

RUFORUM 18th Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Dates: 12th -16th December 2022

Venue: Harare International Conference Centre, Zimbabwe

Hosted by: The Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe and RUFORUM member Universities in Zimbabwe

Concept Note

Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a member-based consortium of 147 Universities in 38 countries in Africa. Established in 2004 by Vice Chancellors of the then ten member Universities in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Zimbabwe. RUFORUM's purpose is to transform the mode of leadership, teaching, training, research and outreach in African Universities Faculties/Colleges of Agriculture and related sciences. RUFORUM's vision is "a vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities which can produce high-performing graduates and high-quality research responsive to the demands of Africa's farmers for innovations and able to generate sustainable livelihoods and national economic development". The Network has several unique features for building Africa's innovation capacity and for engaging universities in development process and practice; i) It derives its agenda largely from the continent wide policy frameworks especially of the African Union Agenda 2063 and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP), The African Union Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA) 2024, the National Strategy Papers of the member States and Governments and constant review of global trends and foresight planning to build the required capacity for global competitiveness; ii) It is owned and managed by Africans; and iii) it allows for joint action by the member universities and stakeholders in higher education and agricultural sectors.

To achieve impact, RUFORUM has embarked on four main activities through its Secretariat. These include 1) Enabling the institutionalization of improved training and research in member universities; 2) Building University capacity to work with research, business and development partners to transform ideas into innovations; 3) Serving as a key actor in platforms for national and continental integration of Research for Development (R4D) and as a backbone for University interaction; and 4)

CO-ORGANISERS:



Serving as an envoy of higher education and a voice for wider attention to agriculture through convening, publications and evidence-based policy papers. These actions have and continue to transform the performance of Universities in the areas of; i) enabling policies, practices and management; ii) new approaches in pedagogy and academic management; iii) production of skilled and pro-active graduates; and iv) relevant and user oriented research. These are geared at transformative changes leading to High Performing African universities that produce skilled, proactive graduates, demand driven research outputs and innovation in response to national, regional and continental development priorities and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Joint action by the Network is achieved through a number of Secretariat coordinated programs and guided by several engagements including, among others, convening events such as the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which is organised and hosted on a rotational arrangement amongst member universities /countries. The AGM is the supreme decision making organ of the RUFORUM Network; it oversees Network interventions and performs functions as deemed relevant for the achievement of RUFORUM objectives. Since 2005 when the first RUFORUM AGM was held, the AGM has evolved into a valuable convening event that provides a platform for RUFORUM members and Governance Organs (the Board and its committees- the International Advisory Panel; the Technical Committee and the Committee of Principals and Deans). Recognizing that the adoption and institutionalization of a number of RUFORUM initiatives vary across African Universities due to variation in capacities, RUFORUM offers a platform for African universities to share and learn from each other for capacity development for the continent. Thus, the AGM provides a forum for lesson sharing within the higher education and agricultural development space. Within this framework, the AGM has served as a springboard for leveraging resources and has fostered many mutually beneficial partnerships between and among universities in and outside the Network. The 2022 AGM will provide to all RUFORUM governing bodies a special opportunity for a reflection on the implementation of the RUFORUM Vision 2030. The 18th AGM will be hosted by the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe and will be held from 12th -16th December 2022 in Harare, Zimbabwe. It will include a number pre-AGM events.

Rationale and Objectives of the 18th RUFORUM AGM

The Annual General Meeting oversees RUFORUM’s program and management and performs such functions and tasks that it deems necessary to carry out its mandate, and accomplish its mission. RUFORUM’s Vision and Mission recognize the largely unfulfilled role that Universities play in contributing to the well-being of small-scale farmers and economic development of countries in Africa. This contribution is made

CO-ORGANISERS:



through building leadership and management capacity of university academic and administrative staff, quality training of graduates entering the rural development and research for development workforce and the production and dissemination of demand-driven, development-oriented research that is defined and applied through participatory processes linking researchers, farmers, policy-makers, and business. One of the key avenues for reaching policymakers is through generating and disseminating policy documents but this should be supplemented with face-to-face meetings especially since policy-makers may not find time to read and internalize the messages being conveyed in the published policy briefs. In this regard, efforts must be made by universities to better understand the needs of policy makers and policy making processes for engagement. The rapid expansion in the number of universities and student enrolments coupled with several developments that are rapidly manifesting at regional and national levels provides further justification for the need to engage with policy makers at the highest level. Clearly, a Network such as RUFORUM and its AGM is well placed to provide a forum to deliberate on pathways for addressing existing and emerging challenges. This 18th AGM has a particular focus on engaging governments and development partners to support Higher Education in Africa. The theme for this 18th AGM is ***“Strengthening Africa’s Agri-food Systems in the Post COVID-19 Era – Opportunities and Challenges”*** As such the 18th RUFORUM AGM is convened with the following objectives:

