

## **RUFORUM 2016 Annual General Meeting**

**Session Chair: Prof. Mabel Imbuga, Vice Chancellor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology and RUFORUM Board Chair**

**Venue: Conference Hall, CCCC Hotel**

### **Background & Introduction**

Established in 2004, The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a Network of 60 African universities in 25 countries whose vision is ‘a vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities which produce high performing graduates and high-quality research responsive to the demands of Africa’s farmers for innovations and able to generate sustainable livelihoods and national economic development’. The Network has several unique features for building Africa’s innovation capacity and for engaging universities in development process and practice; i) It is owned and managed by Africans; ii) It derives its agenda largely from the continent wide policy frameworks especially of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the New Partnership for African Development’s (NEPAD) Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), the African Union Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024, Continental Education Strategy for Africa 2016-2025, the Sub regional Multi–Country Agricultural Productivity Programmes, National Strategy Papers of the member States and Governments and constant review of global trends and foresight planning to ensure Africa has the required capacity for global competitiveness; and iii) it allows for joint action by the member universities and stakeholders in higher education and agricultural sectors.

RUFORUM’s vibrancy emanates from its own character, which a) allows for ownership and direction of network activities by member universities, b) for identification of priorities from national level to inform regional thrusts, c) ensures broad consultation and consensus on regional level activities by members, and d) promotes sharing of resources, rather than competition, across the network for capacity building in agriculture and the broader Science and Technology Innovation (STI). The AGM is a key platform for achievement of the above. Each year, RUFORUM members and stakeholders meet at its (AGM) to discuss issues facing network members and strategies to overcome these challenges. The AGM is organised and hosted on a rotational arrangement amongst member universities /countries. The AGM is the supreme decision making organ of the RUFORUM Network; it oversees Network interventions and performs functions as deemed relevant for the achievement of RUFORUM objectives. Although a number of activities are associated with the AGM the actual AGM is a one day meeting which this year will be held on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2016.

## **Focus of the RUFORUM AGM**

The theme of the Fifth Biennial conference; “Linking Universities with private sector, government and other stakeholders in support for agricultural development in Africa” builds on the strategic objectives of RUFORUM Strategic Business Plan for 2015-2020 that was approved in Windhoek, Namibia. The Plan envisages an enhanced **engagement of University actors along the whole value chain, including** sister organizations and the private sector in mutually beneficial research and training to accelerate delivery of agricultural science-based innovations. The 2016 RUFORUM Biennial Conference, the fifth in the series, aimed at providing a platform for sharing experiences and lessons among Higher Agricultural Education actors in Africa and the globe at large towards strengthening higher agricultural education in Africa through partnerships with the private sector and industry. Each other year, a specific thematic area is selected towards achieving the mission of RUFORUM. The 2016 Biennial Conference purposely strived to enhance the linkages among universities (leadership, lecturers and students), governments, the private sector, civil society and policy makers for increased investments and partnership to enhance contribution of the Higher Education sector to development. The Conference provided an opportunity to hear directly from the Private Sector on their demands related to how the Higher Education Sector can better contribute towards their business processes. The private sector were also be engaged to share how they can direct portion of their social responsibility towards higher education. Universities solicited for feedback from the private sector on training initiatives and across universities on best practices to engage other stakeholders.

## **Objectives of the RUFORUM 12<sup>th</sup> AGM**

1. Review and approve minutes of the 11<sup>th</sup> AGM, held August 2015 in Windhoek, Namibia;
2. Receive and approve Reports for the Activity Year July 2015 – June 2016 and Annual Work plan and Budget for the Activity Year July 2016 – June 2017;
3. Receive an update of RUFORUM international policy engagements in support of Higher Education in Africa;
4. Consider requests for membership from universities that wish to be part of the RUFORUM network;
5. Recognise outstanding university achievers;
6. Recognise Young African Innovators.

## **Approach and Methodology**

The AGM was organised in collaboration with the Agricultural Research Council and opened by the South African Minister of Agriculture. The meeting reviewed minutes of the previous AGM held in Windhoek, Namibia in August 2015, review reports from the Secretariat for the year ended June 30, 2016, and Secretariat work plans for the subsequent year (2016/17). The AGM received and considered External Auditor’s report for 2015/16 and appointed Auditor

for 2016/17. The 12<sup>th</sup> AGM also provided guidance on the next AGM and 2018 Biennial Conference.

