



Theme: Operationalising Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialisation and Economic Development in Africa: A Call for Action

Venue: Mercure Hotel, Windhoek, Namibia

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS FOR RUFORUM'S SECOND TRIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Thematic area 1: Educating Africa: Implementing Transformative Higher Agricultural Education to meet Africa's Human Capital Needs

Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), a network of 170 Universities in 40 African Countries, will hold its second Triennial Conference and the 20th Annual General Meeting (AGM) from 12th – 16th August 2024 at **Mercure Hotel, Windhoek, Namibia**. The theme for the second Triennial Conference is **“Operationalising Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialisation and Economic Development in Africa: A Call for Action”**. It is a response to the urgent call to action by African governments, development partners, private sector and citizenry to this crucial sector to generate inclusive and sustainable solutions for the continent’s urgent development needs.

The conference will enable education, research and agricultural ecosystem actors to showcase and present their key findings, lesson-share and inform each other on key actions required to harness science, technology and innovation for Africa’s development. Accordingly, the second Triennial Conference will involve scientific sessions that bring together a wide range of stakeholders and partners. The scientific sessions, which cover four thematic areas, will include oral and poster presentations as well as exhibitions. Various meeting types involving bilateral and multilateral partners will also be conducted to establish coalitions for leveraging Africa's and the global science community's capacity and science solutions for development.

The four thematic areas are as follows:

Thematic area 1: Educating Africa: Implementing Transformative Higher Agricultural Education to meet Africa’s Human Capital Needs

Thematic Area 2: Sustainably Growing the Economy and Feeding Africa

Thematic Area 3: Unlocking Inclusive and Broad-Based Economic Opportunity

Thematic Area 4: Economic Trends, Best -Practices, Policy-Practice and Futures

Thematic area 1: Educating Africa: Implementing Transformative Higher Agricultural Education to meet Africa’s Human Capital Needs

The Africa Union in February 2024 launched the second ten-year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 titled, **“The Decade of Acceleration (2024-2033)”**¹. The Implementation Plan is a bold

¹ <https://au.int/en/newsevents/20240217/agenda-2063-launch-2nd-decade-acceleration>



endeavour by Africa to shape and fulfil its destiny. The Plan recognizes a number of critical development challenges that the continent must earnestly address during this decade such as: (a) Social and economic inequalities; (b) Failure to harness the demographic dividend; (c) Climate risks and natural disasters as well as (d) Economic externalities caused by among others global market forces that affect the economic growth trajectory of the continent. The plan also recognizes the social and economic diversity of the continent, that if unattended to will impede development. Africa's capacity to develop its human capital to implement its own development agenda is crucial to stem the impacts of these threats by providing the relevant human resources and development solutions. Disruptive technology such as artificial intelligence (AI), coupled with improvement in broad band coverage across Africa and the need to harness digital innovations to shrink value chains segments is becoming more widely recognized worldwide. The increasing Artificial Intelligence's adoption globally is predicted to alter how we manage our economies, leading to a 40% loss of jobs according to the the International Monetary Fund². The African Development Bank estimates that Africa produces annually, between 12 million new job entrants³, but can only provide jobs to one third of the new job candidates. Moreover, the African Union Commission (AUC) is urging African Universities to produce 100,000 PhD graduates over the next 10 years, of whom 20% should be in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics, (STEM), to support the continent's development agenda⁴. Additionally, the AUC aspires to see a 60% increase in TVET education to rebalance the human capital pyramid, while creating jobs and complementing Africa's job and wealth creation capacity. Overall, there is high demand on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of Africa and their partners, to rethink how they train and skill the human capital. While the potential exists, new economic realities demand for transformative processes in how Africa's HEIs conduct their business. RUFORUM, and partners, collectively specialized on Agricultural Higher and Tertiary Education, recognize this call to duty for contributing to Africa's development. The RUFORUM Secretariat in partnership with the host country, Namibia and the Local Organising Committee now invites abstracts for the Second Triennial Conference to address this theme. For this thematic area, abstracts may be presented on the underlisted topical areas under each sub theme as indicated below:

Sub-theme 1a. Supplying Africa's 2nd decade (2024-2034) work force:

- a) Transforming Graduate Training and Research: The gap, experiences and lessons learnt.
- b) Entrepreneurial education: The practice, and scalable lessons.
- c) Rebalancing the human resource pyramid: The gap, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETs).
- d) Closing the gender and diversity gap in agricultural education: The gap, lessons-learnt and opportunities.
- e) Leaving no one behind: Out of school skilling and education programs: Practice and lessons learnt.

Sub-theme 1b. Emergent issue-Digitizing education:

- a) Leveraging digital tool to increase access to education while maintaining quality and relevance.

² www.cnbc.com/2024/01/15/imf-warns-ai-to-hit-almost-40percent-of-global-employment-worsen-inequality.html.

³ www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Publications/2019AEO/AEO_2019-EN-CHAP2.pdf.

⁴ Technical and Vocational Education and Training.



- b) Machine learning and Artificial Intelligence and its impact on education.

Sub-theme 1c. Emergent issues: Building human capital for Africa's climate change and resilience programmes:

- a) Climate risks and mitigation: The gap, experiences and lessons learnt in training programmes.
- b) Low carbon services and renewables: The gap, experiences and lessons learnt in training and research programmes.
- c) Climate and carbon finance, and resilience investments: The gap, experiences and lessons learnt.

Guidelines for Abstract Submission

1. Abstracts must be submitted via an online platform through the [link](#) no later than **31st March 2024** (Email submissions will not be accepted).
2. A clear and concise abstract of **no more than 2100** Characters with spaces excluding the title, authors' details and key words. Please do not include figures or tables.
3. Abstracts must be submitted with the following structure when writing: background, objectives, methods, results, conclusions/implications, and keywords.
4. On submission, indicate whether for oral or poster (The selections committee may suggest otherwise upon review of the content of the abstract)
5. Accepted abstracts will be informed to submit a full short paper which will be published in either the RUFORUM Working Document Series <https://repository.ruforum.org/> or the African Journal of Rural Development <https://afirdev.org/index.php/jos> once approved by peer reviewers. Sample papers can be accessed at <https://shorturl.at/ICHPX>.
6. You may submit more than one abstract. However, presenters who are accepted for oral presentations will be permitted to give only one oral presentation. Additional accepted abstracts will therefore be posters only.
7. Poster size should be as follows: Height: 118.9 cm, Width: 84.1 cm ([link or sample poster](#))
8. All papers will be subjected to peer review and plagiarism checks before publication.

Enquiries should be submitted to triennial@ruforum.org with a copy to acheikhyoussef@unam.na