

REPORT TO THE RUFORUM GOVERNANCE FOLLOWING MEETING OF THE BOARD EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON 23 JUNE 2020

Summary

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) was founded in 2004 by 10 Vice Chancellors in five countries (Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Zimbabwe), and as of 30 June 2020, is a Network of 126 universities in 38 countries across Africa with a mission to *'Strengthen the capacities of Universities to foster innovations responsive to the demands of smallholder farmers and value chains through the training of high quality researchers, the output of impact-oriented research, and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, market actors, national agricultural research and advocacy institutions, and governments'*. RUFORUM operations is guided by a constitution which has established organs of governance to ensure proper professional functioning and management of the organisation. This includes, among other organs, Annual General Meeting (AGM), the Board of Trustees, and the Board Executive Committee (BEC) ; the BEC acts on behalf of the Board, follows up on decisions of the Annual General Meeting and oversees the operations of the RUFORUM Secretariat. It is also responsible for reviewing Secretariat Annual performance including financial operations, and for recommending admission of new Member Universities to the Network in addition to identifying venues for AGMs and Triennial conferences. Constitutionally, the AGM approves the Annual Workplan and Budget of the Organisation. The Financial period of RUFORUM runs from 01 July to 30 June of the following year. The AGM is usually held 3 -6 months following external audit of RUFORUM operations.

In line with the above the Board Executive Committee met on 23rd June 2020, virtually, to review operations of the Secretariat and follow up on decisions of the 2019 Board and AGM meetings, and subsequent issues emanating from the various Board Committees including reviewing emergent issues, among which was the COVID-19 Pandemic. Below is a Summary of decisions and recommendations agreed upon during the Board Executive Committee meeting of 23 June 2020.

Key Decisions

Holding of AGM 2020. The AGM meeting of 6th December 2019 in Cape Coast Ghana agreed that University of Mohammed the 6th Polytechnique (UM6P) and OCP Group hosted the 2020 AGM in Morocco. Accordingly UM6P/OCP Group made arrangements to host the AGM 18-20 November 2020 in Ben Guerir, Morocco. Due to the travel ban and health concern posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board Executive Committee agreed that:

1. The AGM 2020 be held virtually, on 23rd October 2020
2. UM6P/OCP Group considers hosting a future RUFORUM event in Morocco when conditions allow.

Holding of Future AGMs and Triennial Conferences. Assuming conditions return to normal, allowing travel and face to face meetings, the BEC confirmed the holding of the follow-up events as follows:

1. 2021 AGM/Triennial Conference: Tentatively first week of December 2021 in Cotonou, Republic of Benin, West Africa
2. 2022 AGM: Tentatively 7-9 December 2022 in Harare, Zimbabwe
3. 2023 AGM: Tentatively Oct-Nov 2023 in Kampala, Uganda
4. 2024 AGM/Triennial Conference: Tentatively last Week of August 2024 in Windhoek, Namibia
5. 2025 AGM: In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
6. 2026 AGM: In Lusaka, Zambia
7. 2027 AGM/Triennial: In Kampala, Uganda

Admission of New Member Universities: After due diligence check, the Board Executive Committee recommended that the AGM meeting in October 2020 admits the following two universities as full Member Universities of RUFORUM:

1. University of Dar-Es-Salaam (Tanzania)
2. Federal University of Technology, Akure (Nigeria)

Secretariat Annual Reports for 2019/2020: The Committee reviewed both the [Narrative](#) and [Financial reports](#) for 2019/2020 and agreed that they represented true state of affairs of RUFORUM operations, and as such the two reports be presented to the AGM Meeting in October 2020. However, the Committee is still to review the External Audit report in September 2020 prior to its presentation to the AGM 2020 for final review and adoption.

Workplan and Budget for 2020/2021: The Committee reviewed the Draft [Work plan](#) and [Budget](#) submitted by the Secretariat and approved their implementation, subject to further guidance during the October 2020 AGM.

Responding to the aftermath of COVID-19 Pandemic: The Committee noted the efforts being undertaken by African Governments and their institutions including universities, to respond to the challenges and opportunities created by the Pandemic and advised that:

1. RUFORUM Secretariat establishes a Data Centre to facilitate sharing of education resources and other resources across the Member Universities
2. Broker partnerships for online teaching and learning amongst the Member universities and with other Knowledge Hubs/Centres
3. RUFORUM Secretariat continues to strengthen functionality of the Higher Education Capacities Indicators platform, and engages universities across the continent to input data
4. Member Universities continue to share lessons and experiences on their coping strategies and initiatives for purpose of lesson learning and updating on ongoing efforts to cope up with the COVID-19 Pandemic and development needs in Higher Education sector
5. Universities put up measures to deal with teaching and research delays on students completion of studies

Implementation of the Graduate Teaching Assistantship Programme: The Committee noted with appreciation that 140 PhD students are being trained through the GTA Programme. However, some 290 still needed to be placed. The Committee urged the Member Universities:

1. Those offering PhD studies to take in more GTA students

3. Those universities receiving PhD students to continue waiting fees, including functional fees, and provide accommodation for the GTA students
4. The Sending Universities should meet their obligation of paying for upkeep, insurance and research costs of their students
5. Vice Chancellors to periodically brief their Management on the GTA operations

RUFORUM Secretariat, Kampala, Uganda

30 June 2020