- a) Provide a forum for the RUFORUM Governance organs to reflect on progress made on the implementation of various programs and initiatives of the RUFORUM network;
- b) Provide a platform for RUFORUM Secretariat to sensitize the Network members about the 2nd RUFORUM Operational Plan for the RUFORUM Vision 2030 Strategy (The African Universities’ Agenda for Agricultural Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation - AHESI) which consolidates and builds upon the achievements of the first Operational Plan (2018-2022), which sought to attract and nurture (through the transformative process of learning and knowledge accumulation) superior postgraduate talent into agriculture in Africa to achieve significant economies of scope and scale in rigorous and relevant training;
- c) Profile and inform the Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe and other Development Partners and other stakeholders about RUFORUM engagements at regional and national levels, including, among others, RUFORUM support for Higher Education in Africa;
- d) Provide opportunity for scientists, researchers and students to share their scientific findings and experiences

CO-ORGANISERS:



- e) Provide a platform for RUFORUM members to establish partnerships and/or teams to respond to various opportunities; and
- f) Engage governments to support Higher Education in Africa and reflect on progress made in the operationalization of the five (5) continental initiatives in various countries

Approach and Methodology

Two days prior to the 18th AGM, respective RUFORUM Governance Organs will convene and carry out business meetings based on their respective mandate. During the AGM sessions, power point presentations and facilitated discussions will be carried out in a blended manner. Additionally, a visit to the University of Zimbabwe and Department of Research and Specialist Services (DR&SS) will be included as part of learning and exploration opportunities for joint activities for the network.

Participation, Venue, Date and Agenda of the 18th RUFORUM AGM

The AGM will consist of pre-AGM meetings as a means of ensuring adequate preparation of input to the AGM. As such, a series of events/ meetings will be organized prior to the AGM to be held on 16th December 2022 (See Overall AGM and pre-AGM meetings at a glance). The pre-AGM meetings will include meetings of all RUFORUM governance organs as well as other side events that contribute the achievement of RUFORUM mission and goal. There will also be an official address by Senior Government Officials, Guest Lectures, recognition awards for outstanding achievers, including three role model farmers from Zimbabwe, 20 Young Innovators from Southern Africa, as well as three young scientists from Zimbabwe. RUFORUM member universities in Zimbabwe and other partners will hold an exhibition to profile their institutions and activities.

The five-day event will bring together policy makers including Ministers and Technical Experts, Higher Education Leaders in Africa, development partners, private sector leaders, researchers, innovators, students, and farmer organisations, among others. Approximately 600 participants are expected to attend the RUFORUM 18th AGM. The venue for the 18th AGM will be Harare International Conference Centre in Harare, Zimbabwe.

Key Outputs of the AGM

1. A profile of RUFORUM engagements at regional and national levels
2. Draft 2nd RUFORUM Operational Plan for the RUFORUM Vision 2030 Strategy
3. Audited Financial Statements for 2021/22 FY

CO-ORGANISERS:



4. Approved Reports for the Activity Year July 2021 – June 2022 and approved Annual Work plan and Budget for the Activity Year July 2022 – June 2023
5. Admission of new member universities
6. Appointment of the financial reviewer for the next fiscal year

CO-ORGANISERS:



**Convenor and
Contact Persons
for the
RUFORUM 18th
AGM**

The Principal hosts of the 18th AGM will be the University of Zimbabwe, Africa University, Bindura University of Science Education, Chinhoyi University of Technology, Great Zimbabwe University, Lupane State University, Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, and Midlands State University in collaboration with the Zimbabwean Government. The Focal Point and Contact Persons for the implementation of AGM activities will be **Prof Charles Mutisi** (mutisi@agric.uz.ac.zw) who will be assisted by **Dr Xavier Poshiwa** (xposhiwa@gmail.com); **Prof Chrispen Murungweni** (chrispen.murungweni@gmail.com); **Dr Mcebisi Maphosa** (mmaphosa@lsu.ac.zw) and **Dr Walter Manyangarirwa** (manyangarirwaw@africau.edu). The RUFORUM Secretariat, which can be contacted at secretariat@ruforum.org with a copy to agm@ruforum.org will be the convener of the 18th AGM and the associated events.

For further details about the RUFORUM 18th Annual Genral Meeting, visit www.ruforum.org

CO-ORGANISERS:

