

*Celebrating*  
**the Legacy of**  
**Dr. Bharati. K. Patel**



*An Icon of Higher Agricultural Education in Africa*



**Dr. Patel seated right with her sister on the left and her nephews**



**Dr. Patel and part of her family**

## Foreword



**Professor Adipala Ekwamu**

**Executive Secretary**  
RUFORUM

I just received the communication about the passing away of Dr. B.K.Patel. Dr Patel and Prof Blackie started FORUM which transformed into RUFORUM. What a loss!!!

I am in a bank but I can't hide my tears!

### Bharati K Patel- She combined Passion and Vision

In December 2019, we invited Dr. Bharati K. Patel to Cape Coast, Ghana to attend the RUFORUM Annual Convening for African Universities and other actors. We wanted Dr. Patel to see the outcome of the FORUM programme that she led at the Rockefeller Foundation from 1992-2003. This was a milestone time for RUFORUM and we wanted her to be part of the reflections. She gladly accepted our invitation and flew from Hyderabad in India to Accra and joined us for a full week. What a time together!. You didn't need to have met her before but if you had heard the story of FORUM and RUFORUM and about the 'iron lady', you would spot her straight away. And her voice and laughter would attract your attention. And before even settling down, there she was talking loudly *'There you are'*. You have expanded to North Africa and West Africa! You are now fully a continental organisation. Something I dreamed about but was not able to do. I hope you have not lost focus on smallholder farmers and the students. Where are the students?. I want to see their work. I hope they publish their work..... Ah, there is Mwang'ombe: how many students has she trained, and I hope you have more women students..' That was the beginning of a week of very intense interrogation and laughter. Little did we know that would be the last time to see her. That is what went through my head that fateful morning of 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020 when I heard the news of her death through an email from Sarwat Hussain. I just could not help but burst into tears and wailing in the bank where I had gone to get some money.

It is very difficult to find words to describe Dr. BK Patel as a person. She was energetic, forthright and very passionate about Africa investing in its young people to drive change in the continent to remove poverty and hunger from the face of the continent. To her, African universities would be at the forefront of the change process, working towards rural transformation driven by a new generation of development oriented scholars, committed to working with rural communities. *'It will take time but we will get there- we are not second class people'*. She had the drive, the passion and vision for the continent.

May her passion and vision drive all of us to remove poverty and hunger from our continent, and give a better future for our youth.



**Mr. Pranav R. Bhakta**

**Late Dr. Bharati's nephew  
San Francisco, California, USA**

**M**y aunt, Dr. Bharati K. Patel, was a second mother to me. I put her through the same ups and downs my mother had to face. She had a mother's dedication and love undoubtedly a force in the universe that binds all of us and her force was just as strong! That said, she was the anchor for me. Set in every way possible with an eclectic flair for all things from Bauhaus Movement to traditional Indian architecture. She instilled many values and principles in me: life is about knowledge; action; selflessness; independence, equality for all; too many to note down.

From being the first Rotary Fellow from West Africa and the first Rotary-sponsored student at Hawaii University in the late 60s, obtaining a Double Masters plus PhD, to her work at the Rockefeller Foundation and ICRISAT, to her co-authoring *The Green Book, A Guide to Effective Graduate Research in African Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Development*, to her work with RUFORUM for her belief in students as the Change Agents warranting the need to work with and Invest in Young people towards Rural Transformation in Africa, countless other publications in scientific agricultural journals....never relied on anyone else but herself. Never married, never compromised, just achieved and gave back -- that's her legacy.

I had the blessed opportunity to live with her when I relocated to India. Where we could debate, have constructive discourse on various topics, and reach common ground through shared knowledge. Her appetite for reading was vast; as was her knowledge base on various topics from politics to art. Her fierce independence was the cornerstone – the bedrock – that grounded her to achieve all that she had in her life by herself. And, she left this earth the same way, only to come back stronger. Till we meet again.

*I Know Your Death Is Not the End, You Can Never Be The End, Death is the Road, Life is the Traveler, The Soul is the Guide, You were my Guide, Love you, miss you, Rest In Peace, Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti!*

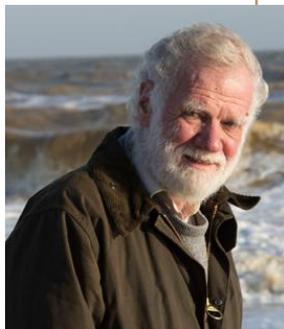
Dear Pranav,

It has yet to sink in this morning with regard to the sad demise of Bharati. We join you in this hour of grief and pray her soul rests in eternal peace.  
Regards

**Sunil Rao**

Dear Pranav, so sorry for your loss and that the world has lost a great spirit. I spent some weeks with her in Raleigh in North Carolina, I think it was in 2003 and those are forever in my memory. I have often been thinking of her and how much I learnt from her, so grateful that I met her. Thank you for letting us know.

**Eiwor Backelund Jacobsson**



**Prof. Malcom Blackie**

**University of East Anglia Norwich  
Norfolk, United Kingdom**

**B**harati was an outstanding plant pathologist from Zambia. She became Chief Research Officer in Zambia when I was Dean of Agriculture at the University of Zimbabwe in the 1980s. We first met at a conference in Minnesota and, thereafter, we frequently were together at SADC and other regional meetings. I recall one when I was checking

in at our hotel and was informed by the clerk that I would be sharing my room with a Dr Patel. Fortunately, my friend Mandivamba Rukuni, who was there at the same time, informed the clerk that Dr Patel was a very fierce Hindu lady and would not appreciate the arrangement!

Our close professional engagement came after I joined Rockefeller Foundation and, as part of my work, set up what has since become RUFORUM. From a slow start, once the participating universities understood how to apply for grants, applications for funding ballooned. It needed a dedicated staff member to manage it; I was delighted when Bharati applied for, and was awarded, the position. She joined our office in Lilongwe in Malawi and for some time we shared a house since accommodation was so difficult in that city at the time. My cook rapidly acquired the skills needed to become a good Indian chef and I learned the benefits of vegetarian cuisine.

Bharati was indeed, a 'fierce Hindu lady'. She had no time for poor quality work or failure to address evident problems. She knew how to speak her mind without being offensive or aggressive. You always knew what problem was concerning her and what she expected of you. I could not have had a more effective or thoughtful friend and colleague. Within her programme, she watched constantly over the welfare of the students involved. Poor supervision or mismanagement of resources was immediately addressed, and students were made the central component of her programme.

I left Rockefeller Foundation in 1998 and soon after the Lilongwe office was closed. She moved to Nairobi in Kenya where she continued her work. When RUFORUM became an independent Africa led programme she retired to Hyderabad where she had family connections. Her last days in the Foundation were marred by some sad and unnecessary disputes. I met with her shortly before

she retired and was distressed by her state of mind. A senior manager in New York, who should have known better, dismissed her upset as just the outpourings of a 'hysterical woman'. I remain deeply saddened by this thoughtlessness which I know hurt her badly.

Bharati remained engaged with RUFORUM and Africa the remainder of her life. She was always welcomed warmly at RUFORUM meetings, and her students speak highly of her kindness and support. In retirement, she followed her interests in art and literature and was always a warm and engaging conversationalist. She was a devoted African who left the continent a better place. We are all grateful for her achievements. I miss her as a friend and a scientist.