### **Session outcomes**

1. AGRINATURA and RUFORUM are part of the same intellectual alliance. In this alliance, AGRINATURA believes in agriculture. We know agriculture drives development and wellbeing. Therefore, we provide a platform to academia to support agriculture through science that makes a difference
2. As RUFORUM, AGRINATURA is a network of universities who educate skilled, proactive graduates, to engage in critical innovation. The work of this network our way to respond to the grand challenges including; Climate change, the loss of biodiversity and forests, food insecurity and inequality
3. The SDGs call for sustainable agriculture; agriculture that provides fair opportunities to farmers in Spain and Burkina Faso. This agriculture is not about poverty, but it is about prosperity and wealth. Therefore, a new story about agriculture is warranted.
4. Universities in Africa and Europe must ask itself a critical question. Is our research agenda fit for purpose? Does higher education educate the change agents the SDGs demand? Are we contributing to the new story?
5. Taking SDGs seriously implies nothing less than a whole new paradigm for higher education and research. Training students in agriculture is not sufficient anymore, no matter how high the quality may be. Also, we must educate students to become global citizens who are conscious of their action, who act morally.

## **Part II: Official opening of the RUFORUM 12th Annual General Meeting**

### **Statement by Dr. Michael Hauser, President of AGRINATURA**

It is my pleasure to speak on behalf of AGRINATURA during the Annual General Meeting at the Fifth African Higher Education Week and the RUFORUM Biennial Conference in Cape Town. AGRINATURA and RUFORUM are part of the same intellectual alliance. In this alliance, we believe in agriculture. We know agriculture drives development and wellbeing. Therefore, we provide a platform to academia to support agriculture through science that makes a difference. As RUFORUM, AGRINATURA is a network of universities who educate skilled, proactive graduates, to engage in critical innovation. The work of this network our way to respond to the grand challenges. In agriculture, these grand challenges are immense, and they are global. Planetary boundaries. Climate change, the loss of biodiversity and forests, food insecurity, inequality. Africa and Europe rightly call for transformative change in agriculture. Business as usual is no option.

Five years ago colleagues would ask: What is wrong with the change? Why do you want to transform it? Today nobody questions the importance of transformative change. Transformative change as a concept is now part of the most important global agreements we have. Several of these agreements were signed in 2015. Addis Ababa, New York, and Paris became synonymous for finance, sustainability, and climate. 2016 is the first year to test these commitments. In a few days, the historic Paris Agreement on combating climate change will enter into force. Ratifying the agreement wasn't easy for Europe. Europe must reduce its emissions by at least 40% by 2030. This task attacks the heart of traditional development

models. Protecting our climate is not free of charge. Europeans fear to lose what Africans rightly demand: prosperity and wellbeing. If we cannot reconcile our positions and introduce justice to the climate and sustainability agenda, we will not succeed. Quite often our approach to reconciliation, however, is incremental. Incremental change is a slow change, it is shallow, and it ignores the underlying structures that reproduce our unsustainable behaviour. Incremental change is insufficient to overcome path-dependencies; incremental change will not transform agriculture. Instead, we risk being transformed by changes we cannot control. This is true for Africa and Europe alike. Just look at the latest developments in Europe. The United Kingdom leaves the European Union; we see Xenophobia and new fences between countries. Fear is on the rise. In some parts of Europe, nationalism, separation, and isolation have become the new normal.

Disintegration results in shallow commitments to sustainable development. We will not achieve sustainable development through fragmentation. And as paradoxical it may sound: inequality becomes the biggest enemy to climate justice. We will only protect our climate through equity and cooperation. Cooperation is what RUFORUM does so well. The SDGs call for sustainable agriculture; agriculture that provides fair opportunities to farmers in Spain and Burkina Faso. This agriculture is not about poverty, but it is about prosperity and wealth. Therefore, we must tell a new story about agriculture. Universities in Africa and Europe must ask itself a critical question. Is our research agenda fit for purpose? Does higher education educate the change agents the SDGs demand? Are we contributing to the new story? My assessment is mixed. In Europe, the SDGs are hardly known in society. They have not arrived at the universities. Taking SDGs seriously implies nothing less than a whole new paradigm for higher education and research. Training students in agriculture is not sufficient anymore, no matter how high the quality may be. Also, we must educate students to become global citizens who are conscious of their action, who act morally. Such global citizens have enormous tasks ahead of them. They must turn around incoherent support governments give to resource degrading agriculture, and they must find solutions to under- and over-nutrition. They must close yield gaps and tackle food waste. They must rebuild local and global food systems. Therefore, simple references to the climate contract and the SDGs will not tell a new story. The new story requires serious stocktaking and fair accounting of progress towards the Agenda 2030. If we fail to nurture a new mindset based on partnership, equity, and benefit sharing, the 2015 agreements won't help us. This SDGs requires university graduates in African and Europe who analyse and understand prevailing circumstances rather than document them. Our graduates must judge and take decisions, also at the risk of being voted out of power. These are one out of hundred reasons why the intellectual alliance of RUFORUM and AGRINATURA is so critical. Sustainable development requires leadership. Africa and Europe must mastermind such leadership. Africa needs Europe and Europe needs Africa.

