



18TH RUFORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

Harnessing Digital Technologies for Teaching and Learning

Concept Note

Date: Wednesday 14th December, 2022 (08:30-13:00 CAT)

Venue: Diamond Lecture Theatre, University of Zimbabwe

Registration link: <https://bit.ly/3UVx2RE>

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Background

Digital technologies can play a significant role in teaching and learning in higher education. Indeed, a number of efforts have been made towards the transformation of higher education in Africa. So far, these efforts have not realized the transformation that higher education in Africa needs. As we focus on ***Sustaining African Industrialization through Innovative Agricultural Research, Training and Outreach in the Post COVID-19 Era*** as a theme for this year's African Higher Education week and the RUFORUM AGM 2022, digital technology innovations around higher education teaching and learning will be of great interest. This session will therefore focus on how digital technologies targeted towards Agricultural higher education research, teaching and learning might be of help in the attainment of the Africa's Agenda 2063.

It has been argued that in order for digital technologies to cause a significant transformation to higher education, approaches to the implementation of digital technologies in higher education must be given sufficient attention involving a level of change in practice for all stakeholders in the higher education space. This should normally include understanding the relationships between digital technologies, knowledge and pedagogy. Developing the kind of outputs in terms of graduates and citizens required in an information era, agricultural higher education players in Africa must therefore understand what kind of skills and knowledge can be delivered using which technology. To arrive at a consensus on the optimal approach of improving educational outcomes, and enhancing and improving the quality of teaching and learning, requires contributions and expertise from different fields (especially agriculture, education, technology and development).

As part of this year's African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM AGM 2022 in Harare, the RUFORUM Secretariat will show case the achievements made through support from Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), PBL-BioAfrica Project, West and Central African Research and Education Network (WACREN) and other development partners and to rally support for and utilization of the Regional eLearning Platform (REP) which has been developed with seed funding from BADEA for use by RUFORUM member universities. RUFORUM is implementing its

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African Digital Agriculture Programme (AfriDAP), with special interest on Pillar one, which focuses on supporting digital learning and sharing technologies for which RUFORUM Secretariat. As a result, a number of RUFORUM member universities benefited in terms of capacity building for e-learning and the REP was developed to be used by the RUFORUM member universities with coordination from the RUFORUM Secretariat. In order to achieve full utilization of this e-learning platform, awareness creation and engagement with relevant stakeholders is to be undertaken during the annual convening to be held in Harare, Zimbabwe. The major question for discussion during the session will be: *How can the agricultural higher education institutions in Africa harness digital potential to drive their transformation?* This question remains important and relevant, requiring in-depth analysis of the affordances modern digital technologies offer, what pedagogy must be adopted and what knowledge and skills are required in order to cause the much-needed transformation of agricultural higher education in Africa.

The aim and objectives of the symposium

The aim of this session is to seek a consensus on how agricultural higher education institutions in Africa can harness digital technologies to drive their approach to teaching and learning. To achieve this, the following objectives will be pursued:

- i. Examining the state of digital technology integration in African Universities
- ii. Assessing opportunities available to agricultural higher education institutions in Africa for full integration of digital technologies for teaching and learning
- iii. Discussing the progress made by RUFORUM member universities towards capacity building for e-learning

Approach to be adopted

This session will be a blended event where some participants will attend face-to-face while others will attend virtually through a Zoom link (<https://bit.ly/3UVx2RE>). There will be three main sessions, each directed towards achieving an objective from among the objectives stated above. **Session One** will be for setting the scene whilst highlighting the RUFORUM's efforts towards transforming African agricultural higher education institutions. It will include an opening address by one of the RUFORUM leaders and a Key Note address by an expert on digital technologies. There will be a number of remarks by leaders of African agricultural higher education institutions. **Session Two** will be dedicated towards assessing opportunities that are available for African agricultural higher education institutions to harness for them to fully integrate digital technologies for their services especially in regards to teaching and learning. This will be guided by experts in the fields of higher education, agriculture and digital technologies. Finally, there will be a wrap up session by the session moderator to extract the key deliverables and recommendations for harnessing digital technologies to drive approach to teaching and learning for RUFORUM member institutions. **Session Three** will focus on lesson sharing by selected institutions that benefited from the BADEA

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supported e-learning project. The main interest will be in discussing the progress made by African universities in capacity building for e-learning. This will include presentations from various focal persons from institutions that have benefited from the BADEA funded project but also others that have made progress towards capacity building for e-learning.

