

**Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
(RUFORUM)**

Report of the Principals and Deans' Meeting

**Held at Nobleza Hotel, Kigali, Rwanda
19th September 2013**

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

RUFORUM's capacity building efforts stem from the significance of agriculture to the continent and a commitment to support postgraduate level training and research among its member universities as enshrined in the RUFORUM Vision and Mission. A strategic entry point to catalyze the process of graduate training and research is the proactive engagement of Principals and Deans responsible for agriculture at respective RUFORUM member universities. The Principals and Deans Committee is an organ of the RUFORUM Governance Structure comprising of Principals and Deans of Colleges / Faculties of Agriculture and related sciences participating in RUFORUM's activities. Its functions are to: (a) Review of issues from the National Forums and Regional Thematic Groups and providing feedback to the Secretariat and Technical Committee; and (b) provide advice to the RUFORUM Secretariat on activity progress and issues emerging at individual university and country levels.

The Deans and Principals' Meeting under the framework of RUFORUM was held on 19th September 2013 at Nobleza Hotel, Kigali, Rwanda. This meeting was attended by delegates from 17 countries (Annex 1 and 3).

1.1.1. Objectives

The main objective of this meeting was to review operations of the RUFORUM Network over the past year, and also make strategic recommendations to improve performance for the next year.

The specific objectives were to:

1. Provide updates on RUFORUM activities in 2012/2013 and emerging issues, including from the independent external review
2. Review implementation of agreed actions in previous meetings of Deans of RUFORUM member universities
3. Seek guidance on strategic thrusts for future operations of the RUFORUM Network in relation to:
 - a. Key strategic areas for the period 2014-2018
 - b. Strategies for partnerships and expansion of membership under RUFORUM
 - c. Modalities for implementing Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) as part of the self-effort by member Universities to train faculty staff at PhD level in RUFORUM member Universities
 - d. Strengthening the work on livestock under RUFORUM
 - e. How to improve the national forums
 - f. Increased visibility of RUFORUM through use of ICTs

4. Review of the Principals and Deans' Committee Communiqué of September /November 2012, and agree on a communication to the AGM of 2013

The meeting was organized in four main sessions namely; 1) Opening, 2) Overview of performance, 3) Operationalization of key strategic thrusts, and 4) Data collection and reporting for visibility of RUFORUM achievements. The meeting adopted a facilitated participatory approach to focus on the specific issues as mentioned in the objectives. Because of the availability of some speakers/presenters at particular times of the day, the program (Annex 2) was not strictly sequentially followed. However, the facilitator for the meeting, Dr. Paul Nampala, allowed for all presentations to be done and also the discussions to be undertaken.

All the presentations made during the meeting, and all the reference documents, including those for the AGM, were compiled and included in the flash diskette that was given to all the Principals and Deans.

2. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING DISCUSSIONS

2.1. Opening and overview of performance

2.1.1. Welcome and objectives by Paul Nampala

The facilitator of the meeting, Dr. Paul Nampala, welcomed the participants from RUFORUM member countries in the land of a thousand hills (Rwanda) and thanked them for coming. He later facilitated them to introduce themselves. He mentioned that such meetings are important because they provide participants with the opportunity to be updated on RUFORUM activities, review of implementation of agreed actions, and guidance on proposed and future operations or activities of RUFORUM network. He highlighted the objectives of the meeting and also outlined the process the meeting would take.

2.1.2. Opening remarks by Solange Uwituze

Dr. Solange Uwituze, who is also the Deputy Chair of the RUFORUM Deans and Principals Committee, warmly welcomed the Deans and Principals in Rwanda. She further informed the participants that there are currently 18 member countries in RUFORUM network. She highlighted that the importance of RUFORUM is to serve as a *Think-Tank* where member countries come together and plan towards achieving common objectives, for example, ensuring food security. Dr. Uwituze further emphasized that agriculture sector and all of us involved have the noble job of feeding the world since nobody can perform without eating. In addition, the Deputy Chair of Deans Committee highlighted the importance of thinking along the value-chain and designing curriculum for students that respond to the market needs. She emphasized that our responsibility as RUFORUM is to produce adequate and quality food for our populations. Dr. Uwituze asked the Deans and Principals to consider the graduate teaching and

research assistantships as a program will enhance and further strengthen staff development in RUFORUM member countries. She concluded her remarks by thanking Dr. Daphrose Gahakwa, the former Minister of Education for initiating RUFORUM in Rwanda and finally wished the participants fruitful deliberations.

