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A Daily Brief on the 18th RUFORUM AGM Week #RUFORUMAGM2022

We Must Make a Deliberate Move Towards Innovation and Industrialization for Africa



Zimbabwe's Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Prof. dr Amon Murwira during an Interview with RUFORUM Secretariat before Officiating the Science Conference.

The 18th session of the RUFORUM Annual General Meeting begun in earnest on Monday 12 December 2022 at the University of Zimbabwe, Harare, with the opening ceremony of the Scientific Conference.

Held under the theme, “Strengthening Africa’s Agri-food Systems in the Post COVID-19 Era – Opportuni-

ties and Challenges,” 42 African countries are represented at the gathering, with 161 universities and 887 foreign delegates. Government Ministers from South Sudan also graced the occasion.

Several speakers were lined up for the event, in-

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cluding the Vice Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe, Professor Paul Mapfumo, RUFORUM Board Chair and Vice Chancellor of the University of Bamenda, Cameroon, Professor Theresia Nkuo-Akenji, President of the African Crop Science Society, Prof. Luisa Santos. Incoming Executive Secretary of RUFORUM, Dr Patrick Okori was scheduled for the keynote address, with Professor Brice Sinsin, former Rector of the University of Calavi, Benin being the respondent.

Zimbabwe's Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Prof. dr Amon Murwira also gave an address at the gathering.

In his welcome remarks, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Zimbabwe, Professor Paul Mapfumo paid tribute to His Excellency the President of Zimbabwe, Cde Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa and the Government of Zimbabwe for the policy support for higher education.

Professor Mapfumo said the convening of the gathering was testament of the passion and conviction of researchers in Africa in tackling the issue of food insecurity. He added that African economies were largely agro-based, and that translated to the need for functional systems to support food security in Africa.

In his remarks, Professor Mapfumo highlighted that the entire globe had gone through a trying period because of the COVID 19 pandemic, witnessing restricted travel and other measures to curb the disease. The era, he said, had seen an implosion in the growth of ICTs the attendant demand for new competencies in ICT.

The Zimbabwean higher education system, he said, was fully implementing the Education 5.0 doctrine, focused on the production of goods and services and the deliberate move towards innovation and industrialization.

RUFORUM Board Chair, Professor Theresia Nkuo-Akenji paid tribute to the Government of Zimbabwe for accepting to host the AGM and to RUFORUM member universities for their participation.

She added that science and knowledge production were at the heart of development with the singular purpose of moving people out of poverty. She highlighted that young people were at the centre of this research and knowledge production, and that scientists had the responsibility to ensure that research output is used to drive science and technology development. Professor Nkuo-Akenji said that meaningful research output had regressed and



During the Science Conference, official poster and exhibition tour took place at the University of Zimbabwe

there was need to change the narrative of science and technology research; positioning it to drive economic development in African nations. She added that the AGM provided an opportunity for inter disciplinary discourse and an interface between researchers and policy makers, with the latter having the capability to provide avenues for investment in research so that it makes an impact. She said that AGM should see the convergence and power of African science to drive economic development for the continent.

President of the African Crop Science Society, Professor Luisa Santos added that agriculture was a complex endeavor, with many factors affecting agricultural output such as resources, policies, the business environment, innovation and climate change. Platforms such as RUFORUM provided opportunities for collaborative learning on how best to tackle these issues for enhanced productivity.

Story by: Sharai Muonwa, Great Zimbabwe University, Contact: smuonwa@gzu.ac.zw and 0772587828

Making Agriculture Work for Africa to Respond to Current and Future Developmental Challenges



Patrick Okori, Incoming RUFORUM Executive Secretary delivering his Keynote address yesterday at the Conference

Incoming Executive Secretary of RUFORUM, Patrick Okori in his keynote address, “Making Agriculture work for Africa to respond to current and future developmental challenges: Lessons learnt after a decade of implementation of the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme, (CAADP), spoke of the need for a transformed agricultural system, capable of delivering on the needs of the continent.

He cited that at present, there was 22% food insecurity in Africa as at 2019, and strategies to close that gap included investment in good crop agronomy and growing crops, which were adaptive and best suited to the African climate. He gave examples of African nations that were growing adaptive crops such as bananas in Uganda and cassava in Angola and how those countries were exporting such crops and raising their foreign currency earnings.

The continent, he added was also adversely affected by climate change.

To meet the changing demands of Africa’s agricultural needs, a completely different human resource base in agriculture was to be developed and deployed, supported by a vibrant education system able to meet the demands of the continent in agricultural training and extension work. Transformation of systems was also required

In his response, Professor Brice Sinsin addressed the issue of the required actions for agricultural sustainability in Africa. He spoke on the need for capacity development in agricultural training, as well as synergies between development partners and centres of knowledge creation. He added that there was need for demand driven and homegrown solutions based

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on science and technology development. Professor Sinsin concurred with Okori, that there was need to intensify investment in training in human capital for agricultural research.

