



Operationalising Higher Education for Innovation, Industrialisation, Inclusion and Sustainable Economic Development in Africa: A Call for Action

Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Agriculture, Education & Training, Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa convened during the

The Seventh African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Triennial Conference

Minister's of Agriculture, Education, Science Technology and Innovations
Round Table Dialogue

Date: Tuesday 7th December, 2021

Time: 14:30-17:30

Venue: TBC

Focus: Review of Progress in Implementation of Ministerial Decisions and Initiatives as agreed in Cape Coast, Ghana in December 2019

Contact: Professor Adipala Ekwamu, Executive Secretary, RUFORUM
Email: e.adipala@ruforum.org

Background

In 2018, Universities in Africa under the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Africa (RUFORUM) network, adopted the African Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy (AHESTI)/ [Vision 2030](#) as a guiding framework for strengthening universities' contribution to Africa's development. This was premised on the realisation that universities and their constituents have a significant role towards sustainable development to meet the Agenda 2063 and the SDG targets. Knowledge brokerage, science, technology and innovations will drive these Agenda if Africa is to realise any tangible benefits.

CO-ORGANISERS:





RUFORUM was established by Vice Chancellors to meet three basic objectives:

1. Provide a platform for **networking, resource mobilization and advocacy** to transform universities for relevance towards inclusive sustainable development
2. **Rationalize resource** use and enhance economies of scale and scope
3. Provide a **platform for training quality graduates** to support development processes in Africa

In fulfilment of these objectives and in line with the governance structures that were instituted, RUFORUM has organised convenings that bring together diverse stakeholders to deliberate, the contribution of universities to the development agenda, university-policy engagement has brought evidence-based decision making at the forefront; and the exploration of university-public, private and informal sectors linkages as the future of transition to the world of work for graduates.

Against this background, the [2016 Cape Town Annual General Meeting and Biennial Conference](#) hosted a Ministerial Round table that recommended a more structured approach to the initiatives that support higher education. The [2018 Ministerial meeting](#) held during the Sixth Africa Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference in Nairobi challenged African Universities to develop regional investment programmes for enhancing human capital development. Five continental initiatives notably, (i) the Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education in Africa (SHAEA); (ii) Building Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity (BASTIC); (iii) Strengthening Africa's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capacity (SASTIE); (iv) Regional Initiative to Strengthen Staff Capacity and Increase the Pool of Women Scientists in Africa (RISSCAW); and (v) the African Digital Agricultural Platform (AfriDAP) were endorsed by the 2019 [Ministerial Round table during the 15th Annual General Meeting](#) in Cape Coast Ghana that was organised under the Delivering on Africa's Universities Agenda for Higher Agricultural Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (AHESTI): "What will it take?" theme.

While there has been some progress since the December 2019 Cape Coast Ghana AGM, there have also been challenges notably the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to review these initiatives and establish pathways for operationalisation if the intended outcomes towards Africa's economic development are to be realised.

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Objectives of the Ministerial Round-Table Meeting

The Ministers round table is one of the meetings to be held during the 2021 African Higher Education Week and Triennial Conference to be hosted by the Government of Benin, 7th December 2021. The overall objective on the round table is to review progress and map out a pathway for the operationalisation of the Cape Coast and other continental initiatives for universities to contribute to the regional and global agendas. The proposed ministerial meeting will receive input from the Technical Expert meeting scheduled for 6th December 2021. Specifically, the Ministerial Round Table will be held to:

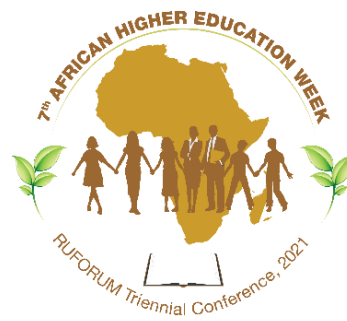
1. Receive a proposed Action Plan for operationalisation of the five continental initiatives agreed in Cape Coast Ghana
2. Identify and or confirm action points for the development of agriculture, science, technology and innovation in Africa;
3. Review priorities and constraints to the adoption and adaptation of the recommendations made by the [Lilongwe Declaration](#) of the United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) Heads of State University-policy dialogue for strengthening resilience; and,
4. Agree on a communique basing on the deliberations of the Technical Experts Meeting of 6th December 2021.

Approach

1. A representative of the technical experts will make a presentation on the status of the implementation and the Action Plan for the operationalisation of the agreed initiatives. The Action Plan will draw from evidence on the country specific needs, gaps and required strategic actions for effectively harnessing STI regional cooperation for economic development through the five initiatives. While noting that operationalisation will require partnerships with a multi stakeholder focus at national and continental level.
2. Development Partners will make statements on existing opportunities for operationalisation of the initiatives.
3. Ministers present will be expected to make statements on the operationalisation of the Action Plan.

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4. The Ministers round table will draw participants from Ministries of Agriculture, Higher Education, Science and Technology in dialogue with Development Partners for the realisation of the efforts to build Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation capacity.
5. The final output will be an endorsement of the proposed Action Plan.

Meeting Venue

The meeting will be held on **Tuesday, 7th December, 2021**, from 1430 to 1730 at **XXXXX**. The Session Chair will be the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Government of Benin.

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