

UPDATE ON RUFORUM SECRETARIAT EFFORTS ON RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Briefing Note to the RUFORUM Finance and Administration Committee Meeting of 28th October 2020

Introduction

This Briefing Note provides an update on the resource mobilization activities that the RUFORUM Secretariat has engaged in since between December 2019 and October 2020 (the last meeting of the RUFORUM Finance and Administration Committee). Progress on the implementation of strategies identified and recommended during the launch of RUFORUM Vision 2030 five year operational plan are provided, specifically achievements, challenges and lessons in the process. Areas where we seek further support and guidance from the Finance and Administration Committee are also outlined.

Progress and achievements as at October 2020

1. **Seeking support from Governments of Countries where RUFORUM operates in**
 - a. **Government of the Republic of Uganda.** RUFORUM Secretariat has continued to pursue support from the Government of the Republic of Uganda. The following has been achieved in this endeavour
 - i) **Cabinet Memo to Government**

As we continue to pursue the engagement with the Government of Uganda, the Cabinet Memo which was prepared, finally reached the stage of presentation to Cabinet with all the internal processes completed. The memo was expected to be tabled by the Minister of Education and Sports, who in the meeting of 22nd October 2020 requested that RUFORUM prepares a project for Ugandan universities to transform rural communities around them through the agricultural sector. This project will be included in the Cabinet Memorandum to be presented to Cabinet soon after this project is finalized. The memo outlines key areas of engagement/support from the government of Uganda, these include:

 - Government of Uganda endorses the RUFORUM Charter for the establishment of RUFORUM as an African governments

owned institution. This was cleared by the Solicitor General for signing by the Head of State

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs to ratify the RUFORUM constitution as the legal establishment and governance for the institution
- Government of Uganda provides diplomatic status to RUFORUM as one of the International Organizations based in Uganda.
- Government of Uganda provides an annual budget subvention of at least UGX 1 billion to the RUFORUM Secretariat to facilitate its core functions
- Provide land to RUFORUM for construction of a permanent RUFORUM Secretariat headquarters, which would serve as a continental higher education facilitation hub. Government of Uganda through Makerere University offered five (5) acres of land
- The institutionalisation, integration and the RUFORUM Network Constitution governance structure and the Network, and the RUFORUM Secretariat management structure into the Education and Sports sector;
- Approve tax exemptions on the income of internationally recruited staff tax waivers on all imported goods and services by RUFORUM Secretariat in accordance with the laws of Uganda’.
- Approve Uganda’s participation in the World Bank IDA funded Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa to be coordinated in Uganda.
- Approve Uganda’s participation in a possible IsDB funded Enhancing quality and regional competitiveness of Uganda’s higher education sector

ii) **Other engagements with Government of the Republic of Uganda**

- i. Government of the Republic of the Republic of Uganda through the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) has confirmed participation in the Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa (SHAEA) project funded by the World Bank with RUFORUM Secretariat being Regional Facilitation Unit. The Concept Note was presented to the MAAIF Budget Working Group in March

2020. RUFORUM Secretariat has requested the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development to reaffirm to the World Bank that SHAEA is a relevant project for Uganda because it was initially put on hold at the World Bank due to change in leadership and restructuring

- ii. RUFORUM Secretariat also worked with the Ministry of Education and Sports to develop two projects for submission to Islamic Development Bank (Building Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity (BASTIC) and Enhancing quality and regional competitiveness of Uganda's higher education sector. The State Minister for Finance, Planning and Economic Development (General Duties) submitted a request to Islamic Development Bank to finance BASTIC
- iii. RUFORUM followed up with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) on the proposed projects - Strengthening Agricultural Value Chains for Community Transformation in Africa (SAVACOT) and the Operationalization of African Digital Agriculture Programme (AfriDAP). BADEA advised that SAVACOT be put on hold given their current focus on digital technologies for learning and agriculture. RUFORUM submitted a summary of needs assessment process and a revised proposal as advised by BADEA
- iv. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development through the Minister of State for General Duties, submitted a request to Qatar Foundation to support RUFORUM work to be implemented with other African States. A request for support to Africa through RUFORUM was also submitted to African Ambassadors in Doha through Uganda's Ambassadors in Doha,
- v. Signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. Part of the collaboration is the implementation of the Arab Bank for Economic Development for Africa's funding for a feasibility study on Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture in Uganda which currently on-going
- vi. BRIDGIN Foundation Support. We continue to pursue support from the BRIDGIN Foundation through the Government of Uganda Structures. A Cabinet MEMO was developed and presented by the

