

ANNEX 8

A REPORT FROM THE 17th RUFORUM PRINCIPALS AND DEANS MEETING HELD VIA
THE ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCING PLATFORM, ON 2nd NOVEMBER, 2020
TO THE

20TH MEETING OF THE RUFORUM BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
6TH NOVEMBER, 2020

Key highlights

1. The meeting was attended by 40 of current members of the Principals and Deans Committee, and RUFORUM Secretariat staff. The meeting was chaired by Prof Abdelaziz Yasri from Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, the Chairperson of the Committee.
2. The Principals and Deans Committee reviewed the Minutes and Actions of the 16th Principals and Deans Committee held on 5th December 2019, and adopted them as a true record of the proceeding.
3. The Committee received an update on the operationalisation of the RUFORUM Principals and Deans' Sub-committee which was created and officially approved by the RUFORUM Board of Trustees during the 18th Board Meeting held on 5th December 2019 in Cape Coast, Ghana. The total membership of the Sub-Committee is Seven (7). However, there was concern about the omission of one member from the Sub-Committee that was initially constituted during the RUFORUM AGM in Cape Coast, Ghana. The Secretariat agreed to follow-up and cross-check membership to the Sub-Committee and communicate to the concerned party.
4. The committee also received a progress report on the signing of the RUFORUM by Member Countries. It was noted that the signing of the Charter was slow among the Member Countries despite its importance for strengthening the status of RUFORUM to enable it pursue its mission.
5. On the implementation of the Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA), so far 145 GTAs (42 female, 103 male) have been placed in 28 host universities



from 38 sending universities across the RUFORUM network. In order to increase the number of placed GTA students undertraining, RUFORUM reached out to 11 universities to train and host more students under the GTA arrangement. The Secretariat has reached out to 25 sending Universities seeking their confirmation to cover the costs of upkeep, travel, health insurance and research funds for their nominees during training at host universities. The committee noted that the COVID-19 Pandemic has negatively affected the implementation of the GTA in several ways. Further, most GTA fellows are disadvantaged due to the issue of language. To address this challenge, short accelerated language courses need to be extended to the students before commencing studies.

6. With support from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), RUFORUM has trained 23 PhD students in different disciplines. In addition, four (4) staff fellows were selected for monitoring teaching, monitoring, supervision and development of eLearning courses at different universities with support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York.
7. The Committee also received a report on the progress towards facilitating universities to innovatively use Information and Communication Technologies to improve teaching and learning in the Network. The Secretariat has come up with a number of activities to build its own capacity in order to effectively facilitate the use of ICT tools in teaching and learning in the Network. The Committee noted that universities are at different levels in terms of ICT infrastructure and human capacity. Therefore, a thorough needs assessment of ICT infrastructure is needed proper appropriate implementation.
8. Prof Nancy Mungai, the Director of the Board of undergraduate studies at Egerton University, reported on the implementation of National Forums in Kenya under the TAGDev Project. The Committee noted that there is a need to formalize the national Deans Forums in order to have effective organisation of the National Forums in their countries. They also noted that there is a need to create organisational structures to manage the Forums and formulate a resource mobilisation strategy to ensure the sustainability of National Forums. The Committee also noted that Sub-committee of Principals and Deans should meet the Chairpersons of National Forums within their regions.

9. The Principals and Deans Committee was invited to the RUFORUM AGM and activities based on a detailed presentation of the proposed schedule of events.

Actions required from the Board Executive Committee

1. The Board Executive Committee is requested to urge Vice Chancellors of Member Universities to support establishment and operationalisation of National Forums.
2. The Board Executive Committee is requested to consider possibilities of mobilizing finances from different sources to support GTA students.
3. The Board Executive Committee is requested to urge Vice Chancellors to consider supporting the introduction of preliminary short language accelerated courses that can be extended to students before commencing studies, to overcome language barriers in the implementation of the GTA and other academic exchange programmes.
4. The Board Executive Committee is requested to urge Vice Chancellors to reach out to their Governments and Development Partners to mobilise funding to promote use of ICTs within Network Member Universities.
5. The Board Executive Committee is requested to urge Vice Chancellors to reach out to their Governments to endorse the RUFORUM Charter
6. The Board Executive Committee is requested to urge Vice Chancellors to reach out to their Governments to increase support for Post graduate Training within Africa