Expected output

The main deliverable for the symposium will be a consensus (recommended actions) for agricultural higher education institutions in Africa to integrate digital technologies in their operations. Also expected at the end of the symposium will be:

- i. A statement on the state of digital technology integration in African Universities
- ii. A list of opportunities available to agricultural higher education institutions in Africa and recommendation on how to harness them for full integration of digital technologies for teaching and learning
- iii. A documentation on the progress made by RUFORUM member universities towards capacity building for e-learning in the last five years

Participants

In order to for this symposium to be a success a number of stake holders will be invited to take part. Various participants will have different roles and will have different expectations as outlined below:

1. **RUFORUM Secretariat staff** will provide technical backstopping and will also play a leading role in Session One given its role in coordinating the engagement of various stake holders in the development of digital solutions for transformation of African higher agricultural education
2. **University Leaders** including Vice Chancellors, Principals and Deans as well as key professors will participate in the evaluating the activities lead by the RUFORUM Secretariat in light of the AfriDAP model and its implementation. They will also provide relevant information and guidance on the progress made by institutions.
3. **Subject experts** who have been involved in the development and delivery of e-learning contents through the REP and otherwise will participate in experience sharing and evaluation of the implementation of AfriDAP and other RUFORUM similar initiatives.
4. **E-learning experts** who have been facilitating skill development and capacity building for e-learning will participate in experience sharing and also further contribute towards capacity building of human capital and infrastructural improvement
5. **Other participants** including Young Scientists, Young Innovators and Young Farmers will take part in experience sharing and contribute towards the capacity building for full utilization of this e-learning platform, awareness creation and engagement with relevant

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stakeholders in the development of digital initiatives to transform African higher Agricultural education

Programme (Venue: University of Zimbabwe Diamond Theatre)

Time	Agenda item	Responsible party
Session One: Setting the Scene		
Session Chair: Dr. Mick Mwala, Acting Director Agricultural Technology Demonstration Center, University of Zambia		
0830-0840	Opening remarks	Prof Félicien Avlessi, Rector University of Abomey Calavi, Benin and RUFORUM Vice Board Chair
0840-0845	Setting the Scene and Objectives of the Symposium	Dr. Francis Otto, Manager Knowledge Hub, RUFORUM
0845-0910	Key Note Address: State of digital technology integration in African Universities	Prof. Jude Lubega, Vice Chancellor, Nkumba University, Uganda
0910-0930	Reactions to the Keynote address	ALL
0930-1000	Health Break & Group Photographs	
Session Two: Opportunities available to agricultural higher education institutions in Africa for full integration of digital technologies for teaching and learning		
Session Chair: Professor Emmanuel Kaunda, Vice Chancellor of LUANAR		
1000-1015	eLearning for International Organisations (eLIO)	Prof. Wale Adekunle, Advisor L3F, Commonwealth of Learning (Canada)
1015-1030	Experience from implementation of FAO eLearning Academy	Cristina Petracchi, Head of the FAO eLearning Academy Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
1030-1045	Digitalization of PBL for Online mediated learning for Sub-Saharan Africa	Dr. Eija Laitinen. PBL-BioAfrica Project Manager and Principal Research Scientist from Häme University of Applied Sciences (HAMK), Finland
1045-1100	Supporting digital transformation of Higher Education Institutions in Africa	Representative from Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) - TBC
1100-1115	Reactions and Comments from the Audience	ALL
1115-1130	Session Summary	Dr. Maria Mbatudde, Dean of Faculty of Agriculture, Ndejje University (Uganda)
Session Three: Progress made by universities towards capacity building for e-learning in the last five years		
Session Chair: Dr Drake Patrick Mirembe, Makerere University		
1130-1145	Lead Speaker: Prof. Address Malata, Vice Chancellor, MUST	
1145-1245	Panel: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prof. Dorothy Okello, Dean School of Engineering, Makerere University (Uganda) 2. Dr. Precious Gawanani, Head of ODeL, LUANAR (Malawi) 3. Mr. Robert Tumusiime, Senior e-Learning Officer, Kabale University (Uganda) 4. Dr. Florent Okry, Access Agriculture (Benin) 	

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	5. Mr. Omo Oaiya, Chief Strategy Officer, West and Central African Research and Education Network - WACREN (Ghana)	
1245-1255	Reactions and Comments from the Audience	ALL
1255-1300	Closing Remarks	Prof. Nancy Chitera, Vice Chancellor of Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences, Malawi
1300-1400	Lunch Break	

For more details visit <https://www.ruforum.org/AGM2022/>

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