2.1.3. Opening and achievements of the past year for RUFORUM by Nodumo Dhlamini

Ms. Nodumo Dhlamini, who spoke on behalf of Prof. Adipala Ekwamu, the Executive Secretary of RUFORUM, gave an overview of the meetings objectives highlighted as indicated in section 1.2. Ms. Nodumo Dhlamini is the Program Manager at RUFORUM Secretariat for Information, Communication and Technology (ICT).

Ms. Nodumo further updated the participants on RUFORUM Secretariat-led activities for 2012-13 and emerging issues. She highlighted the five core areas of RUFORUM namely; 1) demand driven research, community action and institutional strengthening, 2) activities to guide and support research and institutional grants, 3) monitoring and evaluation, 4) harnessing ICT for improved performance at the secretariat and universities, and 5) tightening and enhancing RUFORUM governance and management. Ms. Dhlamini concluded her presentation by citing one of the major challenges affecting RUFORUM as that of changing tenure of Deans and Principles. Usually, the newly appointed Deans and Principles take time to familiarize with RUFORUM activities.

2.1.4. External review of RUFORUM by Paul Nampala

RUFORUM undertook an External Review of RUFORUM from March-May 2013 of the programs implemented in the past 4 years, with a specific focus on the BMGF project. The objectives of the review were to:

1. Assess progress achieved during the implementation of the first phase of the BMGF program
2. Establish the extent of achievement of project objectives and outcomes on direct target groups and indirect program beneficiaries
3. Incorporate feedback from key stakeholders, principally, funded-researchers, faculty, university deans, vice-chancellors and other key partners to implementation
4. Document lessons to help shape future strategic direction

Dr. Paul Nampala made a summary presentation and highlighted the issues raised by the review team. The full report was circulated to all the Principals and Deans (on the flash diskette) and they were encouraged to study the report and take action as needed.

2.1.5. Summary of the report of visioning for the next 5 years for RUFORUM by Solange Uwituze

RUFORUM Secretariat organized a meeting for some Principals and Deans from 26-27 Jun. 2013 in order to get some indications on the future of RUFORUM for the next 5 years, from the perspectives of the Principals and Deans. Dr. Uwituze made a summary presentation of the discussions held and the proposals suggested. The full report was included in the flash diskette that was given to the Principals and Deans at the end of the meeting.

2.1.6. Issues from past Principals and Deans meetings by Agnes A. Obua-Ogwal

Agnes provided a summary of all the Principals and Deans Meetings since 2009. The schedule of the meetings are presented in Table 1.

No	Dates	Town	Focus / theme of meeting
1	31Aug-4Sept.09	Mombasa	Recreating African Universities for Development Relevance
3	27 Aug. 11	Lilongwe	Agricultural Tertiary Education in Africa: Reorienting Capacity Building through University Networking
4	22 Sept. 12	Entebbe	Quality Assurance & Credit Accumulation and Transfer; & National Forums
X	23 Sept. 12	Entebbe	RUFORUM Theory of Change
5	24 Nov. 12	Entebbe	Strengthening capacity of newer and/or under resourced member universities; Students feedback; Future focus of RUFORUM; Content of the MoU with member universities
X	26-27 Jun 13	Entebbe	Consultations on the future of RUFORUM in the next 5 years

The key issues that have been raised over the years were as follows:

1. Improving financial viability of the universities and particularly the sustainability of Regional Programs
2. Increasing the output and impact of research
3. Curricular development - targeting market segments
4. Strengthening management and leadership
5. Infrastructure for ICT
6. Improving enrolment – pre-university teaching
7. Strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
8. After graduation support and engagement with industry
9. Networking, outreach, advocacy and outreach

Details of all these areas were documented and was also circulated in the flash diskette, including the minutes of all the previous Principals and Deans meetings.

