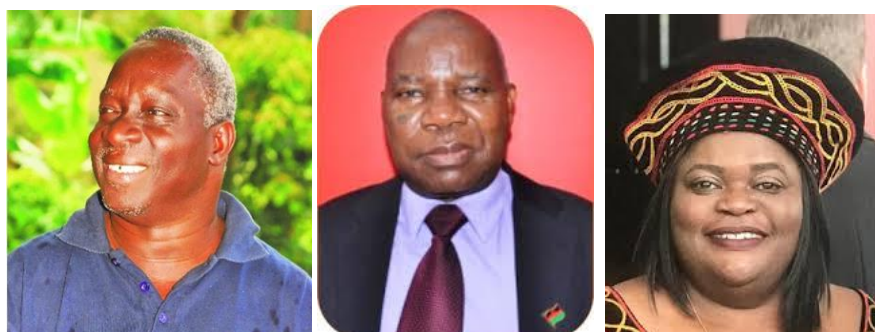




SUMMARY REPORT

The 16th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting



"Higher Education- Private Sector Partnership: Harnessing Opportunities for Agricultural Transformation in Africa."





16-20 November, 2020

Mohammed VI Polytechnic University, Morocco





1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The RUFORUM Annual General Meeting (AGM) is a statutory annual gathering of Member Universities and their stakeholders convened purposely to give accountability, strengthen governance, ratify annual work-plans as approved by the Board of Trustees, and guide the organisation's development strategy. The AGM is the supreme organ of the RUFORUM network and is composed of Vice Chancellors, Principals and Deans, and other stakeholders who represent non-University actors but with stake in Africa's Higher Education and Agricultural sectors. It has been adopted as a practice and the scope of the Annual General Meeting events extend to special dialogue sessions and other activities that foster learning and show-case university involvement to improve livelihoods in Africa through training, research and community engagement.

MAIN THRUSTS OF AGM 2020

1. Examined key issues with regards to Higher Education- Private Sector Partnerships
2. Reviewed and approved
 - Minutes of the 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting held 06 December 2019 at the New Examinations Centre (NEC), University of Cape Coast, Ghana;
 - Financial and Annual Reports for the activity year July 2019 – June 2020; and,
 - Annual Work plan and Budget for the activity year July 2020 – June 2021
3. Provided a platform for networking opportunities and facilitating dialogue on experiences, lessons and good

1.2 The 16th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting was virtually hosted by the Government of Morocco and Moroccan RUFORUM Member Universities: Mohammed VI Polytechnic University and Institute Agronomique Et Veterinaire Hassan II from 16-20 November, 2020. The 2020 AGM, the first to be held in North Africa provided an opportunity for mobilizing wider participation from North African Universities in several opportunities of the network.

1.3 Pre-AGM events, mainly RUFORUM Governance meetings provided in-depth technical and administrative guidance for the smooth operation of RUFORUM Secretariat and for collaborative undertaking by the Member Universities and other





partners. The AGM business meeting was convened on 20th November 2020 virtually and hosted by Mohammed VI Polytechnic University in Marrakesh, Morocco.

1.4 The overall objective of the 16th RUFORUM AGM was to convene actors and practitioners in Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation to deliberate on the needed transformations for inclusive growth and development for a better Africa. The AGM examined key issues with regards to university-private sector engagement under the theme: *"Higher Education- Private Sector Partnership: Harnessing Opportunities for Agricultural Transformation in Africa."* The 2020 AGM coincided with the Morocco Higher Education Day held on 19th November, 2020 that provided Member Universities with opportunity to learn about Morocco especially its agricultural and higher education sectors.

1.5 The key highlights of the AGM were: expansion of RUFORUM membership from 126 universities to 129 universities in 38 African countries; approval of the financial year 2020/2021 work plan for the Secretariat; approval of the financial year 2019/2020 financial report and budget for the 2020/2021 financial year; the External Auditor issued unqualified audit report for the 2019/2020 Financial period; appointment of PKF as the External Auditor for financial year 2020/2021; commitment to expand the RUFORUM Graduate Teaching Assistantship Programme; commitment to strengthen online teaching and learning and sharing of resources amongst the Member Universities and with knowledge centers; and, re-confirmation of the decision to host 2021 AGM and Triennial Conference in Benin.

2. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY

2.1 The 16th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting convened 16 side events. These events brought together several stakeholders including Policy Makers; University leaders; Development Partners; Development Actors; and other stakeholders in the agricultural and higher education sectors to dialogue on harnessing opportunities for agricultural



transformation in Africa through Higher Education- Private Sector Partnerships. The Annual General Meeting was also used to learn from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation on the collective action for making Africa and the World a better place through calls for leadership from Higher Education Institutions; Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences (GCHERA) about repositioning and transforming higher education for development relevance; and the Food and Agriculture Organization about the status of agricultural development and food and nutritional security in Africa. During the event, the African Union Commission was requested to support and champion implementation of the five continental initiatives for strengthening Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa (See link to [Ministerial Communiqué](#))

2.2 The Pre and Post AGM Events:



Trainings

- Capacity Building on Online Content Development
- Training and Mentoring for Young Business Start-ups



Side Events

- Online content development for academic staff of Universities
- Realignment towards online teaching and learning in universities: Learning from each other
- Strengthening the role of African Researchers in the EU-Africa Research and Innovation partnership on Food & Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)
- Working together for resilient food systems: Towards a Europe – Africa platform for research and innovation
- Morocco Higher Education Day





The following Governance Meetings were held

- Joint meeting of the Technical Committee and TAGDev Steering Committee
- RUFORUM International Advisory Panel Meeting
- Principals and Deans Sub-Committee
- RUFORUM Technical Committee Meeting
- Finance and Administration Committee
- Audit Committee
- Principals and Deans Committee

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

3.1 The 16th RUFORUM AGM approved the admission of five New Member universities, which increased the organisation's footprint across Africa: membership increased to 129 universities in 38 African Countries.

3.2 The 17th RUFORUM Technical Committee and 5th TAGDev Steering Committee Meeting was held 02 October, 2020 to provide advice, quality assurance and technical backstopping to the TAGDev implementation team at the RUFORUM Secretariat and the implementing universities. The meeting recommended that;

- i. In future selection of students, academic performance needs to be an embedded selection criteria;
- ii. An index for persons not currently amongst countries accessing the programme benefits be developed to embed rationalization and broader participation in the programme; and,
- iii. Focused attention to strengthen virtual and blended learning and pedagogy in universities be promoted



3.3 The RUFORUM International Advisory Panel (IAP) meeting held 14th October, 2020 recommended that:

- i. Champions be identified to advocate for the Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa (SHAEA) project;
- ii. Vice Chancellors of Member Universities in the SHAEA project focus countries engage with the World Bank Country representatives to advocate for the resumption of the SHAEA project;
- iii. Member Universities continue collaborating with several stakeholders including private sector, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and other non-academic institutions; and,
- iv. RUFORUM Network expansion be managed and considers strategies for ensuring that services to Member Universities are aligned with the different levels/status of Member Universities

3.4 The new Principals and Deans Sub-committee meeting held 19th October, 2020 and presided over by the Chairperson, Dr. Aziz Yasri resolved to:

- i. Follow up with respective countries to sign the RUFORUM Charter;
- ii. Urge respective Member Universities to pay their Annual Membership fees dues;
- iii. Follow-up on the operationalization of the National Forums in their respective countries;
- iv. Compile and submit reports on the implementation of RUFORUM activities at their respective Universities and Countries;
- v. Support placement of the 304 nominated candidates for training under the Graduate Teaching Assistantship programme in respective universities, and to urge their universities to fulfil obligations under the GTA arrangements; and,
- vi. Explore strategies for strengthening online teaching and learning and sharing of resources across the Network.