### “Tribute to Late Dr. BK Patel Former Coordinator FORUM, Rockefeller Foundation”



**Dr. Sadik Kassim**

**Former FORUM Student and currently Deputy Director General - Agricultural Technology Promotion Uganda National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO)**

**A**ugust 25, 2020 was a dark day for me and certainly for many former FORUM students of the early 2000. The first email I saw in the morning was from Dr. Robert Kawuki, my long-time friend, former class mate at Makerere University where we attended both

BSc and MSc classes together and presently a colleague at National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), Uganda. When I opened the message, it was an obituary for Dr. BK Patel. Since the message was copied to Prof. Adipala Ekwamu the Executive Secretary of RUFORUM, I quickly realized and believed it was Patel who was a sponsor, mentor, mother and friend to us, RUFORUM students. At first I was so saddened and confused. But after a deeper reflection I got consoled by her good deeds, kindness and generosity, and humbly prayed to Almighty God to grant Dr. BK Patel eternal peace.

I first heard about Dr. Patel around September 2000. I had visited Prof Adipala at the Faculty of Agriculture, Makerere University to inform him that it was not possible for me to start graduate classes immediately after graduation because I had just lost my only brother who left orphans. I needed time to settle them and so would enrol for graduate studies later. Full of empathy, Prof. Adipala advised that it was wiser for me to enrol immediately and build capacity so as to support those orphans better though later. He instantly pulled money from his pocket and gave me for late application fees, stationary and subsistence and asked me to go to class the following day. He assured me that he was expecting

a project where he would fit me and if the project failed, he would talk to his colleague Prof Patrick Rubaihayo to take me up on a Rockefeller Foundation funded project or talk to some kind and considerate lady at the same Foundation to fit me on any of their projects. Soon I got to know that the kind and considerate lady referred to was the late Dr. BK Patel.

Late Dr. BK Patel was among the silent heroines and heroes who have contributed enormously to transformation of society. For her she made it through supporting capacity building initiatives especially on the African continent. While at Rockefeller Foundation she was personally committed to sponsor students and support other capacity building programs of FORUM. She was keen and firm on quality of training given to students and since Prof Adipala has been equally concerned with quality of training particularly in African Universities, they ensured we attended several inspiring training workshops especially on soft skills and leadership to complement the technical skills we were being given in our faculties of Agriculture. One such training was conducted in 2001 at Lake Victoria Hotel, Entebbe. It was a multidisciplinary training combining MSc students from Agriculture and Public health converging from a number of universities. She passionately interacted with us, shared life experiences and challenged us to be prepared to respond to emerging challenges associated with climate change, globalization, urbanization and rapid population growth that would dramatically increase the demand for food especially in Africa and Asia. She encouraged us to work harder and ensure a hunger free and healthy population in Africa.

Late Dr. Patel and Prof Adipala generously invested on our exposure as students in different ways so that we could aim higher, get inspired to realise our full potential and develop positive attitude. They facilitated movement of students from different parts of Africa to converge and train together so as to develop relationships and nurture spirit of collaboration and networking. Most of the problems affecting agriculture are regional or cut across borders and thus require multinational partnerships, collaboration and spirit of collective responsibility that must be nurtured.

As an Alumni of FORUM I can confidently conclude that, the convergence of the personalities of Late Dr. Patel and Prof. Adipala contributed enormously to the firm foundation of RUFORUM which has made many of us what we are. Personalities with wide hearts and vision who knew how and where to invest generously. Their commitment and enthusiasm for capacity building especially in agriculture has resulted into a reasonable pool of impactful cadres in all sectors of agriculture across Africa. The late Dr. Patel's personality indeed increased the visibility and impact of the contribution of Rockefeller Foundation to capacity building in Africa for which we the alumnae are grateful. May her legacy be an inspiration towards a hunger free Africa as she had wished. Rest in Peace Patel.





**Ms. Judith Francis**

Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)

Dear Prof. Adipala,

Thanks for sharing. It is indeed very sad news. However, I am sure Dr. Patel died happy and at peace, knowing that RUFORUM is a stronger organisation today and that her investment in the growth of network had borne fruit and her service were highly appreciated and duly recognized by you, the Secretariat and Board and governance as well as all the network members. She thoroughly enjoyed participating in last year's AGM in Ghana. I was there and can vouch for this. Our return bus journey to Accra to catch our return flights was epic.

Thanks for always being caring and considerate of all those who have travelled with you and the RUFORUM community on this 'unfinished journey'.

Dr. Patel has left an indelible mark. May she rest in peace. I am smiling as I think of all our encounters over the years. She gave without asking for anything in return.

My condolence to her family and the RUFORUM fraternity. She was an exceptional person; a leader, a mentor, a firm believer in Africa and passionate about Africa feeding its self. She has left behind a legacy of excellence and exemplary leadership.

**Bongiwe Njobe**

**South Africa**





Prof Adipala, I do understand as it's very sad and emotional. I have memorable photos I took with her. Let us remember the long hours we spent with her mentoring us and a number of times in the late hours to ensure the birth of RUFORUM.

Just stay strong and especially for her as she was a very strong lady.

Sad news indeed. BK (as we all knew her) was committed to capacity building in Agriculture in Africa to drive the Agricultural transformation in Africa we talk about today. She was visionary and passionate about African Agriculture and ensured that relevant capacity was built. Worried so much about the continent plagued with several challenges including lack of institutional support (and poaching of Scientists from the very continent with low capacity) to retain the high calibre of Scientists, she designed programs to support us to remain in the continent through very innovative grant calls. For newcomers to RUFORUM, She is Mama RUFORUM and some of us we shall live to remember her for what she did for the continent. Prof. Adipala thanks so much for bringing BK to Cape Coast, Ghana in December 2019. I had memorable discussions with her and she tried to convince me otherwise and unfortunately the otherwise has happened.

May Our Almighty God rest her soul in eternal peace.



**Prof. Agnes Mwang'ombe**  
**University of Nairobi**  
Kenya

Oh my friend Adipala, I know that your heart is heavy. But please know that you helped to bring her great joy. I echo Judith in her words. I will remember always how fierce she was in both expecting the best and providing all support to students and staff. I carry the memory of being so delighted to find someone even fiercer and more outspoken than me at a workshop in the early 90s. And we have remained friends since.

I have written to her nephew but I can't remember the name of her close friend in New York.

So to you, as a person I know who meant so very much to her, my condolences. I think you need to rather celebrate that we knew her and were such an important part of her life.

A hug for your hurt.

The idea of a RUFORUM BK Patel scholarship to attend one of the Regional Programmes - or for GTA research support - to the student displaying outstanding determination to improve African agriculture and to overcome disadvantages in advancing their qualifications is good.



**Prof. Kay Muir-Leresche**  
**International Advisory Panel**  
RUFORUM



Dear Prof, very sad news indeed. The world will miss her passion and her tell it like it is attitude. She has been an inspiration to many and a great example.