2.2. Operationalization of key strategic thrusts

2.2.1. Presentation on partnerships by Malcom Blackie

Prof. Malcom, a retired professor from the University of Zimbabwe discussed the importance of strategic partnerships and expansion of membership under RUFORUM framework. Malcom expressed the relevance of partnership to member Universities through shared experiences, resources, trainings and research and also vision casting.

2.2.2. Presentation by David Campbell

Prof. David Campbell, former professor at the Royal Agricultural College in the United Kingdom stressed the need for fellowship programs that would help African students to make a difference. Campbell emphasized the following points with regard to future partnerships and opportunities between Royal Agricultural College and RUFORUM member universities:

- Strong linkage between RUFORUM Universities and private sector;
- Monitoring and Evaluation;
- Undergraduate and graduate fellowship programs; and
- Collaboration in the areas of curriculum development and exchange of students and professors.

1.1.1. Presentation on National Forums by Patrick Okori

Assoc. Prof. Patrick Okori anchored his presentation on the RUFORUM impact statement¹, and emphasized that training and research are not ends in themselves but a means to the end. He mentioned that there are four areas of focus needed:

- Improving operations: (resource access and use): institutional capacity strengthening; and resource mobilization and rationalization
- Support to market segments through outreach (public awareness) and strengthened knowledge management
- Service to market segments through supporting outcome(s) and impact(s) delivery
- Advocacy for critical issues such as gender & equity, funding, visibility, capacity building

He concluded by asking the members to identify key structural challenges within the institutions, and at national level. Some of these included policy instruments needed at College and University level to frame operations, institutional arrangements are needed to harness ongoing opportunities among staff and Faculty, engagement with stakeholders at the national level.

¹ High performing African universities that strive to produce skilled, proactive graduates, demand driven research output and innovation in response to regional and national agricultural development priorities

1.1.2. Presentation on livestock by George Gitau

Prof. George Gitau gave a presentation on how to strengthen the work on livestock under the RUFORUM programs. Prof. Gitau appealed to RUFORUM to do the following:

- 1) Give support to the livestock component within the RUFORUM framework;
- 2) Endorse and approve the further development of livestock thematic area; and
- 3) Encourage participation of more universities engaged in livestock research to participate in RUFORUM livestock activities.

Prof. Gitau recommended the following three thematic areas:

- 1) Sustainable livestock health and production through regional approach and collaboration for improved livelihoods and enhancing food security;
- 2) Quality and innovative market-driven animal product processing and/or value addition for public health and safety; and
- 3) Stakeholder-driven livestock market systems, policy and regulatory frameworks for improved and sustainable livelihoods.

1.1.3. Operationalization of graduate teaching assistantships by Sylvia Mkandawire

Mrs. Sylvia Mkandawire, the Program Officer for Training and Quality Assurance, presented the concept and outline of the proposed graduate teaching assistantship (GTA) program. She explained that the GTA program was designed and proposed to enable member universities to address their teaching and research capacity gap needs, and to address challenges related to aging / retiring experienced staff in the member universities. She further expounded that over the years, RUFORUM member universities have sought openings to send their staff for post-graduate training to universities in Europe, USA, Asia, and other destinations at very high costs. Beginning in 2004, the RUFORUM network championed the development of selected regional agricultural post-graduate training programs to support training for its member universities by using the capacities resident in the network through identified RUFORUM centers of excellence. Mrs. Mkandawire added that funding for these regional agricultural post-graduate programs has remained a challenge – development partners would only fund components of the training costs (e.g. research, attendance to conferences, etc) but not the full package (research, tuition, stipend, short skills training, exposure events) to support the post-graduate students.

