 the human resources pyramid in Africa by integrating university education with Technical and Vocational Education and Training to skill youths who did not have access to

## MEETING VENUE

The meeting will be held on, 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at the Mercure, Windhoek, Namibia. The meeting will be held in French and English.



## PROGRAMME

### Session Rapporteurs: RUFORUM

Time	Agenda item	Responsible party
14:00-14:10	Arrival and registration	Local Organizing Committee
<b>Session Chair: Prof. Peter Mbatl, Vice Chancellor, Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University, South Africa</b>		
14:10- 14:20	Welcome Remarks	RUFORUM- IAP Dr David Nielsen
14:20- 14:30	Welcome Remarks	Dr Alfred Van Kent, Executive Director, Ministry of Higher Education, Training and Innovation
14:30- 14:50	<b>Lead paper:</b> Transformative higher agricultural education and research for in Africa: What have we learnt?	RUFORUM
14:50- 15:20	<b>Case study- (Fire-side chat)</b> Training the next generation of young engaged and productive Africans  <b>Moderator:</b> Prof Peter Mbatl	Gulu, Chinoyi, Egerton and Ashesi Universities, UM6P,
15:20- 15:40	<b>Lead Paper.</b> What we have learned working from country to continental level? Dr Tina Muparadzi, Mastercard Foundation	Mastercard Foundation
15:40- 16:20	<b>Policy implications:</b> Identification of main policy imperatives for scaling-out transformative education across Africa. Dr Beatrice Muganda, Principal Secretary, State Department for Higher Education and Research, Ministry of Education, Kenya  <b>Moderator:</b> Prof Peter Mbatl	RUFORUM
16:20- 16:40	Key messages to be included the action plan. Prof Peter Mbatl	RUFORUM
16:40-17:00	<b>Meeting closure and Health Break</b>	<b>All</b>