**Prof. Daniel Sherrard**

**Earth University**  
Costa Rica

This is bad news indeed. She was personally my active mentor from the early 1990s and early 2000s. Because of her passion for Africa we nicknamed her Mama Africa.

**Prof. George Kanyama-Phiri**

**RUFORUM Board Chair & Vice Chancellor**  
Lilongwe University of Agriculture and  
Natural Resources, Malawi



Dear Professor Adipala,  
I hope these few lines find you well. Sorry to convey sad news, Dr. Bharati Patel passed away in Hyderabad today. She will be sorely missed in the international ag4dev community, including for championing the cause of women in science and more broadly on S&T for advancing African agriculture. May her soul Rest In Peace.

**Mr. Sarwat Hussain**

**Former Head of Communication**  
Ag Global Practice, World Bank  
Washington, DC



## “Dr Baharat Patel: A candle that lit so many paths finally bows out”



Charles Owour

RUFORUM Alumnus

During our time, the prospect of getting a full paid Master Degree scholarship is dream for many undergraduate finalists. In a class of only four-soil science finalist with excellent grades, it was guarantee to get scholarships to pursue master degrees courtesy of the Forum for Agricultural Resource Husbandry (FORUM) initiative for which Dr Patel was the head. The initiative was intentioned to stabilize Faculties of Agriculture in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Zimbabwe by providing resources, mission and peer support, leading to knowledge contributing to improved lives of smallholder farmers.

Central to this initiative was the urgent need to improve the quality of training at the Master of Science level. As a fresh graduate, I was awarded a fully funded scholarship to pursue a Master’s Degree in Soil Science attainable at Makerere University. It was during this tenure that I met and interacted with Dr Baharat Patel. My fond memories about her though tough on discipline, she deeply loved her students and most of her good moments and characteristic laughter was around us. She treated us with respect and courtesy that cultivated the feeling of collegiality among a different

cohorts of FORUM now RUFORUM alumni. I have no doubt in my mind that this streamlined the power dynamics and strengthened the relationship between the academic supervisor and student. Prior to this programme, as a student the relationship between one’s academic supervisor was better described as a cat and mouse. It was common for none FORUM students to take tangential diversions just to avoid a cursory meeting with their supervisors while for us, we had and still have genuine friendships with our supervisors hinged on mutual respect, learning and mentorship. Dr Baharat Patel was transformational leader and it is on record that the postgraduate completion rates improved significantly because of her mission driven purpose to intentionally change agriculture higher education in Africa.

As alumni of RUFORUM, we have remained connected as her former students to this day despite the space and time divide. This was her dream, to have a critical mass of young graduates who can transform Africa’s agro-food system. Her love for excellence and confidence in communicating science was exceptional. The confidence she instilled in us is evident. Most of us have defied the odds and ventured in diverse spaces and domains with the confidence and go get attitude that yes, I can do it. She instilled in us the spirit if discipline and self-control, skills we were never taught in class. I vividly recall in one of the student’s retreat that was held in Entebbe in

2003. As norm, these retreats were fun filled, we had all sorts of eats and drinks (soft and hard) and long nights of bonding and cementing relationship. And that is when her famous phrase came in “work hard, have fun”. However, do not be fooled that you will have long party nights each day. Each evening we had a book chapter to read from some of her choicest hard reads and we were required to summarise and make judgemental deductions to be presented in a group work by 7.30a.m the following day. It was really a tough choice to make. To either imbibe the bitter or burn a mid-night candle and make an exceptional

presentation the following day for which there was a handsome reward for the effort. But as young and energetic men, trust one of my Malawian friend, Mavangehama, who opined that a sip of whiskey actually made reading easier and comprehension more efficient. The move was disastrous, and knowing Dr Baharat Patel’s nonsense disciplinarian approach to deviant characters, one would opt to be run over by 18 wheeler truck that finding oneself on her wrong side. It is these experiences of love, respect and determination that continue to shape our professional lives until our candles equally get extinguished.

Oh my condolences Prof. Adipala

**Prof. Address Mauakowa Malata**  
BScN, MScN, PhD, FAAN

**Vice Chancellor**  
Malawi University of Science and Technology



Sorry for the loss of Mama Africa Dr. Patel. May God comfort all of us and her family.

**Prof. Maud Kamatenesi Mugisha**

**Vice Chancellor**  
Bishop Stuart University  
Uganda

Very sad indeed. I remember how Female Vice-Chancellors had great fun with her in Cape Coast last year. We should learn to treasure every moment we meet, She was such an inspiration to us. May she rest in eternal peace.

**Prof. Akenga Teresa**

**Vice Chancellor**  
University of Eldoret  
Kenya



## Bharati Patel: Building a Future For Africa



**Prof. Mabel Imbuga**

**PhD, MBA, EBS, Hon DSC (Cardiff Met),  
Professor of Biochemistry, Jomo Kenyatta  
University of Agriculture and Technology  
Kenya**



It is great shock... Dr. Bharat Patel was full of energy during the RUFORUM Annual Conference Cape Coast in Ghana...just the other day...we all had a wonderful time with her and quite often laughed cracking our ribs...she was full of instant advice on research, policy, mental well being.... Always sharing her experiences, selflessly Always having RUFORUM and Agricultural research in Africa at the center of her heart and her activities....Dr Patel was The Research Mother to all irrespective of age and very easy to get along with.. never keeping quiet even for a minute...she had all information at her finger tips..had a great vision and courage for Africa even in times when physically she was not feeling well, and even made fun out of it...

Dr. Patel supported research and implementation of numerous projects in many universities touching on crop protection, increased food yields, storage issues, educating farmers, encouraging women scientists. She was selfless and without any ego. Just to mention one of her impacts...Dr. Patel funded my first research on pest management of the new variety Pigeon peas way back in the year 2000 that enabled two ladies Brigid Wanga and Phanice Namungu, to enrol and complete their MSCs at JKUAT. Brigid is now Prof in the USA and Phanice is successful Agro-entrepreneur in Rwanda. This research generated many papers that enabled me to get my full professorship at JKUAT and three other researchers get promotions in Academia. This is the lady who catapulted our professional advancements. These are the many successful stories on the lips of many researchers and lecturers on the African continent accredited to Dr Patel and her generosity and concerns to all. She made us realize early, the importance of sustainable agriculture to feed ourselves in Africa. This great adopted daughter of Africa should never be forgotten... how can we engrave her name on the African Continent for generations and generations to remember her...

Our God is a God of restoration and we pray that we shall find another Dr Bharat Patel to replace the one that death has so cruelly and painfully grabbed from us.

May her soul rest in eternal peace.



## “A tribute to the Late Dr. Bharati K Patel: Your service–above-self yielded fruits ingrained in posterity”



**Dr. Nampala M. Paul**

**Uganda Christian University**

In this era of initiatives that work using a project mode approach, it is very rare to establish and build institutions. Instead, many people join and build careers in their service to humanity in and through existing institutions. This was not the case for the Late Dr. Bharati K. Patel (BK). She championed the cause for a regional platform – the Forum for Agricultural Resources Husbandry (FORUM). Her passion for capacity building

in agricultural sciences and flexibility coupled with philosophy of hard work laid a solid foundation, from precursor initiative (the FORUM), for establishment of now a vibrant Africa-wide continental network – the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM). The FORUM and RUFORUM have significantly contributed to improvements in the quality of research and training at postgraduate level in Africa. National Agricultural Research and Innovation Systems (NARIs) in many countries in Africa have benefitted from the competent human-resource capacity that has been developed over the years.