Mrs. Mkandawire then explained that the GTA was all about staff exchange for agricultural training at master and doctoral levels (priority being given to the doctoral training focusing not only on the RUFORUM regional post-graduate training programs but other university programs as well). She elaborated that the GTA Mechanism would support capacity building in key identified gap areas of the participating member universities. RUFORUM member universities would send staff for training to other RUFORUM universities, and also receive staff to be trained on behalf of the sending university. The RUFORUM Secretariat would play a brokering role.

The GTA mechanism places the responsibility on the member universities to support capacity building of their own staff members, clarified Mrs. Mkandawire. She also mentioned that the RUFORUM Vice Chancellors had agreed, in principle, to implement the GTA Mechanism, and that the Principals and Deans would be responsible for working out the operational modalities for implementing such a noble scheme. The details of how the Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) Mechanism is proposed to work was also highlighted as follows:

- Sending and receiving universities identify their capacity gaps
- The receiving university waives fees and provide accommodation for the students/staff nominated by the sending university
- The sending university provides their staff with travel, stipend and research funds
- The nominated student/staff will contribute to the host university by participating in teaching during his/her training

The Principals and Deans agreed that the topic needs further clarification and discussion.

1.2. Data collection and reporting for visibility of RUFORUM achievements

1.2.1. Presentation on CABI by David Onyango

Mr. David Onyango from the Centre for Agricultural Bioscience International (CABI) gave a presentation on how to strengthen tertiary agricultural in Africa through, (i) enhancing access to agricultural research discovery tools; (ii) capacity building in agricultural knowledge management through training; (iii) improving access to agricultural and environmental scientific knowledge. He elaborated on how CABI has various resources that the member universities could access to improve their research and training programs.

1.2.2. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and the RUFORUM Network by Liz Levy

The presentation on IPRs showcased Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Access (OA) as freely available materials for use by educators and students. These could therefore be distributed and adapted without requesting permission, but attribution would often be required. Ms. Liz Levy also explained that teaching resources in African universities are frequently out-of-date, and insufficient budgets make it impossible to purchase new textbooks and other materials: she said OER offers a cost-effective way to update resources. Ms. Levy elaborated that RUFORUM has worked with network members to create 26 e-learning courses, which are being turned into OERs and OA PDF files; RUFORUM collaborates with OER Africa and network members in Ethiopia, Uganda, and Tanzania on the AgShare initiative; and that RUFORUM has requested funding to explore the feasibility of creating an OER/OA pilot course, using MOOC methodologies. She encouraged all the participants to visit the RUFORUM

institutional repository to browse OER and OA resources at <http://repository.ruforum.org/>. Ms. Levey also provided other useful links and websites that the participants could visit.

1.2.3. RUFORUM Information Management System (RIMS) by Nodumo Dhlamini

Ms. Nodumo Dhlamini informed the members of the key components and the progress made so far in computerizing the management information system for RUFORUM. She highlighted the various modules covered by the RIMS to facilitate efficiency in the following areas

- Competitive Grants System
- Tracking RUFORUM Network Contacts – students, staff, other stakeholders
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
- Training and Quality Assurance
- Archiving of Internal Institutional Documents

Progress made so far is as follows:

- Online reporting for Principal Investigators
- Tracking alumni and current students
- Compiling the contacts database – all students, Principals and Deans, Board members, IAP members, other stakeholders from various RUFORUM meetings

She requested the Principals and Deans to support the online data collection as and when requests for information are made

1.2.4. The RUFORUM Institutional Repository by Liz Levy

An institutional repository (IR), is an online library, collects, preserves, and disseminates in digital format, the intellectual output of an institution said Ms. Liz Levy. She explained that resources contained in institutional repositories are frequently classified as open access and freely available. Many institutions are now having IRs such as some member universities, CABI, and ILRI. Ms. Liz explained to the members that and IR is important because

- Recognition of African research is hampered because it does not reach the global knowledge pool
- Resources in the RUFORUM repository are indexed and abstracted in the major scholarly search engines and services, and thus can be reached by scientists everywhere
- The repository can protect intellectual property rights. It's hard to plagiarize if a work and authorship are widely indexed online and not in question
- Research has shown that making full text freely available online brings increased visibility, usage, and impact

