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A Daily Brief on the 18th RUFORUM AGM Week #RUFORUMAGM2022

## ‘We must feed ourselves’



**President Emmerson Mnangagwa officially opening the 18th RUFORUM AGM in Harare, Zimbabwe.**

The continent of Africa has been encouraged to ensure food security and sufficiency by leveraging on the expertise of its academics and Universities. The clarion call was made by the President of Zimbabwe and Chancellor of State Universities, His Excellency President Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa at the official opening of the 18th Regional Universities Forum on Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) Annual General Meeting, in Harare on Wednesday, 14 December 2022.

President Mnangagwa reiterated the need for a mindset shift within the continent in order for food security to be achieved. “The mindset that agriculture is for the primitive should change. Agriculture

is not for the primitive. Agriculture is for the sophisticated and must be made lucrative in order to attract young people”, said President Mnangagwa, adding that the current scenario in which Africa is a net importer of food needs to be corrected, especially given the fact that the majority population on the continent earns a living from agriculture.

“Increasing production and productivity levels in the sector, therefore, remains critical for a higher quality of life and improved incomes among grassroots communities. It is further imperative that we leverage our abundant arable land, dams and rivers

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to increase agriculture output,” said the President.

In this regard, President Mnangagwa called on Universities to find home grown solutions to Africa’s problems such as climate change and environmental degradation, noting that the onus was incumbent on Universities to provide transformative community service. “The more educated you are, the more inclined you are to community service”, he added.

A call was also made for Universities to equip students with relevant skills in order to enable them to contribute effectively to the agriculture agenda. In the case of Zimbabwe, the government had moved towards a University system focused on producing goods and services.

Addressing the gathering, outgoing RUFORUM Executive Secretary Professor Adipala Ekwamu, applauded the Government of Zimbabwe for engaging Zimbabwean Universities to champion development in the country and called upon African Governments to work with African Universities to develop science solutions for the African continent. Professor Adipala further called upon African Governments to strengthen the education value chain while promoting inclusivity; in order to ensure that Africa retains the ability to feed its people, and to support econom-

ic development.

In his address, Food and Agriculture Organization Assistant Director, Professor Abebe Haile Gabriel highlighted the need for Africa to fight hunger and poverty, noting that the continent features prominently on the World Hunger and Poverty indices. Consequently, a lot of work needs to be done to rid Africa of these challenges.

The Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Professor Amon Murwira spoke on how properly structured education systems can save people from poverty, adding that while there are many Universities in Africa, there are no African Universities.

The official opening ceremony coincided with the launch of the RUFORUM Journey Book and was attended by Vice Chancellors, students and researchers from participating universities, government ministers, representatives of development agencies and other high profile dignitaries.

The Annual General Meeting will come to an end on Saturday, 16 December, 2022.

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## Professor Adipala Ekwamu: A science ambassador of note

Professor Adipala Ekwamu is one of the most influential figures in higher education in Africa today, having founded the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and serving as its executive secretary for nearly two decades.

He is retiring from the position at the end of December, having steered the organisation to become one of the most visible university organisations on the continent. However, he already has several plans lined up. University World News spoke to him.

**UWN:** Briefly outline your early life. Where were you born? What was your childhood and early schooling life like?

**AE:** I was born in Olyanai – a smelly place because it had a lot of fish – in Kaberamaido on the fringes of Lake Kyoga in Uganda. Kaberamaido, a good place for groundnuts-peanuts, is occupied by the Kumam, cattle keepers. Thus, as a child, I had to learn to fish, to plough with oxen and more romantically, to herd cattle. I also had to learn our traditional dance Ekoso, and Okeme which are key to courting your future partner.

[Click here to read the full article from University World News](#)



## Experts commit to supporting African Crop Science Society



**Above: Dr. Luisa Santos, the president of the African Crop Science Society**

Crop scientists from across Africa gathered to exchange ideas and strengthen the African Crop Science Society's (ACSS) authoritative voice at the University of Zimbabwe in the 4th parallel session of the 18th Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) Annual General Meeting (AGM).

The experts unanimously agreed that there is a need to strengthen the ACSS's journal by preferring it over other journals that charge exorbitant fees to publish papers.

One of the experts, Dr. John Tenywa, highlighted that he had to pay USD2,800 to publish his paper in 'big academic journals.

"I paid USD2,800 just to publish my paper in the supposed big academic journals. Why should we as Africans need validation from non-Africans over African matters? We need to strengthen the African

Crop Science Society journal," said Dr. Tenywa.