Europeans recognize the importance of leadership and good relations with Africa. Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor who visited Africa this October, is one of them. And I am convinced that the Fifth African Higher Education Week and the RUFORUM Biennial Conference further strengthens the critical academic and political partnerships between Africa and Europe.

*AGRINATURA represents the major research and education stakeholders in Europe dealing with agricultural research and higher education for development. AGRINATURA and its members place their ability to develop synergies and mobilise resources for accompanying projects from around the world. Their accumulated experience in international research and educational projects and the vast range of research areas is covered by its network.*

### **Statement by Dr. Yemi Akinbamijo, Executive Director, FARA**

Please allow me to first of all express my heartfelt gratitude and felicitations to the Board of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture and its Executive Secretariat for the great work of executing the fifth Biennial Conference and the African Agricultural Higher Education Week. I would also like to congratulate the leadership of the Secretariat especially my dear brother and friend, Prof Ekwamu Adipala and his formidable staff who despite all odds, dared the impossible to convene this great event. All too soon, it has been two years since Maputo as I personally look back with gratitude to God for all the heart-warming changes that has befallen our dear continent since 2014.

In an august gathering like this, missing an opportunity to speak about my passion and the philosophy of an 'Africa First' will be unforgivable. In order to capture the essence, I have chosen to be lean with my words by leaning on the works of literary giants '*Multum in Parvo*' to be able to say a lot in a few minutes - it will be yours to digest once I quit this podium. If the cap fits, please wear it! I will base my message on two thesis: We have no other Country we can call our own, we must salvage it together – IBB. There is still a lot to be done. Welcome to the Future (petit a petit, l'oiseau fait son nid). To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee, one clover, and a bee, and revery. The revery alone will do, If bees are few. *Emily Dickinson 1830-86.*

Overall the Poet seems to say that in life one may be given a few tools to get where they need to go, but if short-handed in something, anything can be achieved with a dream. You may actually be given what you need, like the bee, the clover, and revery, but if not, all you need to do is keep dreaming. Another strong point is that, it really only takes a few things to get somewhere, and all you have to do is dream and use those tools to make it happen. The tone seems uplifting in a sense, almost hopeful. Revery can make anything possible, and with that opens the doors to the world. With the shorter lines it seems matter-of-fact when one reads it, as if saying it doesn't take much for anything if you have what you need or at least revery. She could have chosen to write about any other idea. But she chose somewhere beautiful, sunny, and welcoming to show an uplifting view on things. The word one is said to show the simplicity of things, and to say that ONLY you alone can make a metaphorical prairie – Be the CHANGE that you hope to see – Mahatma Ghandi

Do and few: These words rhyme to maybe show that we can "do" anything with just a "few" things. At first the writer says that it takes a few things to make something (it takes the clover, the bee, and revery to make the prairie), but later on she says that it really is simple with revery. It goes from multiple things to the simplicity of revery; just like the third line where it has two words and revery is one of them (and the most important).

The path of a rising Africa is the path that you and I tread on a daily basis. The Biennial Conference is but one of the few tools in our hands. We don't wait for the manna anymore. In this year alone, there have been a lot of dreams turned real. Most of the CG Centres in Africa will be celebrating 50 years. FARA and the constituent SROs had the AASW7 – a turning point in Agricultural Research, AGRF speaks of seizing the momentum, the African Development Bank endorsed and outdoored its Agriculture Strategy and now RUFORUM – Indeed we've got more than a bee and a clover!

During the last GCARD three event in Johannesburg last April, I recall the wisdom of a Nigerian proverb -when the beat of the mother drum changes, the *omele* and the dance steps must change accordingly.

Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen, the operational context of the African Agriculture is a very dynamic one. Africa has finally decided to take the bull by the horn by taking responsibility for the institutional and technical growth in its agricultural development. The signs of the times show a strong convergence of events too significant to be ignored. During the past couple of months, almost all major continent-wide event sounded the clarion call and the need to galvanize all efforts and move together in synchrony as we respond to the demands of SDGs, CAADP (Malabo), STISA, Agenda 2063, etc. The red thread in all of these is the modernization of our food production systems using science.

