



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

### CONCEPT NOTE

### SYMPOSIUM II: SUSTAINABLY GROWING THE ECONOMY AND FEEDING AFRICA

**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> August 2024 **Time:** 08:00 – 10:00 CAT

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

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

**Contact:**

Prof. Majaliwa Mwanjalolo ([m.majaliwa@ruforum.org](mailto:m.majaliwa@ruforum.org))

### BACKGROUND

Africa currently strives to fulfil a vision where it can feed itself through multiple agrifood system interventions to transform her agriculture from a solitary struggle for survival into a flourishing business. The global COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia- Ukraine crisis have demonstrated the need for increasing food production on the continent <sup>(1)</sup>. The transformation processes should target several aspects of agriculture including the seed systems, agricultural practices, and market and trade among others. The African seed sector is key in supporting food security and nutrition, livelihoods, sustainable resource use, and climate change mitigation<sup>2</sup>. However, the seed systems cannot sustain the existing demand and efforts toward continuous improvement. Unfortunately, most countries on the continent do not have a good blend of public and private investments, and healthy competition among stakeholders to create and sustain a robust seed system. In addition, despite their importance in rural development on the continent, implementation of sustainable agriculture practices faces several challenges including limited awareness, limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, policy gaps, and lack of market linkages. The latter has made it difficult for smallholder farmers to invest in agriculture, develop and adopt better farming practices, shift the power balance in the supply chain, and reduce post-harvest losses.

During the Second Triennial Conference convened under the theme ***“Operationalising higher agricultural education and research ecosystems for innovation, industrialization and economic***

<sup>1</sup>Balma, Lacina et al. (2022): Long-run impacts of the conflict in Ukraine on food security in Africa, Kiel Policy Brief, No. Ukraine Special 1, Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW Kiel), Kiel

<sup>2</sup>Deborah Nabuuma et al. (2022). Impact of seed system interventions on food and nutrition security in low- and middle-income countries: A scoping review, Global Food Security, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gfs.2022.100638>.

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**development in Africa: A Call for Action**”, a discussion will be held on how to generate scientific and entrepreneurial solutions for enhancing production, distribution, and consumption of sufficient, nutritious food in the African continent. Innovative models and pathways for making Africa’s agrifood sector a more competitive one that creates jobs and wealth for the African people, and growing its economy will be discussed and documented. This theme will be discussed in two sub-themes:

**Sub-theme 2(a): Sustainable, productive, and competitive agriculture.** This sub-theme fosters scientific discussions on deployment of science, technology, innovation, and entrepreneurship to unlock production and productivity of Africa’s agrifood sector, specifically focusing on:

- i. Crop-based systems with a focused discussion on topics such as agronomy, soil health, genetics & plant breeding, crop protection among others.
- ii. Livestock-based systems with a focused discussion on topics such as livestock production systems, health, genetics & breeding.
- iii. Blue economy and related food systems with a focused discussion on topics such as aquaculture, aquatic, and marine production systems.
- iv. Crop-livestock production systems for tropical agro-ecologies such as drylands, humid and sub humid farming systems.

**Sub-theme 2(b): Enhanced agrifood systems resilience.** Under this sub-theme, papers presented will share findings, key lessons, and recommendations for enhancing resilience and productivity of Africa’s agri-food system focusing on:

- i. Sustainable food supply including flow of sufficient, accessible, nutritious, and safe food.
- ii. Climate change mitigation and adaptation in agriculture including among others clean energy, climate smart agriculture, environmental conservation, and carbon neutrality.
- iii. Leveraging indigenous agrifood systems for sustainable development.
- iv. One world, one health including human, animal, and environmental health nexus.

## OBJECTIVES

The scientific session is organized to foster the exchange of knowledge for enhancing Africa’s agrifood sector production, productivity, and its potential to create jobs and wealth for its people.

Specifically, this session will:

- i. Foster exchange of knowledge, technologies and innovations for nurturing and scaling a sustainable, productive, and competitive agrifood sector in Africa.

