

The Seventh African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Triennial Conference 2021

Promoting Intra-Africa Collaboration in the field of Higher Education in Africa

Date: 5th December 2021

Time: 8:30-13:00 (GMT+1)

Venue: UAC-CPUAQ

Video conference (link: <https://bit.ly/3qrOvoN>)

Concept note

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Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a Network of 129 African universities in 38 African Countries. RUFORUM has eight (8) main Governance Organs designed to promote ownership of the organization by the member universities while at the same time ensuring good international practices and quality. Each of these organs has distinct responsibilities that feed into each other. The Principals and Deans Committee is one of RUFORUM's Governance Organs whose roles are to: 1) Review issues from the National Forums and Regional Thematic Groups and provide feedback to the Secretariat and Technical Committee; and 2) Provide advice to the RUFORUM Secretariat on activity progress and issues emerging at individual university and country levels. The Committee consists of all RUFORUM Principals and Deans in participating colleges, faculties and schools and, meets at least once every year.

RUFORUM has since inception developed 3 Business/Strategic Plans. The third and current Vision 2030: African Universities' Agenda for Agricultural Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (AHESI) is the period where RUFORUM is seen as the voice for Higher Education in Agriculture, and indeed Science, Technology and Innovation. RUFORUM is emerging as a regional knowledge hub for Higher Education in Agriculture. AHESI envisions *vibrant, transformative universities to catalyse sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa*. Since its drafting and the formulation of the operational plan, in 2018, new issues have emerged. For example, the number of universities have grown from 85 in 36 countries in Africa to 129 in 38 African Countries coupled with the significant effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education and the movement under the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit agenda. All these require a concerted thought

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CO-ORGANISERS:



process that draws participation and lessons from a diverse group of stakeholders including those in higher education sector. The proposed Principals and Deans side event will review the current RUFORUM Theory of Change and provide input into the ongoing process of envisioning the future of RUFORUM.

The Emergence of Covid-19 pandemic has reinforced the need for e-learning in order to cope with the situation that has seen many institutions close their campuses for face-to-face teaching and learning. Most of the Higher Educational Institutions in Africa which have relied on the traditional face-to-face mode of delivery, have been significantly affected by COVID-19 and other emerging and re-emerging challenges. E-learning is considered as an important component of enhancing teaching and learning processes by Higher Educational Institutions in Africa. In the context of teaching and learning, e-learning encompasses the use of digital technologies to enhance communication in the process of teaching and learning.

Advancements in digital technologies has made it possible for education to be effectively offered through e-learning process. Technological revolution of education has therefore become more important now than ever before and many institutions are integrating e-learning in their operations. However, unlike other continents, Africa has lagged behind in the implementation of e-learning due to a number of reasons including financial challenges, inadequate technical skills, and unsupportive infrastructure. RUFORUM is working with a number of partners to implement Africa Digital Agriculture Program (AfriDAP) initiative, which among other things seeks to promote digital learning and sharing technologies, aimed at supporting effective teaching, learning and experience sharing ubiquitously especially within the agricultural scope. With seed funding from Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), RUFORUM is currently working to promote e-learning in selected member universities in Uganda and Malawi. This effort needs to be supported and spread across the continent. The proposed Principals and Deans side event will consider efforts and progress made across member universities with respect to integrating digital technologies in their insitutions operations.

Further, in the recent past Problem-Based Learning (PBL) has been widely adopted in diverse fields and educational contexts to promote critical thinking and problem solving. The concept of PBL is centered around the fact that learning should be considered as a constructive, self directed, collaborative and contextual activity. RUFORUM in partnership with Häme University of Applied Sciences in Finland is implementing PBL-BioAfrica Project which integrates PBL methods into bio-entrepreneurship education to equip graduates with practical and entrepreneurial skills needed in working life. As part of the Triennial pre-conference events, a training Webinar on *PBL: Getting the Engine Running in Universities* was organised on 11th October 2021 during which different aspects of required actions for full integration of PBL as a pedagogical approach were introduced. As a follow-up to the Webinar, the proposd Principals and Deans side event and 19th Principals and Deans Committee Business Meeting will deliberate the actions needed for operationalising PBL in higher education institutions.