Here I will like to commend the different donors especially the Master Card Foundation that supported RUFORUM and have helped put the wind back in the sail of agricultural education. I heard Prof Adipala saying on Sunday that that is a promise he intends to keep a promise to The MasterCard Foundation and indeed a promise to Africa.

The vision as you can see today is a dream come true. Welcome to the Future. Truly, a child is born by a woman but it will certainly take the community to raise the child. The environment is right. The time for agribusiness to seize the moment is now. Only four weeks back the AGRF themed 'Seizing the moment' could not have been more instructive. To create a game changer, the African Development Bank is looking inwards at the continental institutions and has decided to work with them to jointly turn the tide of African agriculture in a wealth and job creation endeavor that will resonate across every country on the continent and help stimulate a new wave of agriculture-led science-based growth. These complimentary actions from the African Development Bank's strategy regarding Agricultural transformation, R&D and Youth empowerment are all emerging spaces within which Agribusiness, up-scaling and commercialization of technologies will shape the future of African Agriculture.

On our part, wearing the Capacity Development and Outreach cap of the FARA Mandate, the governance and institutional structures of the AfDB-led TAAT and the AARP are two initiatives that will further allow FARA to continue to support the work of RUFORUM **as much as it is necessary.**

As you may be aware that there are new initiatives and instruments of collaboration being negotiated with partners across the continent. We have come to a point where we must understand that we are all we have got. We will as much as it is feasible put our capacities,

experience and capabilities at your disposal. Experience as you know is still not available for sale. It has to be earned.

Finally, ladies and gentlemen. Please accept on behalf of my Board Chair Dr Ephraim Mukisira our very best wishes on this auspicious occasion as you progress in your quest to contribute your quota to the continent's growth in the agriculture sector. You can count on FARA. We will be sailing right behind you and we will ease your mind.

## **Statement by Dr. Shadrack Moephuli, CEO and President of ARC, South Africa**

- Chair of the Board of RUFORUM: Professor Mabel Imbuga,
- Deputy Chair of the Board of RUFORUM: Professor Kanyama – Phiri,
- Executive Director of RUFORUM: Professor Adipala,
- Vice Chancellors,
- Executive Director of FARA: Dr. Yemi Akinbamiyo,
- Acting Executive Director of CCARDESA: Dr. Simon Mwale,
- Chief Executive of National Research Foundation: Dr. Molapo Qhobela,
- Heads of Institutions,
- Distinguished Guests,

Greetings to you all on behalf of the Agricultural Research Council.

Let me start by congratulating the leadership of RUFORUM for the hard-work and excellent preparations towards this conference. Thank you Professor Adipala and your team. As the Agricultural Research Council we appreciate this opportunity to partner with RUFORUM in this event. However, we are not only partnering for this conference as we plan and hope this partnership will become a good and successful marriage, that delivers on the aspirations and hopes of many Africans.

The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) is a public entity established in terms of the Agriculture Research Act of 1990 of South Africa. Our mission is to conduct research with partners, develop human capital and foster innovation in support of the agricultural sector. The Board of the ARC is the Accounting Authority in terms of the Public Finance Management Act. The Board provides leadership and oversees strategic direction, so as to enhance shareholder value and ensure the ARC's long – term sustainable development and growth. To fulfil its responsibilities, the Board is supported by ARC Management in implementing the approved strategic plan as well as organisational policies.

We believe that through this research, the ARC impacts on agriculture and related sectors significantly, particularly through the effective dissemination of scientific knowledge. It's our hope and expectation, that by so doing, our scientific endeavours as a research organization influence people's thinking, the economic performance and sustainability of agriculture.

A significant part of South Africa is unsuitable for crop production mainly due to low rainfall and poor soil conditions. Estimates are that only 15 % of South Africa's agricultural land has high potential for arable farming. Although South Africa has a cohort of large commercial farmers who are highly skilled, productive, innovative and operate competitive enterprises; their numbers have been declining at an alarming rate. We therefore need to explore a variety of approaches to replenish their numbers and make them more sustainable. It's for this purpose that South Africa has implemented a land reform programme.

Another challenge is that South Africa, like many African countries, has a large cohort of smallholder farmers situated primarily in communal areas of our rural landscape. These smallholder farmers face many challenges similar to what is experienced in much of this continent:

- i. Low crop productivity, including in maize and other staple crops;
- ii. Poor soils and their crops are often subjected to moisture stress during periodic droughts
- iii. Lack of inputs;
- iv. Lack of business acumen to make their farms successful enterprises;
- v. Further, Climate change is predicted to worsen the situation with more variable rainfall and above average temperatures.