Key words: National Agricultural Research and Innovation Systems (NARIs), FORUM, RUFORUM

### Introduction

I received with great pain and shock the passing on of Dr. Bharati K. Patel, fondly referred to as BK. The subject line to the email was – Sad News: Dr. Bharati Patel, and from this I sensed that this was the depressing news of the day and I reluctantly opened the email to see the entire message that confirmed my fear. My mind raced back in the day as a graduate student (MSc. and PhD) under the Rockefeller Foundation supported Grants that BK awarded to Makerere University through my mentors – Prof. Adipala Ekwamu, Prof. Ogenga-Latigo and Prof. Samuel Kyamanywa. In that

moment of reflection, I sent the below response:

*Oh, very sad!*

*The reality is that we shall grieve forever. Frailty and death are robbers - She had so much energy and passion which she unreservedly poured into mentoring and capacity building efforts. We are grateful to God that this effort has yielded fruits for the betterment of humanity in posterity!*

*Love knows not its own depth until the hour of separation - we truly loved Bharati Patel (BK), may her Soul Rest in Peace!*

She loved capacity building and mentoring of young scholars; she was very passionate about her work, was very flexible and hardworking.

### **Capacity building and mentoring of young scholars**

The period of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) had far-reaching effects on many sectors of the economy in many African countries. After independence around 1960, African countries started with high hopes for rapid growth and development. Whereas the initial performance was remarkable, economic development slowed in the 1970s and stagnated in the 1980s. In response, the states' attempts to reinvigorate economic growth through state-led investments and import substitution industrialization strategies were unsuccessful. The World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and Western donors developed and advocated SAPs, which emphasized macroeconomic stabilization, privatization and free market development (Heidhues and Obare, 2011). Privatization in the case of higher education implied a dwindling contribution of support from national governments to universities and deserving students joining postgraduate programmes had to pay their tuition and other associated expenses. To cope with the situation and sustain research and training programs universities in Africa resorted to soliciting resources through developing projects and programmes. Similarly, development partners also developed and designed programs to facilitate process of covering gaps in capacities.

In response to a needs assessment (Saints, 1992), the Rockefeller

Foundation developed and supported a 10-year (1992 – 2002) programme – the Forum for Agricultural Resource Husbandry (FORUM). The Foundation identified and retain BK to lead the FORUM, whose mission was to stabilize Faculties of Agriculture in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Zimbabwe by providing resources, mission and peer support, leading to knowledge contributing to improved lives of smallholder farmers. To achieve this mission, the FORUM had training of Masters students as the core activity.

I was lucky to be recruited as a masters students under the Cowpea Improvement Program Phase II which was managed by Prof. Adipala Ekwamu as the Principal Investigator. This was one of the many FORUM supported grants. The FORUM was a very unique initiative that emphasised the importance of locally trained expertise in agricultural development (Patel et al., 1999). The motivation for the FORUM was that the MSc. educational experience in agricultural sciences would have the potential to be a problem-solver addressing and recognising the constraint to agricultural production. Owing to resource limitation coupled with the fact that many universities were founded with emphasis on Bachelor level education rather than graduate research programs, it was not uncommon to find only one student for a couple of years in a department offering postgraduate training. Thus, for many participating universities, the FORUM created opportunity for hosting a cohort of not less than 40 students intakes per given year. In the process of implementation, it become overwhelming for the units and supervisors to provide the

needed mentoring and guidance to students especially in light of systemic weakness and challenges documented in Patel and Woomer (2000).

The Late BK., was consumed and worked tirelessly to remodel the components of the FORUM initiative to provide avenues for addressing systemic weakness. These efforts were not only intended to fulfil objectives of the FORUM but to streamline and transform operations of research and training units; and ultimately the universities. For instance, a “Student Development Fund” was provided for each grant to facilitate purchase of computer software, books or scientific journal literature and minor repairs of relevant equipment. Soon, the postgraduate programs at FORUM participating universities become more appealing and started attracting more students than had been the case when the only feasible choice was to undertake postgraduate training abroad than at universities in Africa.

### **Passionate**

Despite the increasing number of students from the five countries in ten participating universities under the FORUM, BK made every effort to know each by name and their respective discipline of study. Each grant was comprised of a Principal Investigator, at least two graduate student supervisors and two graduate students. Given her passion and zeal to engage the research teams, BK made time to interact and understand the progress and challenges of each research team. As a regional coordinator, she understood the importance of the forest (the whole) but also the trees (individuals) in the task towards achieving the goal of the FORUM. She

organised annual peer-review events and we would always be surprised to note that she very quickly linked each of us to the different research.

With over 100 grants awarded in five countries in east and southern Africa, BK and her team at the grantee office had a busy schedule. Despite this, she made time to visit and hold quality meetings with students, PIs and graduate supervisors. She visited all students experiments that were located on-farm and the various research teams greatly benefitted from her wealth of experience in on-farm experimentation. This enhanced scholarship with several publications in peer-reviewed journals – an indication to show that the studies were well designed and implemented.

### **Flexibility and hardworking**

In the implementation of the FORUM program, it become apparent that research grants were not adequate to meet the mission of the FORUM program. This was mainly because of the gaps in curricula, and other weaknesses in the university research and training system (Patel and Woomer, 2000). To overcome such challenges and ensure that the intended objectives of the FORUM were attained necessitated hard-work and flexibility. The Late BK exhibited these values and made manifest in many instances. For examples I together with several other students at MSc. benefitted from a quality distance learning course in Biometrics that was commissioned by the Wye College, University of London. This was to cover the gap in biometrics training and was specifically tailored to support students on the FORUM program to understand experimental design, statistical analyses and data

synthesis. Over 50 students were prepared for distance learning in a week – long learning session and statistical packages made available as appropriate based on the data analysis requirements. The distance learning course required 35 weeks for completion and lead to award of a Postgraduate Certificate. This course and many other equally relevant support provided to students were not part of the MSc training at respective universities but were made possible because of the flexibility with which BK implemented the FORUM program to the immense benefit of the recipients. All these efforts entailed hard-work to bring on-board the much needed partnerships with the expertise and skills to catalyse changes at African universities.

Although the FORUM was designed to focus on MSc – level training, a few students (including myself) that excelled at MSc. level were granted opportunity and awarded grants to pursue their respective PhD studies. Again this was another indicator of flexibility in approach which ensured that the cohorts of MSc. students had a few PhD candidates working alongside with them and promoting practices of cohort learning. The few PhD students also served as “guinea pigs” for pilot programs that have over the years helped prepare African universities

establish quality Masters and PhD research and training programs.