Approach

This will be a blended half-day convening which will bring together Principals and Deans in the RUFORUM Network and other university professors and researchers. It will be organised in four (4) sessions: **Session I: Setting the scene** that will include opening remarks and a Key Note Address on PBL; **Session II: Promoting**

eLearning in Africa will highlight efforts being championed by RUFORUM to promote eLearning across its Network and sharing experiences from the pilot initiatives in Benin, Malawi & Uganda; **Session III** will review the current RUFORUM Theory of Change & envision the future of RUFORUM; and **Session IV** will be the 19th RUFORUM Principals and Deans Committee Meeting.

Draft Programme:

Time	Agenda item	Responsible Party
Session I: Setting the scene		
Session Chair: Prof Bonaventure Ahohuendo, Dean, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin & Chair, RUFORUM Principals and Deans Committee		
Rapporteur: Mr. David Ekepu, RUFORUM Secretariat		
8:30 – 8:40	Welcome remarks	Chair, RUFORUM Principals and Deans Committee
8:40 – 8:50	Remarks and Setting the Scene	Dr. Alice Mutiti Mweetwa, Deputy Executive Secretary, Programme Development & Implementation, RUFORUM Secretariat
8:50 – 9:05	Key Note Address: Operationalising Problem-Based Learning in Agricultural Education and Training	Prof Kavwanga Yambayamba, Dean, School of Agriculture & Natural Resources, Mulungushi University, Zambia
Session 2: Promoting e-Learning in African Universities		
Session Chair: Dr. Tinna Austen Manani Ngongola, Dean, Faculty of Food and Human Sciences, Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Malawi		
Rapporteur: Dr. Drake Mirembe, Makerere University, Uganda		
9:05-9:15	Overview of the AfriDAP initiative	Dr. Francis Otto, Manager-Knowledge HUB, RUFORUM Secretariat

9:15-9:45	Implementation of eLearning Opportunities & Challenges a) Benin b) Malawi c) Uganda	Prof Ezin Eugene, Head of eLearning, University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin Dr. Precious Gawanani, Head of ODeL, LUANAR Prof Jude Lubega, Ag Vice Chancellor, Nkumba
9:45-10:15	Open discussion	ALL
10:15 -10:45	Health Break	
Session III: Envisioning for the Future of RUFORUM Session Chair: Dr. Elijah Nyakudya, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Zimbabwe Rapporteur: Mr. Emmanuel Okalany, RUFORUM Secretariat		
10:45 – 11:00	Presentation of the RUFORUM Theory of Change	Dr. Florence Nakayiwa Mayega, Deputy Executive Secretary, Planning, Resource Mobilisation and Management, RUFORUM Secretariat
11:00-11:30	Reactions and clarifications on RUFORUM TOC	ALL
11:30-11:50	Open discussion on the future of RUFORUM	ALL
Session IV: 19th RUFORUM Principals and Deans Committee Business Meeting Session Chair: Prof Bonaventure Ahohuendo, Dean, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, University of Abomey-Calavi, Benin & Chair, RUFORUM Principals and Deans Committee Rapporteurs: 1) Prof. Moses Nyangito, Dean, College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences, University of Nairobi 2) Dr. Simon Angombe, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture and Natural Resources University of Namibia, Namibia		
11:50-13:30	Agenda 1. Prayers	Chair, Principals and Deans Committee

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Communication from the Chair 3. Review minutes from the 22nd November 2021 Principals and Deans Committee Meeting 4. Receive updates from the RUFORUM Secretariat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charter • National Forums • GTA • Resource Mobilisation & Accountability for Grants 5. Focus areas and activities for 2022 6. AOB 	<p>Dr. Runyararo Rukarwa, Manager, Research & Innovation, RUFORUM Secretariat</p>
13:30:14:30	LUNCH	
14:30-18:00	TOURS	Benin Local Organising Committee