It's against this backdrop that the ARC has placed significant focus that provides solutions and technologies for South Africa's agriculture. In response, let me briefly provide a glimpse of some of our initiatives. In the last five (5) years the ARC has successfully developed and disseminated no less than 100 cultivars (fruits, grains, vegetables, medicinal plants etc) to the agricultural sector. These cultivars have been developed to enable farmers to successfully increase production and productivity under various conditions, including climatic stress, as well as enhance the competitiveness of the enterprises. Success lies in the effective and continuous application of agriculture innovations.

Development of scientific solutions or technologies often requires a strong scientific knowledge base. Accordingly, research and development organizations such as the ARC and RUFORUM need to ensure that basic science is supported and enabled. It's in this context that the ARC has continued to focus on scientific excellence by ensuring knowledge generated is shared through peer reviewed publications. In the last 5 years we have increased our peer reviewed scientific publications from 100 to more than 400 in the last year while maintaining the same number of researchers. Scientific skills development is a critical element that underpins the future success of African agriculture. Accordingly, the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) aptly recognized the need to mainstream science, technology and innovation for development in support of Africa's Agenda 2063. Contributions towards the objectives of Agenda 2063 to deliver quality relevant graduates to support production, industrialization and Africa's development are critical to the sustainable success of agriculture. Although we're not registered as an institution that grants educational qualifications like universities, the ARC plays a significant role to contribute towards higher education in agriculture.

In the last five years, the ARC increased the number of students enrolled under its Post – graduate Development Programme (PDP) to more than 250 in year 2015/16. Of these, 28 students obtained doctoral degrees and 25 obtained MSc degrees. A significant proportion of training, supervision, research and mentoring is conducted by the ARC. More importantly, the students in this Programme are afforded the opportunity to learn on relevant, real – time, practical projects that expose them to various engagements with farmers, agri – processors and actors in the value chain. This programme is a good example of the partnerships between South African Universities who are members of RUFORUM and the ARC. We also have to recognize the critical role of the National Research Foundation as they provide the financial resources that link the students to researchers and universities. The ARC's sustained success is largely due to the consistent and continuous support from the government of South Africa through annual grants provided by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; for which we're very grateful.

We also keenly aware that the ARC's research and development efforts has implications beyond national borders. It's in this context that we have recognized and formed partnerships that include many different stakeholders, within South Africa, in SADC, mainly through CCARDESA and by extension with FARA and other NARS.

Linking research and development through partnerships is essential for the sustainable success of agriculture. One example is the Water Efficient Maize for Africa partnership. This is a partnership between national research organizations of Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda and South Africa, with the African Agricultural Technology Foundation, International Centre for Wheat and Maize (CYMMIT) and Monsanto. It's an initiative aimed at developing drought tolerant maize cultivars suitable for use by smallholder farmers in Africa. WEMA has succeeded in the development and release of drought tolerant maize cultivars in all the partner countries. Embedded in this initiative was a programme aimed at development of small medium enterprises for seed production. For this we have to thank the funders, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation as well as the USAID.

It is clear from the various initiatives cited that RUFORUM and by extension Africa can succeed. Clearly there's a need to ensure strong linkages with all the actors in the agriculture value chain in support of agricultural development. We therefore believe the objectives of this conference are appropriate to begin the conversation on how do we get African agriculture into the best trajectory for sustainable success. We believe RUFORUM is most suitable platform for this engagement, but it will need all the stakeholders, farmers, processors, retailers, consumers, civil society, research organizations, universities and government. Universities must take the lead in providing evidence based scientific advice – to us, RUFORUM should explore this as an avenue to impact on policy makers. You must insist on evidence based advice, in the absence of such, we will fail.

Our Communities will not sustainably resolve the challenges of poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition and inequality unless we all explore innovative ways to provide most relevant solutions. We must remember, the world is now looking to Africa to provide the solutions for food and nutrition security for the growing global population. This means we must develop the kind of student who responds positively, with energy and innovation towards enabling our communities to adapt and survive through increased production and productivity, including finding new technologies to enable enterprises to succeed.

We hope the discussions will provide the participants and those outside this conference with a good roadmap towards enabling Africa's agriculture to be sustainable, productive, competitive, contributing to poverty alleviation, food and nutrition security and wealth.

Thank you and wishing everyone a successful conference.