All RUFORUM network members (present in the meeting and also other faculty members and students) were encouraged to submit their resources for inclusion in the repository; they were

also encouraged to visit the RUFORUM Institutional Repository and write to RUFORUM with their comments. The URL is: <http://repository.ruforum.org/>

1.3. Summary and conclusions

The RUFORUM Secretariat acknowledged the active participation of the Principals and Deans in the meeting. They also acknowledged the participation and funding of the various partnerships and programs that support the RUFORUM activities. The support from DAAD towards this meeting was also greatly appreciated. The Deans and Principals' meeting concluded that there the main issues that still need further efforts by all members were as follows:

- Improving the visibility of RUFORUM member universities at the regional and continental levels;
- Sustaining and improving the financial viability of the regional programs and taking opportunity of participating the graduate teaching assistantship (GTA) mechanism;
- Improving graduate completion rates, particularly timely completion;
- Improving infrastructure for ICT – both for the hardware and the soft skills needed to harness the ICT for improved research, training, and communication, particularly through embracing Open Educational Resources and Open Access policies, and using the Institutional Repository facilities available;
- Strengthening the advisory role of Principals and Dean's Committee;
- Improving the livestock research projects with the RUFORUM member universities, and principally within the RUFORUM CGS program
- Improving the quality of the training programs and targeting the curricular development and review to the various market segments;
- Increasing the outputs and impact of research through improved research, training programs, learning and communication;
- Strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning particularly for research programs; and
- Maintaining the linkages established in such meetings and improving networking amongst the various member universities faculties.

2. List of Annexes

2.1. Annex 1. Countries represented

Country	Numbers
1. Botswana	1
2. Burundi	1
3. Democratic Republic of Congo	1
4. Ethiopia	2
5. Israel	1
6. Kenya	10
7. Malawi	4
8. Mozambique	3
9. Namibia	1
10. Rwanda (includes 6 NUR LOC staff)	7
11. South Africa	2
12. Sudan	2
13. Swaziland	1
14. Uganda (includes 10 RUFORUM Secretariat staff)	19
15. UK	2
16. Zambia	1
17. Zimbabwe	2
Total	60

2.2. Annex 2. Program Agenda

Dean's Committee Meeting: Pre-AGM 2013. 19-20 Sept.2013. Kigali, Rwanda

Time	Program Thursday 19 th September 2013	Responsible
Day 1	Agenda Day 1: 19 September 2013: Nobleza Hotel	
	Session 1: Opening	
8.00 hrs	➤ Registration	Emmanuel Okalany
8.30 hrs	➤ Welcome Remarks: Chair Deans Committee (DC) & Host	Tiisekwa Bendantunguka Solange Uwituze Nodumo Dhlamini Facilitator
	➤ Welcome Remarks: RUFORUM Secretariat	
	➤ Objectives and process for the Meeting	
	Session 2: Overview of performance	
8.45 hrs	➤ Updates on RUFORUM (Secretariat-led) activities for 2012/2013 and emerging issues	Nodumo
9.00 hrs	➤ Review of implementation of agreements in previous meetings of Deans ²	Agnes Solange
9.15 hrs	➤ Input into the report by Deans on visioning for the next 5 years for RUFORUM, 26-27 Jun. 2013	
9.30 hrs	➤ Issues and recommendations from the March-May 2013 External Review of RUFORUM	Paul Nampala
9.45 hrs	➤ Guided group and plenary discussions	Facilitator
11.00 hrs	Health Break	
	Session 3a: Operationalization of key strategic thrusts	
11.30 hrs	➤ How to operationalize teaching assistantships in universities (what does it take to make this happen in the universities?)	Sylvia Mkandawire
11.50 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guided group discussions ▪ Plenary discussion 	All & Facilitator
12.40 hrs	➤ Talk on Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)	Liz Levy
13.00 hrs	Lunch	
	Session 3b: Operationalization of key strategic thrusts	
14.00 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Partnerships and expansion of membership under RUFORUM ➤ Strengthening National Forums ➤ How to strengthen the work on livestock under RUFORUM 	Malcolm Blackie Patrick Okori Professor Kimera
14.45 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guided group discussions ▪ Plenary discussion 	All & Facilitator
16.30 hrs	Health Break	
	Session 4: Data collection and reporting for visibility of RUFORUM achievements	
16.50 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Launch of the MIS modules on the RUFORUM Grants ➤ Proposed data collection on the RUFORUM indicator "improved excellence of member universities" – academic profiles of universities ➤ Launch of the Institutional Repository 	Nodumo Agnes
17.20 hrs	➤ Access to CABI databases	Nodumo/ Liz Levy/ Joan David Onyango (CABI)
17.30 hrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wrap up for the day and way forward ➤ Closing remarks 	Solange Uwituze Emilio Tostao