## Conclusion

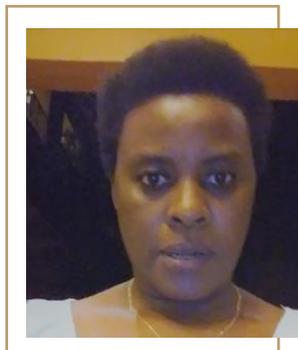
The Late BK served in many other institutions and portfolios prior to heading the FORUM. Her efforts with the FORUM and indeed previous service resulted in significant impacts that we shall forever cherish. Fare-the - well!

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## My memories of Dr. Bharati Patel



**Assoc Prof. Jeninah Karungi**

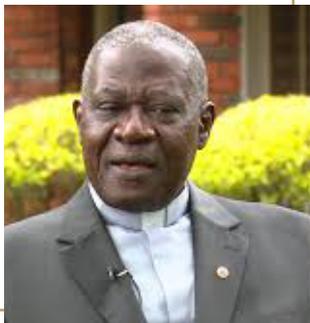
**School of Agricultural Sciences  
Makerere University  
Uganda**

It is nearly 24 years ago that I first met Dr. Bharati Patel. It seems like ages ago but I have an indelible picture of her in my head. I had been blessed to be one of the recipients of an MSc research scholarship by the Rockefeller Foundation through a multilateral project for sub Saharan Africa dubbed Forum on Agricultural Resource Husbandry, for which Dr. Bharati Patel was the Overall Coordinator. Through her foresight and drive, this project became the launching point for pro-active agricultural research in the then Faculty of Agriculture of Makerere University, and the region.

I got to know Dr. Bharati Patel personally through the in-country workshops organized by the project that formed a platform where grantee students on the project were mentored and trained in scientific writing and presentation. I remember the workshops very fondly because in 1997 I won the Best Student Presentation Award for the Uganda chapter, my first distinguished award. At that time, to me as a student, she was a larger than individuals that I wished to impress. Our Principal Investigator on the cowpea subproject, Prof. Adipala Ekwamu had given us the impression of a forthright but encouraging overseer, which we found to be true. One time, together with fellow student Dr. Prossy Isubikalu, we accompanied her and Prof. Adipala on a field tour in eastern Uganda, where our research was implemented in on-farm trials. I remember when we were at a night stopover in Soroti, she observed to Prof. Adipala that we seemed timid. He covered for us with the fact that we were just tired from the travel. We took this remark in the spirit it was meant and endeavored to talk and be free with her thereafter. I learned a lot from our interaction, especially as a young woman at the beginning of her career. Most importantly, how to be a go-getter and not be passive. She instilled a spirit of drive and excellence. This mentorship and the fact that the project provided the best possible training for an early-career scientist positioned me for a successful and fulfilling career as a researcher and academician. It was very important to have her mentorship that early in my career and I strive to reciprocate her efforts by doing the same for young scientists in my orbit.

We have lost her but her legacy lives on, strong and influential.  
Rest peacefully Dr. Bharati Patel.





**Prof. John C. Maviiri**

**Vice Chancellor**  
Uganda Martyrs University

Thanks very much for this re-energizing message which celebrates the life of Dr. B.K. Patel. May she rest in peace.

This is indeed the time to synergize and pursue the RUFORUM dream to put a block on the Africa we Want.

I congratulate you and the colleagues at the Secretariat for leading the way. May we move and succeed together.

Dear Prof. Adipala and RUFORUM family  
This is very sad news. Dr. Patel shaped university training of post graduates in Africa. She inspired many scholars and for some of us she contributed greatly towards our mentorship during the formative phase of our careers

May her soul rest in peace

**Prof. Paul Mapfumo**

**Vice Chancellor**  
University of Zimbabwe



Such sad news!  
Always passionate, full of enthusiasm, compassionate and supportive of good causes. It was a joy to see her in Ghana last year the same as always.

She gave me opportunities when no one else would. She will be missed and always remembered.  
Rest in Peace.

**Dr. Luisa Santos**

Faculty of Agronomy and Forest Engineering  
Eduardo Mondlane University  
Mozambique





I have learnt of the departure of Dr Patel. As much as we as members of university communities and members of the larger African family of farmers seeking to free ourselves from deprivation of sorts I single you out as one to whom I have to send a condolence message over the passing on of Dr Patel.

She was one of the strongest advocates of farmer empowerment through a total process of integration from the consumer through to the leaders of higher education and beyond in the governance of our nations in Africa. She was one of the founders of RUFORUM. For this I send particularly to you a condolence message to remember her illustrious efforts in shaping the vision of RUFORUM.

Rest in Peace Dr Patel.



**Dr. Albert Chiteka**

**Dean**  
Faculty of Agriculture,  
Africa University  
Zimbabwe



I am so sorry to hear this. My deepest condolences to Dr. Patel's family and to the RUFORUM family as a whole. She mentored and inspired many of us especially female students.

**Dr. Abigael Nekesa Otinga**

**Lecturer**  
Soil Chemistry, Soil Fertility and Plant  
Nutrition, University of Eldoret  
Kenya

Very Sad, but she played her part in the global community very well.

**Dr. Bekunda Matete**

CGIAR  
IITA, Tanzania





**Dr. Albert Changaya**

**Chief Executive officer  
Agricultural Research and  
Extension Trust, Malawi**

It is very sad to hear about the demise of our icon Dr. Bharati Patel. I am what I am today because of her assistance. What she did for Malawi through the FORUM and RUFORUM programmes was far beyond just working for the Rockefeller Foundation. She had passion for what she was doing. I was among the first cohort of the FORUM students doing a Master's degree. I did mine in Plant Pathology under Professor Vincent Saka. I remember very well that in more than one trip Dr. Patel travelled with us to collect diseased samples of pigeon peas and to evaluate the field trials. The wisdom she imparted on was beyond recognition as we interacted with her.

After my Masters study and as I was working I still had the desire to do PhD. Prof Vincent Saka advised me to contact Dr. Patel in Kenya as the Rockefeller Foundation office had moved to Nairobi. After getting in touch, she advised me to apply to University of Natal, now University of KwaZulu Natal. That is how I got a chance to do PhD that has me build my career and be able to serve my country well. I am very proud and grateful for her mentoring, linking me to other students across Africa, and making me believe in Africa. All this was possible due to the generosity of Dr Patel and her passion for students and Africa. She had motherly love and I will miss her and I know that all of us who went through the FORUM Programme will live to remember the great lady who changed our lives. May her beautiful soul rest in peace.



A very generous heart and spirit indeed. I think the Board needs to consider the Scholarship Initiative she started in her Honor and Memory. The network shall support it and make it grow.

**Prof. Christine Dranzoa**

**Vice Chancellor**  
Muni University, Uganda





That is so sad, but she has run the race and fought a good fight.

I think I met her last year in Ghana when she continually asked for her 'doggy tag' until we had to create one for her. She sat in the FAWOVC meeting throughout, made sure we captured issues female scientists and took pictures of my yellow attire. She will surely be missed by the RUFORUM community.