Minister of Education and Sports with support from the Minister of State for Finance. We await feedback on this USD 700 million project to support three member universities to set up high tech centres and the construction of the RUFORUM headquarters and Secretariat in Uganda. Information from the Minister of Education and Sports was that the Financing and Governance Agreement (FGA) has been approved and is to be signed by Government and the BRIDGIN Foundation.

b. Engagement with other African governments

- i. To enable legitimization of the RUFORUM Network at national level, RUFORUM Secretariat engaged in mobilizing national governments to endorse the RUFORUM Charter. To date six (6) countries have endorsed the RUFORUM Charter (Eswatini, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe)
- ii. RUFORUM Secretariat has also mobilized countries to participate in the proposed initiative to be funded by African Development Bank - University Engagement to support Human Capital Development, Youth Employability and Entrepreneurship for Agricultural Transformation in Africa (HEEAT). Advance notice to develop proposals has been sent to Burundi, Liberia, Namibia, South Sudan, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe
- iii. RUFORUM Secretariat initiated a mobilization of African governments to reaffirm to the World Bank, the need for the SHAEA project. The request was sent to the African Union Commission and the OCP Group and the governments of Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Malawi, Mozambique, Kenya and Uganda
- iv. RUFORUM Secretariat worked with the Government of the Republic of Sudan to develop a proposal on Enhancing Quality and Regional Competitiveness of Sudan's Higher Education Sector

2. Development partners

- a) Carnegie Corporation New York,**

The proposal to the Carnegie Corporation of New York was approved by the Carnegie Board in March 2020. The grant worth USD 1.5 million for the proposal *Deepening Early Career Engagement to Support Enrollment and Research Capacity for African Universities* will support Post Docs, GTAs and regional staff exchange. The recruitment of beneficiaries has been finalized.

b) Global Research Alliance Graduate Research Grants New Zealand

Under partnership with the Government of New Zealand, USD 650, 000 has been approved to support 7 GRGs in RUFORUM member Universities each worth USD 70,000. Preference is however given to Universities in West Africa which are aligned with the CaSSECS project (Carbon Sequestration and greenhouse gas emissions in (agro) Sylvopastoral Ecosystems in the Sahelian CILSS States; <https://www.ppzs.org/news/cassecs>). The projects have been selected.

c) Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA)

Further to the development partners meeting convened in September 2019 in Kampala, Uganda. Secretariat has continued to engage BADEA for support towards RUFORUM activities. Emerging from this meeting was the commitment from BADEA to finance the SASTIE initiative.

- i) RUFORUM Secretariat supported the Government of the Republic of Uganda to secure a grant of US\$ 270,000 from Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) to conduct a feasibility study for the project - *For Youth Employment, Entrepreneurship and Agro-Innovations Development in Uganda*. This feasibility study is a pilot for the SASTIE regional initiative which is expected to be implemented in several member university countries. In Uganda, the project will be implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Science Technology and Innovations (MOSTI). Preliminary discussion on this partnership for the SASTIE project have been concluded. Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between RUFORUM and MOSTI was done.

A more detailed proposal is being discussed within the provisions of Government of Uganda project support and a concept note has been

submitted by MOSTI to the Development Committee of the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development.

Other countries that have initiated contact under similar arrangement are Zambia and Sierra Leone. For Zambia, the Minister of Education was part of the discussions with Dr. Elfiel Dr Osman Mahgoub Elfeel, Technical Adviser to BADEA Director General in Cape Coast Ghana, and the letter of expression of Interest was sent to BADEA.

- ii) RUFORUM Secretariat paid a visit to the BADEA Director General in Khartoum, Sudan and also had discussions with IsDB on joint initiatives to support RUFORUM, and higher agricultural education in Africa. The delegation led by the Executive Secretary, had an opportunity to interact with the Officials from the Government of Sudan as well.

d) European Commission – Engaging with the partners in Europe (AGRINATURA) and the International Advisory Panel and the African Union Commission to understand the processes and how to access support from them. To date we have been able to secure information on competitively available opportunities which we are studying. We continue to explore various opportunities through contacts within the European Commission

e) OCP Morocco and Mohammed VI Polytechnique

A delegation led by the Executive Secretary visited Morocco in February 2020 to meet the UM6P/OCP team and discuss (i) the arrangements and preparations for the 2020 AGM; (ii) the support to RUFORUM activities; and explore other areas of collaboration. A follow up discussion was held online in September 2020 for which detailed areas of support from OCP were outlined. Proposed areas of collaboration include;