Professor Sinsin explained that soil fertility depletion was ultimately linked to lower employment levels and increased poverty given the fact that most African nations were agro-based. Investment was needed through the green revolution, crop seed improvement, introducing drought tolerant and pest resistant. He added that the traditional subsistence agriculture was not sufficient to meet the demands of Africa's food requirements and called for African governments to intervene and promote commercial agriculture through opening lines of credit for farmers. Investment in research and capacity building was also required, and that policies should be put in place to curb soil depletion.

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Epistemic Freedom Key to Africa's Transformation



Zimbabwe's Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Prof. dr Amon Murwira Officiating the Science Conference at University of Zimbabwe

The African university must embrace epistemic freedom if it is to remain true to its mission of responding to the needs and aspirations of its people, and being a strategic agent of industrialization and the restoration of African dignity and well-being.

Speaking at the Opening Ceremony of the Scientific Conference at the RUFORUM 18th Annual General Meeting on Monday 12 December, Zimbabwe's Minister of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Profes-

or dr. Amon Murwira said the ultimate aim of higher education is to cause innovation and industrialization, by putting knowledge into practice, and transforming lives.

Africa he said, had been subject to centuries of violence in all facets of its existence, where even names of fruits, crops, and food had been distorted by colonial masters, denigrating their use value to the African peoples. Names such as çow peas, and

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Delegates attending the opening of the Scientific Conference at the University of Zimbabwe

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monkey apples carried derogatory connotations and did not depict the value of these foods to Africa. Redeeming Africa's naming of its foods, systems, and practices would be the first steps towards freedom, he said.

The Honorable Minister spoke of the utility and transformation of higher education in Zimbabwe under the visionary leadership of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe and Chancellor of all State Universities, Cde Dr. E.D. Mnangagwa. He explained the trajectory that Zimbabwean universities had taken in implementing the heritage-based Education 5.0 doctrine, a fundamental shift from Education 3.0; a colonial design, which had limited the mandate of university education to teaching, research, and community service.

Under Education 5.0, this threefold mandate was transformed to add the elements of innovation and industrialization, game changers in making universities strategic pillars in the national transformation to middle-income economy status by 2030, through their production of goods and services. The Honourable Minister cited examples of the implementation of Education 5.0 such as the construction of innovation hubs across Zimbabwe's state universities such as the University of Zimbabwe, Harare Institute of Technology, National University of Science and Technology, and the Midlands State University, among others. Universities had also taken a lead role in industrialization such as the Chinhoyi University of Technology Artificial Insemination Project, the Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology Agro-Innovation Park, and the Great Zimbabwe University Poultry Road Runner Project. Veritable national pro-

jects included the Zimbabwe Science Park and the Zimbabwe National Geo-Spatial Agency, (ZINGSA).

These projects he said, had been funded by own resources.

Further, the Education 5.0 doctrine stipulates student experiential learning, as well as igniting their creativity and innovation.

The Honourable Minister added that through collective belief and confidence, Zimbabwe had exhibited its scientific and technological capability in launching its first satellite into space, Zim Sat-1, in collaboration with partners.

The Honourable Minister underscored the fundamental importance of human dignity, saying it was only when a people could meet their most basic and fundamental human needs, such as access to food, water, and shelter, that they could develop to their fullest potential and lead productive lives.

He called for the decolonization of African scholarship and research, saying it was time African academics questioned the global rating matrices in research excellence, analyzing their relevance to the African context. Research, he said should impact the lives of African citizens and cause industrialization through innovation.

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What's happening on Social Media?



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 Theme :Strengthening Africa's Agri-Food system in the post COVID -19 Era , opportunities and challenges .Join the conversation
#RUFORUMAGM2022
 The young people are ready to be part of the change makers transforming Agri food system @ruforumsec @McfChs @MastercardFdn



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Luanar @Luanarofficial · 20h ...
 LUANAR is attending this year's RUFORUM annual general meeting in Zimbabwe under the theme Strengthening Africa's Agri-food systems in the post-COVID-19 Era-opportunities and challenges. The conference is underway in Harare Zimbabwe.
#RUFORUMAGM2022 #LUANAR



10 replies, 15 likes

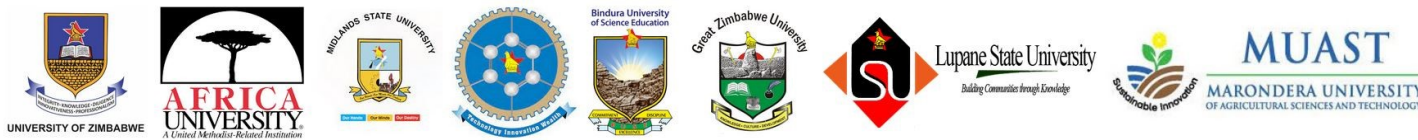


Dorcus Alowo @AlowoDorcus · 21h ...
 Photo with Gulu University Vice Chancellor at the Ruforum Annual General Meeting in Zimbabwe
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