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- ii. Foster exchange of knowledge, technologies, and innovations for enhancing agrifood systems resilience to natural and man-made disasters such as climate change, conflicts etc.
- iii. Provide a platform to discuss policy implications, societal impact, and ethical considerations while enhancing agrifood systems productivity, jobs, and wealth creation.
- iv. Facilitate interactions between researchers and industry professionals, fostering collaboration, technology transfer, and application of research findings in real-world contexts.

## APPROACH

The event will start with a policy address on **“Africa’s strategic and policy aspirations for sustainably feeding and growing its agrifood system** to be delivered by Special Advisor to the Commissioner for Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy, and Sustainable Environment (**ARBE**), African Union Commission. This will be followed by a keynote address on **“Sustainably growing the economy and feeding Africa” to be made by the CGIAR.**” Discussants from academia, national and continental agricultural research organizations, and the extension service providers, private sector, and farmers will respond to the key issues raised in the keynote address. The audience will then be engaged to provide feedback and additional suggestions on how African can feed itself and create jobs and wealth in the agricultural sector. This symposium will set the tone for the different sessions which will take place on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024 as sub-themes this major theme.

## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- a) Knowledge, technologies, and innovations for nurturing and scaling a sustainable, productive, and competitive agrifood sector in Africa. Success stories, challenges, and opportunities will be specified.
- b) Knowledge, technologies, and innovations for enhancing agrifood systems resilience to natural and man-made disasters such as climate change, conflicts etc. Success stories, challenges, and opportunities will be specified.
- c) Policy implications, societal impact, and ethical considerations in innovations and enterprise development for sustainably feeding and growing Africa’s economies through the agrifood sector. Success stories, challenges, and opportunities will be specified.
- d) Partnerships and networks among researchers and industry professionals for innovations scaling across the African continent.

## PARTICIPANTS

Participants will include researchers, scientists, academics, development partners, policy makers and Government Officials, industry representatives, Non-Profit Organizations, professionals, and graduate students.

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## ORGANIZERS

The event is organized by RUFORUM, with support from the Government of Namibia and RUFORUM member universities in Namibia.

## PROGRAMME

TUESDAY 13 <sup>th</sup> August, 2024	
PLENARY SESSION II	
<b>Venue:</b> Mercure Hotel, Grand Ballroom	
<b>Registration Link:</b> <a href="https://bit.ly/3wITNlp">https://bit.ly/3wITNlp</a>	
<b>Chair:</b> Prof. Nickanor Ndeyapo, Vice Chair, RUFORUM Principals and Deans Committee	
<b>Rapporteur:</b> Dr Allan Waniale, Dr Liveness Banda	
Time	
08:00-08:05	<b>WELCOME REMARKS FROM THE CHAIR</b>
08:05 – 08:35	<b>Policy address on “Africa’s strategic and policy aspirations for sustainably feeding and growing its agrifood system”</b> Prof. Jerome Theo Afeikhena, Special Advisor to the Commissioner, Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment, African Union Commission (Representing Commissioner ARBE)
08:35-09:00	<b>Lead paper</b> <b>Title: Economics of land degradation in sub-Saharan Africa</b> Dr. Ephraim Nkonya, Nonresident Research Fellow, IFPRI
09:00-09:10	<b>Discussants</b> Prof. Agnes Mwangombe, Former Principal of the College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, University of Nairobi
09:10-09:20	Dr. Job Kihara, Initiative Co-Lead, Excellence in Agronomy, CGIAR
09:20-09:30	Prof. Umezuruike Linus Opara, Distinguished Professor and Research Chair, Stellenbosch, South Africa
09:30-09:40	Prof. Cliff Dlamini, Executive Director and Head of Mission, CCARDESA
09:40-09:50	Dr. Moumini Savadogo, Executive Director, CORAF
09:50-10.00	Dr. Robert Zougmore, AICCRA Cluster Lead for West Africa, Alliance of Alliance of Bioversity International and CIAT

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