"That is money that is meant for our pockets. If you check those journals, most papers in there are by African experts. Why can we not promote our own journal?"

Dr. Luisa Santos, the president of the ACSS remarked that there is a need to have the journal further indexed so that it becomes a voice of authority on matters regarding African crop science.

"The journal is one of our major activities as a society. While the ACSS's journal is indexed in a few systems. We want it indexed in multiple other systems so as to increase its reach and authority," said Dr. Santos.

The African Crop Science Journal, a quarterly publication, publishes original research papers dealing

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with all aspects of crop agronomy, production, genetics and breeding, germplasm, crop protection, post-harvest systems and utilisation, agro-forestry, crop-animal interactions, information science, environmental science, and soil science. It also publishes authoritative reviews on crop science and environmental issues by invitation. It is bilingual, publishing in either English or French.

“The objective of this AGM is to create a platform for scientists in crop science and farmers to meet and exchange ideas and bring members of the society together to think about how do we organise ourselves to fulfill the society’s objective,” said Dr Santos.

She encourages students to join the ACSS and have access to a plethora of experts and resources.

“Students can download the application form on our website. There is a special fee for students. They will

have access to experts and the latest development in the field,” said Dr. Santos.

The African Crop Science Society (ACSS) was established in 1993 with the overall goal of promoting crop production and food security in Africa. At the same time, scientists from different countries can share their knowledge throughout Africa.

Generally, the activities of the society include the convening of congresses, symposia, workshops, and training courses; publication of the African Crop Science Journal; publication of regular Newsletters; and organizing meetings.

Prof dr. Murwira said, “Human needs must inform education and education must produce industry. Industry must satisfy human needs. Research must lead to innovation and industrialisation.”

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## Calls on governments to increase HE funding grow louder

Africa’s youth has to be at the centre of the region’s clamour for economic transformation. This has been a clarion call from multiple policy and education platforms during 2022, the latest being the high-level Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture, or RUFORUM, one of the continent’s premier science institutions, which has been gathering in Harare, Zimbabwe since 12 December.

Dr Patrick Okori, the incoming RUFORUM executive secretary, has made yet another powerful plea at the AGM for greater government investment into higher education, science and technology for the sake of providing opportunities and livelihoods to the continent’s youth and the continent’s economic sustainability.

His call comes in a context in which political leaders, when the issue of funding has emerged during the past year, have shifted the blame for low state funding levels for research and development, to universities, saying they are not responsive to the needs of their communities and societies.

But the message from the AGM was clear. Governments should up their research, development and educational investments to generate the knowledge required for an economic revolution in Africa, thereby creating opportunities for the huge youth population on the continent.

It is by putting money in universities and research institutions that the goods and services required for industrialisation can be created, allowing local economies to grow.

The efforts should be accelerated in view of the fact that, over the next three decades, Africa’s working age population will grow by about 14% every five years, said Okori.

This should be done by harnessing the immense potential of the youth to ensure that this potential translates to “something meaningful”, allowing them to drive the much-desired change, he noted.

[Click here to read the full article from University World News](#)



## Download Photos from the Various AGM 2022 Sessions



[Click here to view and download images from the various sessions happening during the RUFORUM AGM](#)

## What's happening on Social Media?



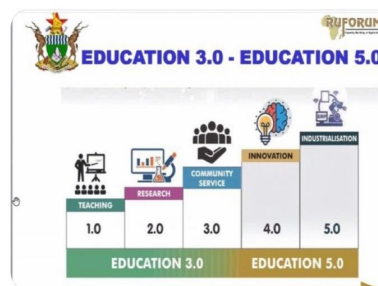
**JOAN APIO** @apiojoan · 15h  
 "Leaders don't create followers, they create more leaders." Tom Peters. A new era for the Network starts tomorrow as Prof. Adipala Ekwamu hands over his instrument of power to Dr. Patrick Okori after 18 years of leadership. A honor to witness a transition of power  
**#RUFORUMAGM2022**



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**Barbara M Zawedde** @Barba... · 1d  
 Happening Now:  
**#RUFORUMAGM2022** Official Opening. "Education 3.0 is a dead horse." Prof. Amon Murwira, Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, STI Development, Zimbabwe. **#African** universities should adopt Education 5.0."



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**Nana Baaza** @NanaAmaBaza · 2d  
 Through the I5hub, Africa University is supporting startups emerging from outputs from the community, staff, and students. This is done through the 5 "I" stages, which are ideation, incubation, innovation, intellectual property, and industrialisation.  
**#RUFORUMAGM2022 @Africa\_Univ**



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