3.5 The 18th RUFORUM Technical Committee meeting held on 26th October 2020 awarded eight Graduate Research Grants through funding provided by the New





Zealand Government for research on Green Gas emissions. The selected universities included Evangelical University in Africa (DR-Congo); Maseno University (Kenya); Makerere University (Uganda); University of Abomey Calavi (Benin); University of Eldoret (Kenya); and, University of the Free State (South Africa). These were selected from 64 proposals submitted by applicants from Member universities.

3.6 The Audit Committee meeting held 30th October 2020 received, reviewed, and approved the internal audit plan for the financial year 2020/2021; reviewed the audited financial statements and management letters for the year ended 30 June 2020; received and deliberated on the Internal Auditors report and recommended actions to be taken by management; and, received and discussed the evaluation report from the Procurement Committee on the appointment of the External Auditor for RUFORUM for the financial year ending 30th June 2021.

3.7 The Principals and Deans Committee meeting held 2nd November, 2020 attracted 40 Principals and Deans. The Committee;

- i. Reviewed the Minutes and Actions of the 16th Principals and Deans Committee meeting held on 5th December 2019, and adopted them as a true record of the proceeding;
- ii. Received an update on the operationalisation of the RUFORUM Principals and Deans' Sub-committee which was created and officially approved by the RUFORUM Board of Trustees during the 18th Board Meeting held on 5th December 2019 in Cape Coast, Ghana;
- iii. Agreed to strengthen Intra-Africa Academic Mobility; and,
- iv. Agreed to advocate for the signing of the RUFORUM Charter by their respective Member States.

3.8 The 19th RUFORUM Board meeting held 11th November, 2020 attracted 47 Vice Chancellors of RUFORUM Member Universities. The meeting recommended that;

- i. A special session be held with the New Member Universities for a deeper orientation about RUFORUM;





- ii. Member Universities under the leadership of the Vice Chancellors/Rectors/Presidents follow up on the endorsement of the RUFORUM Charter by their respective Member States;
- iii. Member Universities offer more slots for the Graduate Teaching Assistantship Programme (GTA) as part of strengthening staff capacities in the RUFORUM Member Universities;
- iv. Member Universities meet their annual membership subscriptions;
- v. Member Universities reach out to respective Member States to participate in the five continental initiatives depending on the priorities of each Member State;
- vi. RUFORUM Secretariat headquarters be established in an independent location in Uganda not tied to one University. This would allow for ownership by all Universities in and outside Uganda and would attract other Governments to invest in the Secretariat Headquarters;
- vii. Member Universities with the support of the RUFORUM Secretariat collaborate to strengthen online teaching and learning and sharing of resources across the Network. Further, that the Secretariat brokered partnership with other global knowledge centers with expertise in the area of online teaching and learning;
- viii. The Secretariat pursued efforts for stronger link and partnership with the Africa Union Commission;
- ix. The Secretariat continues effort to broaden funding base for RUFORUM activities;
- x. The Secretariat pursues effort to establish a RUFORUM West Africa node;
- xi. The Secretariat reaches out to the Uganda Government to host an Afro-Arab partnership meeting in support of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa;
- xii. The Secretariat reaches out to the Government of Namibia through the Vice Chancellor of University of Namibia to consider offering to host a future meeting of the Committee of Ten African Heads of State Championing





Education, Science, Technology and Innovation development in the Continent;
and,

- xiii. RUFORUM during the 2021 AGM and Triennial Conference recognises Young Innovators, upcoming Young Scientists and outstanding farmers in Benin and senior leaders who have made significant contribution to development in Africa especially in the higher education, agriculture and leadership sectors.

3.9 A capacity building training on online content development was held 16-17 November, 2020 and facilitated by Eight Tech Consultants. The training that attracted 237 participants from 27 countries enabled participants attain new knowledge and skills in pedagogy of eLearning, development of e-content, teaching etiquette and education technology strategies.

3.10 A side event focusing on *Realignment towards online teaching and learning in universities: Learning from each other* was held 18th November, 2020 to provide a platform to discuss the advances and opportunities of integration of digital technologies, especially in terms of teaching and learning. The event attracted 331 participants from 35 countries across the globe and recommended: linking African universities together through knowledge centers for online teaching and learning; capacity building for online teaching and learning including but not limited to human resources, infrastructure, policies and strategies; partnership with global knowledge centres in support of online teaching, learning and sharing of resources.