- Strengthening Staff capacities in African universities through the RUFORUM Graduate Teaching Assistantship Programme (GTA), and Doctoral research grants
- Increasing access for University education to disadvantaged students, including girl child

- Strengthening research capacity for technology and innovation generation and for dissemination of promising technologies
- Rural Community based transformation building on the example of OCP work in India and Ethiopia
- Promoting the Next Generation of Technology Leaders through the RUFORUM Young Entrepreneurs Competition
- Implementation of the African Digital Technology Initiative Programme agreed upon in March 2020 in Morocco including development of Micro Masters online courses for delivery as MOOCs
- RUFORUM Secretariat Staffing support

Other proposals which were submitted during the period include

- i). Mobilized member universities to submit eight (8) proposals to Erasmus + Capacity Building in Higher Education funded by the European Commission. One project of Euro 900,000 was selected which was led by Egerton University in partnership with RUFORUM Secretariat, UM6P and Hassan II University in Morocco, University of Abomey Calavi and National University of Agriculture in Benin, and Gulu University and Uganda Martyrs University in Uganda.
- ii). RUFORUM mobilized 23 teams to submit proposals to the 2020 Intra Africa Mobility Call for proposals. The programme aims at funding projects to train Masters and PhD students, facilitate academic and administrative staff exchanges across among African universities, internationalize and modernize higher education in Africa with support of European universities as technical partners. Results of this call have not yet been published.
- iii). Expression of Interest to conduct Agribusiness Skills Survey in Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia submitted to the African Development Bank
- iv). A Concept Note submitted to the Windle Trust Foundation to strengthen science teaching and skills development in secondary schools in sub-Saharan Africa
- v). Concept Note submitted to the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on the importance of Massively Expanding Access and Skills for the Digital Age: the potential for RUFORUM to play a transformative role
- vi). Discussion and Concept Note submitted to the OPEC Fund for International Development to support Strengthening Africa's Science, Technology,

- Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capacity for Agricultural and Economic Development (SASTIE) with potential collaboration with BADEA
- vii). Building a Firm Foundation for a Soils Initiative in Africa submitted to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in partnership with Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the Sub-Regional Research Organisations, African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services, Kansas State University and Colorado State University
 - viii). Translating Africa's Agricultural opportunities into meaningful gains for rural transformation and regional development (TAAM) submitted to Al Maktoum Foundation. Online and physical meetings were held with the Al Maktoum Foundation staff in Uganda and Mozambique
 - ix). Labeled Datasets for Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa submitted to Lacuna Fund in Partnership with University of Maryland USA and the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Austria
 - x). Strengthening Nuclear Science Application for Agricultural Development in Africa submitted to International Atomic Energy Agency

3. Membership universities subscription and co-funding of RUFORUM activities by

Though a significant number of universities have not cleared their outstanding balances, a number is also consistently clearing their dues while others are paying in advance. Many have appreciated the value of the network and therefore investing in it through co-funding. The main co-funding is in the form of i) the Graduate Teaching Assistantship; ii) the RUFORUM Annual General Meeting and iii) Erasmus proposal development Write-shop.

Emerging issues and lessons

- i. Based on the interaction with government officials, the starting point is the need for legitimization of RUFORUM by governments, which the Charter provides. It is thus important to follow-up with endorsement of the RUFORUM Charter by all member countries. There is need to build a critical mass of Member University States that have signed the Charter beyond the current six (6) countries which have endorsed the Charter.
- ii. Given the current global financial status, partly as a result of COVID 19- Governments are likely to be the most reliable source of financing to higher education, agriculture and the related RUFORUM activities. It is important to cultivate a relationship with the different governments for effective

breakthrough. As global funding moves towards bilateral and multilateral agency support, Governments will be the Guarantors of funding support to both governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies such as RUFORUM.

4. **Requests for support from the Board Finance and Administration Committee**

The RUFORUM Secretariat requests for the following from the Board of Trustees;

- I. Support the RUFORUM Secretariat to mobilise member countries to endorsement the RUFORUM Charter
- II. Introduce RUFORUM to various development partners whom they are familiar with to provide funding for RUFORUM's work
- III. Continue to be ambassadors of RUFORUM at their respective countries to publicize RUFORUM's role in their countries