

18th RUFORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022

Theme: Strengthening Africa's Agri-food Systems in the Post COVID-19 Era – Opportunities and Challenges

Moving forward the UNFSS 21 Action Plan: Need for Collaborative undertakings

Date: 31st August 2022

Time: 15:00 – 19:00 EAT

Venue: Virtual

Registration (Link): <https://bit.ly/3yjqrXM>

Concept Note

**Contact: Professor: Adipala Ekwamu, Executive Secretary RUFORUM
e.adipala@ruforum.org**

Background:

The UN Food Systems Summit 2021 under the theme *“Transforming food systems is crucial for delivering all the Sustainable Development Goals.”*, was expected to launch bold new actions, solutions, and strategies to deliver progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Recognising that the attainment of the SDGs was pegged to healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable food systems, The Summit acknowledged that transforming the global food systems must be central in efforts to achieve all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic was a wakeup call to the glaring fragility and inequalities of the global, regional and national agri-food systems making the resolve for sustainable, inclusive, and resilient food systems extremely urgent.

The Summit aimed to:

1. Raise awareness and elevate public discussion about how reforming our food systems can help us all to achieve the SDGs by implementing reforms that are good for people and planet;
2. Develop principles to guide governments and other stakeholders looking to leverage their food systems to support the SDGs; These principles will set an optimistic and encouraging vision in which food systems play a central role in building a fairer, more sustainable world;

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3. Generate action and measurable progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; identify solutions and leaders, and issuing a call for action at all levels of the food system;

The Summit which drew participation from a multiplicity of stakeholders, further sought to create a system of follow-up and review to ensure that the Summit's outcomes continue to drive new actions and progress. For Africa, [A Common Position](#) was presented to the pre-summit held in Rome and to the September 2021 Summit at the UN General Assembly. Driving dialogue, discussions and the Summit agenda were multilateral agencies such as the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and continental bodies such as the African Union that stood out as the vehicle to galvanize participation and commitment to the outcome of the Summit.

Universities in the RUFORUM Network were engaged in a series of dialogues that had a strong interface between universities, research institutions and, policy makers to dialogue on the solutions and actions for the appropriate agri-food systems in Africa. Through these independent dialogues, the network was able to contribute to the [Common Africa Position](#) and facilitate dialogue between science and policy makers at the highest level of Ministers and Heads of State. The [Lilongwe Declaration](#) brought to the fore the possible actions that African governments together with the Universities and the science community can adopt for the development of agri-food systems in Africa.

It is important to take stock and explore the milestones that have been achieved, one year since the [Africa Common Position](#) and the commitments from African Governments that were made as a runner up to the September Food Systems Summit.

Towards this end, RUFORUM intends to host a high-level dialogue. The dialogue will:

1. Review the commitments made by multi-stakeholders and take stock of the actions that have been taken towards the implementation of the recommendations made by the UN Food Summit.
2. Explore options for partnerships and or pathways for university-ST&I-community engagement to jumpstart improvements in agri-food systems as articulated by the Summit.

The Dialogue

RUFORUM Network is organising a half day dialogue /webinar to review and develop a roadmap towards actioning university and research institutions contribution towards strengthening Africa's Food Systems. The dialogue will bring together Universities, Research Institutions, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the African Union Commission (AUC). There will be simultaneous translation in Arabic, English, French and Portuguese languages.

CO-ORGANISERS:



Programme

Moderator: Prof. Theresa Nkuo-Akenji, RUFORUM Board Chair and Vice Chancellor University of Bamenda, Cameroon

Time	Activity
Session 1: Opening and Setting the Scene	
15:00 – 15:10	Opening Remarks: Prof. Adipala Ekwamu, Executive Secretary, RUFORUM
15:10 – 15:25	Official opening by AUC Commissioner for Rural Development, Sustainable Agriculture and the Blue Economy- Ambassador Josefa Sacko – Integrating continental frameworks to strengthen agri-food systems in Africa
15:25 – 15:55	Keynote Address: Dr. Agnes Kalibata, President Alliance for Green Evolution in Africa (AGRA) – Key outcomes, decisions and actions from UNFSS 2021 – Implication for Africa
15:55 – 16:10	Perspective from a Development Partner: Mr Leonard Mizzi, Head of Unit in Directorate-General for International Partnerships, European Commission
16:10 – 16:30	Discussion
Session 2: Status of Agri-food Systems in Africa	
16:30 – 16:50	Lead Paper: FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, HE. Prof. Abebe Haile-Gabriel– Current Status of Food and Nutrition Security in Africa
16:50 – 18:00	Panel Discussion: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. Lobin Clarkie Lowe, Minister of Agriculture, Malawi Hon. Jeanine M. Cooper, Minister of Agriculture, Liberia Dr. Yemi Akinbamijo, Executive Director, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) Dr. Stephen Muchiri, President East African Farmers Federation Dr. Ousmane Badiane, Executive Chairperson and Acting Managing Director, Akademiya2063
18:00 – 18:30	Discussion
18:30 – 18:45	Wrap Up of Key Messages: Prof. Umezuruike Linus Opara, Research Chair in Postharvest Technology, Stellenbosch University, South Africa
18:45 – 18:55	Closing Remarks by the Sessions Moderator

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