

Remarks from Dr. Florence Nakayiwa, RUFORUM Deputy Executive Secretary, Planning, Resource Mobilisation and Management during Webinar III - *Universities' role in preparedness, response and monitoring of emerging and re-emerging pandemics*. 3rd July 2020

Thank you Moderator.

To our distinguished Panelists and Participants who have joined the third Webinar that RUFORUM, a network of 126 Universities in 38 African countries is hosting, I welcome you all. The Webinar Series are part of RUFORUM's effort to initiate dialogue and debate on how Universities in Africa can generate home grown interventions amidst topical challenges in Africa and globally.

You will agree with me that the biggest global challenge for the year 2020 is the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact in all facets of life. While pandemics are not new to Africa, COVID-19 has its unique attributes. Coming on the backdrop of health systems that have been characterized as fragile, the global expanse that has equally affected advanced health systems has not been lost to us.



How then should African institutions reposition to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and other health challenges that are likely to emerge? How best do we develop the response capacities of universities? How do we build capacity and resilience of African institutions to deal with the effects and cope with future pandemics and or other development challenges?

The RUFORUM Webinar series are part of this equation. They have been designed to target, and get perspectives from all stakeholders on various facets. They present opportunities for multi and inter disciplinary reform. Specifically how health, education, food security and agriculture are interwoven. Through the series, we have already shared experiences from Vice Chancellors in Africa and Europe, Regional Education Agencies, Development Partners and other Webinar participants.

The two Webinars hosted to date have explored potential interventions to improve our higher education system and ultimately improve livelihoods in Africa. Both Webinars highlighted genuine partnerships and the value of meaningful institutional and cross sector collaboration.



They emphasised that public, private, education, health and agriculture are all interlinked and therefore response to the pandemic has to be holistic.

Today the panelists who bring in experiences from across the divide will give their views on *Universities' role in preparedness, response and monitoring of emerging and re-emerging pandemics*.

Please join the debate and pay keen attention to the propositions they make. Join me to further thank our Moderator and Panelists for today's Webinar. To all of you participants, we at RUFORUM greatly appreciate your participation.

Let me further take this opportunity to invite you to join us on the 15th July 2020, for yet another webinar which will focus on *agri-food systems in the new normal*.

We look forward to hosting you again- Please remember that the recordings for all Webinars are available on the RUFORUM Website.



I thank you.