**Dr. Florence Nakayiwa**

Deputy Executive Secretary  
RUFORUM Secretariat



**Prof. Kallunde P. Sibuga**

Sokoine University of Agriculture, College of Agriculture, Department of Crop Science and Horticulture, Morogoro, Tanzania

Ever since I came to know Dr Patel during the formative years of the African Crop Science Society (ACSS) in the early 1990's, I admired her for being open, tell it as it is but always resolved to reach an amicable conclusion. She was one, very affirmative scientist. I admired Dr Patel even more when I realized that despite being of Indian descent, she considered and behaved like any other African of African descent. She talked to everyone who listened and led the way in showing how we could all play our parts to benefit from the Rockefeller Foundation where she worked at the time. Then came RUFORUM, and Dr Patel was there with us, sharing experiences and giving constructive ideas on how both the ACSS and RUFORUM were destined to be continental bodies to reckon with.

I cannot claim to have had worked with her in any direct manner but I was in the first batch of women Crop Scientists to build the scientific and management capability of female crop scientists. Under the programme, we were awarded Rockefeller fellowships over a span of two years (2005 -2006) under the Gender and Diversity Programme (ICRAF-Rockefeller East Africa Women Crop Scientist Fellowship Programme). Though this programme, the awardees were matched with mentors and benefitted from leadership and management training that included mentoring for self-actualization in preparation for mentoring of younger staff in our institutions. I believe, Dr Patel played a major role in shaping the nature



and content of this programme which later grew bigger and more encompassing to include all disciplines of agriculture when it graduated into the current AWARD (African Women in Agricultural Research and Development) programme.

As a female agricultural scientist myself, her passing has left a big gap not only for Zambia, but for the entire continent. Let us all learn from who she was, what she did and what she stood for. Her resolve to be nothing short of the best in whatever she was involved should give us strength in our resolve to make African agriculture more productive and inclusive of all gender with no hunger and malnutrition. Africa, has lost a leader but let us all, African agricultural scientists, honour her name and deeds by strengthening our resolve into moving our countries to the next level of development and our continent, the best that it can be.

May the almighty God rest her soul in eternal Peace.



**Prof. Mpeperekwi Sheunesu**

University of Zimbabwe



On behalf of my fellow agricultural scientists and our myriad of now former university students, scattered across east and southern Africa I

convey my sincere condolences to relatives and friends on the departure of our dear beloved former comrade and Coordinator of the then Rockefeller Foundation-funded RUFORUM program, Dr. Bharati Patel. Dr. Patel was an ethnic Indian but a true African at heart genuinely concerned with the challenges of improving smallholder agricultural productivity on our great continent. She dedicated many years of her working life to agricultural

research in Zambia and the training of postgraduate students in East and Southern Africa as coordinator of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture.

To those of us agricultural scientists from universities in East and Southern Africa, who interacted closely with her, Bharati became more than just a Rockefeller Foundation Project manager; she also became our research 'mentor', an intellectual support pillar; yes, a 'mother' figure, more like a matriarch, who did not tolerate cry-babies but insisted that her 'children', the Principal Investigators on Forum projects, apply their best brains to craft and supervise graduate students; think their way out of research challenges and in the process also train postgraduate students who now constitute a large cadre of agricultural scientists in Africa. The ultimate goal: increase number of agricultural scientists to increase agricultural productivity and enhance food and

nutrition security!

And how Bharati, as program manager, rallied her African academic 'troops'; encouraging attendance at scientific conferences, biennial meetings and workshops! She superintended the generation of real agricultural science brewed in African pots! Always firm, persistent, a stickler for quality and meeting deadlines, Bharati helped build a large cadre of highly professional development-oriented African agricultural scientists virtually all of whom got promoted to professorial positions in leading universities in east and southern Africa, on the back of scholarly publications and developmental initiatives that she had superintended as a donor (Rockefeller Foundation) representative.

Dr. Patel mentored many green academics who developed into seasoned research scientists; who with their graduate students, have generated many useful agricultural technologies in Africa. The legacy of Dr. Bharati Patel will have few if any parallels; building momentum for a science-led agricultural revolution in Africa! And Professor Adipala Ekwamu who humbly took over coordination of the FORUM program when Bharati retired, has expanded the Regional Universities Forum to cover many universities across Africa. Bharati's seeds of agricultural research and training have thus spread across the African continent.

Many then young scientists in the mid- to late 1990s, including myself, were among the early receivers of research grants from Rockefeller Foundation Forum program through Bharati's hands. We were promoted on the strength of large volumes of publications in local and international

scholarly scientific journals generated from the Forum grant-supported research.

Dr. Patel's effectiveness as a program manager for the Rockefeller-funded RUFORUM agricultural training program arose from her experience as a seasoned agricultural research scientist in the Zambian agricultural service. Bharati the research scientist had cut her teeth in the Zambian agricultural and extension service interacting with farmer ranging from small scale to large commercial concerns.

Under the FORUM program, she was now working with University agricultural research scientists who also had a mandate to train postgraduate students. She was their peer but led from the front, insisting on high quality work, timeously executed and proper mentoring of students in the research and development process. Those are some of the qualities we learned from working with her.

It is interesting to discover who this woman was to African agriculture.

In a book that she co-edited with three other scientists and titled "The Green Book, a Guide to Effective Graduate Research in African Agriculture", Dr. Patel reveals her vision and the depth of her commitment to African agricultural development. She writes: "Africans can and must solve Africa's problems". That is a powerful fundamental statement. She believed in Africa's intellectual capacity to develop its agricultural capacities to achieve food security.

Dr. Patel also states in "The Green Book" that "To be effective new technologies must fulfil an identified need". She believed and always emphasized that "The best way to learn is by getting your hands dirty.

Share with farmers; live with them and learn their problems first hand”. She also wrote: “You learn from practical experience what effort farmers expend on agriculture; the time, energy, opportunity costs and risks they take to eke out a living”.

These are the words of a practitioner. This is the Patel we knew and will all

miss; dedicated and determined to improve Africa’s agriculture and food security through high quality scientific research and training. A worthy role model for our younger generation!

May Her Soul Rest in Eternal Peace.

Former RUFORUM Grantee



**Dr. Tom Walker**

**Former Senior Economist**  
ICRISAT

So sorry to hear about Bharati’s passing. Thanks for doing the needful under the extenuating circumstances of this strange time.

Bharati was an indomitable spirit with an irrepressible smile. She was the Director of Research of the Zambian NARS when she was on ICRISAT’s governing board in the late 1980s. So most of us first met her as a governing-board member and then she became a colleague. She had a keen appreciation of the role of IARCS in international agricultural development vis-a-vis both strong and weak NARS. She was forthright in her opinions but could also be sensitive and tender when the moment warranted it. I remember how she consoled me when I took the unpopular position that ICRISAT’s strategic plan reinforced the status quo and didn’t change much of anything substantive in 1990. She was one of our most memorable colleagues at ICRISAT.

From 2008 to 2016 when I visited ICRISAT on work-related issues, I always tried to touch base with Bharati in Hyderabad. Much to my surprise, she enjoyed playing golf, and we played together several times. I definitely planned to visit her on my next trip to ICRISAT, but I guess I will have to wait to see her again.



