

ANNEX 7

Briefing note on the preparations towards the RUFORUM Triennial 2021

Theme: Operationalising Higher Education for Innovation, Industrialisation, Inclusion and Sustainable Economic Development in Africa: A Call for Action Be

Venue: Centre International de Conférences and Palais des Congres de Cotonou, Benin

Dates: 6-10 December 2021

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Background Information

1. The Seventh Africa Higher Education and RUFORUM Triennial Conference is set under the theme *“Operationalising Higher Education for Innovation, Industrialisation, Inclusion and Sustainable Economic Development in Africa: A call for action”* that responds to the urgent need for the African Governments, Development Partners, private sector and citizenry to take actions to invest in higher education. This Triennial conference is convened with the following objectives:

1. Catalyse investment in Higher Education for human capital development in Africa
2. Promote international linkages and partnerships for excellence in Higher Education
3. Strengthen collaboration and mutual learning to spur innovation and industrialisation for economic transformation in Africa
4. Promote youth employment and skills acquisition for development
5. Strengthen University-Private sector business linkages



2. The First RUFORUM Triennial Conference, the 16th Annual General Meeting and 7th African Higher Education Week will be held in West Africa in the Republic of Benin, from 6th-10th December 2021. The five-day conference will bring together policy makers including Ministers and Technical Experts, Higher Education Leaders in Africa, Development Partners, Private sector leaders, researchers, innovators, students, and farmer organisations, among others. Approximately 1000 delegates are expected from across the world.



3. The event is being co-organised by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research of Benin, the University of Abomey Calavi, the National University of Agriculture and the University of Parakou and the RUFORUM Secretariat.

Conference venue

The venue for the event will be the Centre International de Conférences and Palais des Congres de Cotonou in Benin (see Photo below)



Conference preparation

1. A first meeting was organized between RUFORUM and the Benin team to bring together participants from both parties, and was honored by the presence of Hon. Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and University leaders. The date of 6th to 10th December 2021 was retained for the Convening, and the Minister instructed her team to continue working with RUFORUM Secretariat to finalize the budget and the calls for different events. It was also decided that a Local Organizing Committee (LOC) be put in place across the relevant ministries and the universities.
2. A budget was prepared from RUFORUM and sent to the Ministry, along with the list of the countries of key dignitaries and ministers to be invited. A local Organizing Committee has been put in place, and RUFORUM Secretariat transferred USD 5,000 to the LOC support activities and preparations of the triennial.
3. A draft concept note has been developed and shared with the LOC for input. The overall programme overview has been prepared and shared with co-organisers for inputs. Similarly, several calls for papers and extended abstracts, exhibitions and posters, farmers, young innovators and young scientist awards have been prepared and sent out.
4. Nineteen sub-committees has been established, including sub-committees on Programme-Planning and Coordination of activities, Public Relations, Publicity/Visibility and Branding, Finance-Resource mobilisation, Scientific/Technical sessions, Posters and Exhibitions, Accommodation, Transport and logistics, Invitations and Visas, Ticketing, Budget and Payments, Documentation, Registration, Health and Safety, Security/Protocol Issues – Dignitaries, Banqueting and Meals, Tourism, Recognition Awards and RUFORUM Governance Meetings
5. There has been an official installation of the different sub-committee by the Rector of UAC. The meeting was chaired by the Rector of AUC and was attended by all the Heads of the sub-committees and some other members to jump-start the start of preparatory activities for the organization of the conference in 2021. The Rector has also appointed a general supervision team made up of the Rector of UAC, Accountant of UAC, Deans and Directors of schools. The different ToRs have been prepared for each sub-committee.

6. The Sub-Committee coordinating all activities had its first meeting, to develop a roadmap for coordination of the preparatory activities, which was shared with all other sub-committees. There has also been a meeting of the Heads of the various sub-committees, to get more understanding of RUFORUM activities, mission and vision, the different ToRs for each subcommittee. Establishment of links between the Heads of sub-committees in the LOC and ROC (RUFORUM Organizing Committee) for a synergy of action in the activities has been undertaken.
7. A list of 31 functional hotels meeting a minimum of acceptable criteria has been established with a total of 1350 rooms. The team is actively working to review the cost of hotel rooms for formal proposition to RUFORUM Secretariat. Further a proposal for tourist route and field visit in the South-West and South-East of Benin has been made. These tours were proposed by the Tourism Guidance Application Agency and shared with RUFORUM Secretariat.
8. The Government and people of the Republic of Benin look forward to welcoming you all to Benin in December 2021.