² Mombasa: 31Aug–4Sept.2009; Victoria Falls: 5-7 Aug. 2010; Lilongwe: 29-30 Aug. 2011; Entebbe: 22-23 Sept. 2012; Entebbe: 24 Nov. 2012

18:00 hrs

END for the day

2.3. Annex 3. Attendance List for the Deans' Meeting 19th September 2013, Kigali Rwanda

Summary attendance

Category	Actual number as at detailed list
Principals	2
Represented principals	1
Deans	24
Represented Deans	4
Secretariat Staff	10
NUR LOC	6
Others	13
Totals	60

Detailed attendance list

No.	Sex	Name and Address Details
RUFORUM Principals		
1.	Male	Prof. Bernard Bashaasha Principal, Makerere University College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, P.O Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda Telephone: +256 414 531145 Mobile: +256 772627249 Email: bashaasha@agric.mak.ac.ug ; principal@caes.mak.ac.ug
2.	Female	Prof. Agnes Mwang'ombe Principal College of Agriculture and Veterinary Science, University of Nairobi P.O. Box 00100-30197, Nairobi, Kenya Telephone; +254-20-2055126 Mobile: +254 722788995 Email: wakesho123@gmail.com ; principal-cavs@uonbi.ac.ke ; mwangombe@kenyaweb.com
Representatives of Principals		
3.	Female	Dr. Nakavuma Jesca Deputy Principal College of Veterinary Medicine and Biosecurity Makerere University, P.O. Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda Telephone; +256 414 554685 Mobile: +256 772 434093; +256 752 521571 Email: jlnakavuma@vetmed.mak.ac.ug ; jesca.Nakavuma@gmail.com
Deans		
4.	Male	Mr. Chitao Maxon Lenon Dean Faculty of Agriculture, Mzuzu University, Malawi Telephone: + 265 1320722; +265111933282 Mobile +265884124790; +265 995811460; +265 111933282 Email: maxonchitawo@yahoo.co.uk ; mlchitawo@gmail.com

No.	Sex	Name and Address Details
5.	Male	Dr. Albert Zwenhamo Chiteka Dean Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources Africa University, Zimbabwe, P.O. Box 1320, Mutare, Zimbabwe Telephone: +263 20 60026 Mobile: +263 778352355 Email: albertchiteka@gmail.com ; deanfanr@fricau.edu
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7.	Male	Dr. Elenimo Brilliant Khonga Dean Faculty of Agriculture, Content Farm, Sebele, Private Bag 0027, Gaborone, Botswana Telephone: +267 3650103; +267 392 8998; +267 3650103 Mobile: +267 721 90591 Email: ebkhonga@bca.bw ; ebkhonga56@gmail.com
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9.	Male	Dr. Ambrose Kiprop Dean Faculty of Agriculture, Moi University, P.O. Box 3900-30100, Eldoret, Kenya/ P.O. Box 9111-30100 Eldoret, Kenya Telephone: +254 719241704; +254 751477937 Email: ambkiprop@yahoo.com ; ambkiprop@yahoo.com
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