**Dr. Luisa Santos**

Forum Principal Investigator, Eduardo Mondlane University



**Prof. Chongo Daniel**

FORUM Alumni



**Prof. Zélia Menete**

Rockefeller Foundation Scholar



**Prof. Cugula Domingos**

FORUM Alumni

## “Tribute to Dr. Bharati Patel from Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique”

On Monday, August 24th, 2020, Dr Bharati Karsondas Patel passed away aged 77. She was the former director of Forum for Agricultural Resource Husbandry (FORUM), a Rockefeller Foundation program aimed at supporting graduate education at Master’s level in selected African universities to support research relevant to smallhold farmers’ livelihoods and rural communities. The program was initiated in 1991 targeting universities in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

Although FORUM started in 1991, Mozambique only became part of it in 1998 when two grants were awarded to Eduardo Mondlane University. Two staff members of the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry (FAEF), Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM) benefited from FORUM scholarships and enrolled in the University of Zimbabwe and University of Cape Town, respectively. By then, UEM did not offer Master level programs and was going through a transformation process from a 5-year BSc Hon to a 4-year BSc + 2-year MSc program structure. In 2001, the first UEM MSc program (on Agriculture Development) was approved by the University Council. Today, UEM offers more than 100 MSc and PhD programs, representing a strong institutional commitment to post-graduation and research development.

Dr. Bharati Patel and FORUM support to UEM was decisive during those years of change and transformation. Her understanding of our unique historic position, her openness to new ideas, her strong believe in our ability to take charge, her focus on the long term objectives of FORUM, allowed us to have access to grants even if we did not fully met all the criteria. As we were not offering MSc programs, she allowed our students to enroll in other universities in the region. As we were struggling to design and implement our first MSc program, she visited UEM, encouraged us, gave all her full support and valuable advice. As we were taking the first steps in the implementation of our first MSc, she allowed a nurturing grant, trusting us with assuring quality of the student research proposals.

Dr. Patel leadership assured the uniqueness of the FORUM program, at a time where there were not many opportunities for supporting university efforts in advancing agricultural research in Africa: a well-rounded program that considered needs of farmers, students and supervisors, curricula development, leadership skills, funding and institutional framework with a strong focus on quality of research and on African universities ownership of the research process.

Dr. Bharati Patel touched the lives of many of us at the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry of UEM, directly and indirectly, through the opportunities she created for our own professional and personal growth, her leadership example and her acts of kindness and caring.

She will be missed and remembered, and we will honor her memory by carrying on her legacy.

Rest in Peace.



### Personal recounts

Dr. Patel played a decisive role in building capacity and critical mass needed to development of MSc programs at the Plant Protection Department. She encouraged younger candidates from East and Southern Africa including Mozambique to apply for FORUM grants. Her vision was focused on African agricultural development, on improving smallholder farmers' production systems and livelihoods, through scientific research led by African universities.

As a result of this effort, the Department of Plant Protection is today one of the strongest at the Faculty of Agriculture and Forestry (FAEF), UEM, and has been, since 2011, running its own MSc program, focusing on research topics that are oriented to improve small scale farmers' production systems. Over the years, a total of 18 MSc students have graduated through FORUM and later RUFORUM scholarships, including national and foreigner students.

Currently, the Faculty of Agronomy and Forest Engineering is considered a center of excellence in the Southern African region on insect science and an appropriate place for those wishing to improve or to start their carriers as researchers in this subject. Because of this, FAEF has been hosting several regional and international research projects, workshops, conferences and training events.

All these achievements would not have been possible without the seed planted by Rockefeller Foundation under the leadership of Dr. Patel. Therefore, we will continue being inspired on her ideals of capacity building and research with focus on small scale farmers' production systems in Africa and in Mozambique in particular.

**Prof. Domingos Cugala**

FORUM Alumni



Dr. Patel had a strong belief that Africa can only achieve food security with involvement of youths as change agents. It was during Dr. Patel mandate that FORUM introduced post-graduate agriculture scholarships to Mozambican students. Her idea was to use young people as a driving force to achieve food security not only in Mozambique but all over Africa. Dr. Patel was also keen on discussing changes to the Agricultural faculty curricula in African universities to further crystallize the concept of sustainable food security. Her tireless work and passion on agriculture development in Africa was widely recognized by RUFORUM, people and many organizations around the world during her working carrier. Dr. Patel was also known for an infectious smile, and her kind and compassionate spirit.

We pray that the many happy memories of Dr. Patel's life with time, will overcome the sadness and pain of this irreparable loss.

May God bless her and all of us at this time of sorrow.

**Prof. Daniel Chongo**

FORUM Alumni

What I remember the most about Dr. Patel are her human qualities. She was passionate about her work and about what she saw as her contribution to Africa and the world, but most of all she was a friend and she cared about all of us: students, PIs, colleagues, farmers. That was her uniqueness. Her people centered approach, her believe that any of us could succeed, if given the opportunities. She looked for the best in us. She pushed us to new limits. She will be missed and always remembered.

Rest in Peace”

**Dr. Luisa Santos**

FORUM Principal Investigator



Bharati Patel was instrumental for funding my PhD at Cornell University in 2001 to 2005.

Cornell University had started earlier negotiation with Rockefeller Foundation to send a cohort of research fellows from Southern and Eastern Africa to Cornell, an innovative concept at the time. The idea was that we could contribute to advancing research and development on food security in our respective countries upon our return. Her vision, pragmatism and flexibility allowed me (from Mozambique) and Rebbie Harawa from Malawi to be added to the cohort, almost when the deal of six others from Zimbabwe (2) and Kenya (4) was already been made. In this way, the program become more representative of the region, allowing the participation of more countries.

The program fostered multi-disciplinary work by selecting scientists in areas ranging from animal, crop and social sciences as well as natural resources management from Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya and Mozambique. Linkages started at Cornell with exchange of experiences through a common seminar series as we planned our research back in our respective countries. These linkages among us exist till today.

In addition, the program allowed our families to come along, also covering their round trip and health insurance while in the United States. These was a huge factor of success allowing all us to focus on our demanding PhD program, graduating after 4 years.

I and my colleagues benefited immensely programmatically and socially as we fell back to the group for support and group study. I would not be the person I am today without that enriching experience. We would not have so much success and high performance as we did during and after program. We all returned, me to Mozambique where I went on to lead a Tertiary education institution, some of my colleagues are leading programs at the African development Bank, AGRA, among others. I attribute all of this to Bharati and her team for their commitment to developing Africa, focusing on human resources development.

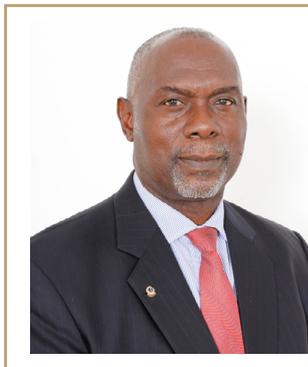
I remember other instances that Bharati, with her sense of justice and vision, pushed for more involvement of other Mozambicans as beneficiaries for Master and PhD programs and research grants. She knew that progress on research on the region could only be made only if participants from individual countries where actively involved. Her legacy lives on but she will be dearly missed.