3.11 A side event focusing on *Strengthening the role of African Researchers in the EU-Africa Research and Innovation partnership on Food & Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)* was held 18th November 2020 to gather opinions on how African research institutions and individuals could effectively participate and benefit from the AU-EU Research and Innovation Partnership platform. The event that attracted 547 participants from 57 countries across the Globe recommended:

- i. Stimulating engaged conversation and collaboration;
- ii. Developing capacity to provide an enabling environment;



- iii. Seed funding and funding from each country;
 - iv. Support towards emerging researchers through mentorship;
 - v. More effective communication mechanisms from policy makers to implementers and researchers; and,
 - vi. Developing modalities of industry engagement
- 3.12 The Morocco Higher Education Day introducing Morocco and Mohammed VI Polytechnic University was held 19th November, 2020. The event attracted 252 participants from 30 countries within and outside Africa and shared experiences on how universities can successfully harness opportunities for agricultural transformation through partnership with the private sector.
- 3.13 A Training and mentoring session for Young Business Start-ups was held 23-25 November, 2020 in collaboration with Mohammed VI Polytechnic University in Morocco. The event attracted 657 participants from 38 countries from within and outside Africa.
- 3.14 A side event focusing on "*Working together for resilient food systems: towards a Europe – Africa platform for research and innovation*" was held 23-24 November, 2020 to explore perspectives of different stakeholders (from farmers to consumers, from policymakers to companies, researchers, social workers and school teachers) within agrifood systems on resilience pathways, the potential role of a sustainable bi-regional (Europe –Africa) research and innovation platform in addressing food systems resilience, and responses to shocks and challenges. The event recommended collaboration in knowledge, research and innovation for food systems transformation at different levels by unlocking the bottlenecks for value chains improvement of nutritious food and the local food production. For this to happen, the meeting underlined the need for aligning visions, channeling of information, mobilizing knowledge, engaging farmers, and engaging all actors



4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Principals and Deans recommended that:

- 4.1.1 Member Universities support the establishment and operationalisation of National Forums.
- 4.1.2 Member Universities consider supporting the introduction of short language accelerated courses that can be extended to students from other language groups before students commence studies.
- 4.1.3 Member Universities reach out to their Governments and Development Partners to mobilise funding to promote use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) in the Network Member Universities.
- 4.1.4 Member Universities reach out to their Governments to endorse the RUFORUM Charter and to increase support for Post graduate training within Africa.

4.2 The 16th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting recommended that;

- 4.2.1 RUFORUM Secretariat reviews the harmonization of quality control processes at Member Universities and establishes mechanisms of institutionalizing these processes at Member Universities.
- 4.2.2 Five new member universities be admitted (Wollo University, Ethiopia; Takoradi Technical University, Ghana; Federal University of Technology, Akure, Nigeria; Nugaal University, Somalia; and, University of Dar-ES-Salaam, Tanzania) bringing the network membership to 129 in 38 African countries.
- 4.2.3 RUFORUM responds to the call for racial equity issued by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.
- 4.2.4 RUFORUM Secretariat develops a regional initiative to build capacity for the Continent in frontline sciences (epidemiology, molecular diagnostics and genomics, virology, pathology, entomology, nematology, vaccine development).
- 4.2.5 A cross-cutting curriculum considering issues of ethics, value-based education, empathy and transformation of the environment be developed in



African Universities to mould individuals to serve the world and make it a better place

RESOLUTIONS

The 16th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting resolved that;

- i. The 2021 Annual General Meeting and Triennial Conference be held in Benin.
- ii. PKF Uganda be appointed as RUFORUM External Auditor for the FY 2020/2021. This would be the final year for PKF to provide auditing services to RUFORUM, until three years have elapsed.
- iii. The Uganda Government is thanked for hosting the RUFORUM Secretariat and for offering to construct the RUFORUM Secretariat headquarters.