**Prof. Zélia Menete**

Rockefeller Foundation PhD scholar



## In memory of Dr, Bharati K. Patel



**Dr. Mick Mwala**  
University of Zambia

In 1974 during my undergraduate studies at University of Zambia I had the privilege of coming face to face with Dr Patel. The class thought she was Indian but soon she corrected the impression by speaking to us in one of the local languages and confirmed that after all she was ZAMBIAN. She introduced herself as BK! She lectured in Plant Pathology course while she worked in the Ministry of

Agriculture at a famous Research Station – Mt Makulu Central Research Station situated some 25 km south of Lusaka.

In 1976 on joining the Ministry of Agriculture a Dr Patel, then Ms Patel became my workmate but obviously my senior. Having taught me she continued 'lecturing' to me on the salient issues of working in research. Dr Patel NEVER missed an opportunity to share her thoughts on how to be a better researcher. A number of us Zambians at the Research Station were greatly inspired by her manner of development of the human being! She was instrumental in sending junior staff for training and I am a beneficiary of this support for all my postgraduate training. I will always be grateful for the support and guidance given.

Over the years I have interacted with Dr Patel on many international for a she ALWAYS was BK to me. She played a major role in getting the University of Zambia as part of the RUFORUM family through which numerous valuable benefits have accrued to the University as an institution and to the staff via training.

May the good lord rest you bk in your prepared place! Go well BK!

This is indeed a great loss not only for Zambia but the whole of Africa. She mentored many of us and supported many to be trained to support agricultural development in Zambia.

She was a no nonsense lady, very forthright in her communication but with a beautiful heart. She encouraged to do the best for Africa.

**Dr. Davies M. Lungu**  
University of Zambia



It is so sad to read the news of the passing of Dr. BK Patel, however, she left a mark in life even to some of us who got to know her later; She inspired many of us by her strong commitment and passion for Africa to drive its own agenda.

Somehow along the way, we may in her remembrance have a Bharati Patel Scholarship for Women in Science or a Research Chair named after her from the RUFORUM side

**Dr. Egeru Anthony**

**Program Manager Training and Community Development**  
RUFORUM Secretariat



This is painfully sad. May she rest well.

Even though I met her only once during the last RUFORUM Annual Conference in Ghana, she left an indelible mark about the quality of the person she was. I recall that she held me hostage after the female Vice Chancellors' dinner until her lost luggage arrived from Accra past mid-night on day 2 of the conference; she promised not to let Prof. Adipala go to sleep until she saw her missing bags.

She indeed made her contribution to Higher Education in Africa.

**Maureen Agena**

**Communication and Advocacy Specialist**  
RUFORUM Secretariat

This is Heart Breaking!!!

I interacted with her directly during the December 2019 RUFORUM Conference in Ghana. She gave RUFORUM US\$5,000 as her contribution to students research, and she interacted very closely with the students. She had high passion for the students.

Her voice echos in my Ears!!!

**Loyce Angoku**

**Senior Finance Officer**  
RUFORUM Secretariat





**Prof. Fanuel Tagwira**

**Permanent Secretary  
Ministry of Higher & Tertiary Education,  
Innovation Science and Technology  
Development, Zimbabwe**



I was shocked and saddened to learn about the passing on of Dr. Bharati Patel. In Bharati we have lost not only a person who played a pivotal role in the founding of RUFORUM but a great friend and advocate of African Agricultural Science for many years. Research to improve smallholder Agriculture was her passion and she tirelessly worked to improve the quality of Agricultural research in smallholder agriculture. A woman of integrity, wisdom, resolve, energy and foresight. She was a larger than life character and was courageous to say out her mind. She provided leadership not only in agricultural research but in ensuring that Universities get empowered to develop and work together. She was a teacher and a mentor. She was compassionate, friendly and had a magnetic character that made her easy to approach and seek help from. She knew how to reach out to the hearts of grantees and students from across the region, mingle with them, and inspire them. Young at heart and full of energy, she mastered the art of breaking personal barriers and making friends with culturally diverse people. Humility was a defining feature for Bharati. She was simple in outlook, and rarely remembered she was of Indian Origin among people of African descent. She inspired successive generations of students under the FORUM program. She was proud to have made the FORUM the success it was and was saddened when it ended as she knew how much it meant for many African scientists who were struggling to build careers in research. She made sure every grant that was given out helped not only capacitate the student but also the grantee through laboratory and field research equipment and a vehicle. Ensuring researchers in different Universities and countries get to know each other and work together was a great passion for Bharati.

In Bharati we have lost a friend who was always eager to listen. In return, she would offer a broad smile or a friendly laugh that made you realise you are among friends. She would get excited with new ideas and possibilities.

The last time I saw Bharati was in Ghana. I greeted her and hoped I would have time to chat with her longer. She sent someone to look for me in the hundreds that attended the RUFORUM meeting but I had caught an earlier shuttle back to the hotel that night.

1 Corinthians 13 vs 13 says “And now these three remain, faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love”. Bharati had great love for the African people. From Bharati flowed a river of love which passed through our different Institutions. From this river of love drank many students and grantees, some



without even knowing where it was coming from and many were saved and flourished.

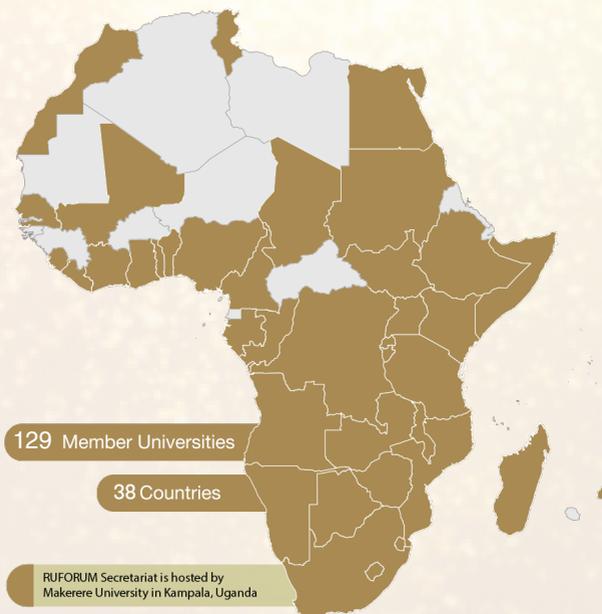
*Fare thee well and rest in peace Bharati Patel. You fought a good fight, and you planted a seed (RUFORUM) that has become the greatest tree in the garden. It will continue to give to generations of young African scientists. You finished the purpose for your life in our generation and rested.*

.....

***Farewell thee Dr. BK Patel***

.....

**D**r. Bharati K. Patel since she was a child strived to break boundaries. At that time, she was the first “colored” woman to attend primary and high school, which was priviledged for white males in Rhodesia. Then from there being the first Rotary Fellow from West Africa and the first Rotary-sponsored student at Hawaii University in the late 60s, obtaining a Double Masters plus PhD, to her work at the Rockefeller Foundation and ICRISAT, to her co-authoring The Green Book, A Guide to Effective Graduate Research in African Agriculture, Environment, and Rural Development, RUFORUM’s Mother of Africa award for her belief in students as the Change Agents warranting the need to work with and Invest in Young people towards Rural Transformation in Africa, countless other publications in scientific agricultural journals....never relied on anyone else but herself. Never married, never compromised, just achieved and gave back.



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