



19TH RUFORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

ACTION PLAN

For

Transforming Higher Education to Sustainably Feed and Create Prosperity for Africa

Building on previous high level policy dialogues, ministerial round table discussions, and engagements hosted in [Cape Town \(2016\)](#), [Nairobi\(2018\)](#), [Cape Coast\(2019\)](#), [Cotonou \(2021\)](#), and [Harare \(2022\)](#), stakeholders under the RUFORUM Network, Senior Government Leaders, Development Partners, agricultural research and innovation systems actors, private sector players, civil society that met during the 19th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting hosted in Yaoundé Cameroon 28th October 2023 – 3rd November 2023,

Recognised the need:

1. To reinforce the education ecosystem across universities and TVETs to leverage secondary and primary education to upgrade the skill levels of young people entering the labour force and ensure that education is relevant to national development
2. To escalate graduate training especially at doctoral level to strengthen capacity of African universities for generation of knowledge and technology
3. Invest in youth programs that advance requisite capacity for technical skills, entrepreneurship and uptake of digital solutions to expand innovation and employability.
4. For a broader ecosystem approach towards strengthening agricultural higher and tertiary education where education sub-sector is integral and catalyses positive changes in the agricultural sector.
5. For intentional actions and an environment that create wealth and jobs in an inclusive, equitable and sustainable manner in order to meet the future of work opportunities for Africa's young population.
6. To expand and strengthen partnerships to enhance coherence in investment and policies for agricultural transformation, wealth creation and, food & nutrition security in Africa

Observed that:

1. Universities, the research community, and development actors must mobilize and efficiently utilise the abundant resources within Africa to increase production and productivity, scale up best practices such as increased value addition, decrease in post-harvest losses and move towards improving Africa's food systems.



Acknowledged that:

1. Transforming higher education to sustainably feed and create prosperity for all will require investments and interventions that will disrupt the existing higher education eco-system and the functioning of the government investment and operational framework including:
 - a. Coherence in planning, resourcing and implementation- strengthen Inter and intra-ministerial collaboration to meet education and development needs
 - b. A repurposed education system that produces human resource in the right numbers and the appropriate scale and scope (TVET, Undergrad, Graduate) for different development needs of African Countries
 - c. An Africa based, Africa owned resource pool that is accessible to drive Research and innovations to generate products and services
 - d. Governments to take-lead investments in integrated R&D programs and agendas to meet the current and emerging development needs and policy
 - e. Integrate Universities into national innovation systems for development and wealth creation

Agreed to:

Develop an **Action Plan** to intensify and focus Higher Agricultural and Tertiary Education and agricultural development investments as a vehicle for delivering impact and creating wealth. With a focus on four emerging issues:

1. Reform the training agenda for Africa to meet the development needs
2. Research for Development and wealth creation
3. Entrepreneurship – wealth creation and incubation
4. Partnerships for scale and impact

Commit to:

Take this Action Plan to RUFORUM Member Universities' Countries, the African Union and Development Partners.



Action Plan for Transforming higher education to sustainably feed and create prosperity for all

Emerging Issue	Action Areas/Focus	Proposed Intervention/ approach
1. Reform the training agenda for Africa to meet the development needs	<p>Conduct curriculum reform in order to enhance integration within higher and tertiary education systems to produce entrepreneurial graduates, who can produce products, services and create wealth for themselves and their countries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This action area aims to repurpose university and higher tertiary education systems to be responsive to contemporary development challenges, including climate change, epidemics and pandemics, food security 	<p>Relevant government departments and agencies in partnership with HEIs and regional apex bodies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Map out success stories and identify appropriate mechanism for scaling out 2. Review legal frameworks for education, land governance that support agri-food systems development 3. Establish a mechanism(s) that enhances coherence in policy for investment and implementation of actions in HAE at national and regional level. 4. Review the funding frameworks for Higher Agricultural Education to respond to make it more relevant to development needs 5. Harmonise, prioritise and invest in staff and student mobility to leverage competitive advantage within the country and across the continent 6. Engage government to harness professional diaspora to support education transformation in Africa
	Government to intensify partnerships with HAE institutions for resourcing (start-up capital) to skill and train entrepreneurial graduates who create wealth and jobs	<p>Relevant government departments and agencies and programs engage HEIs to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish incentives and enabling environment for entrepreneurship and enterprise development 2. Strengthen incubation and wealth creation systems/ hubs at HEIs.



Emerging Issue	Action Areas/Focus	Proposed Intervention/ approach
2. Entrepreneurship – Wealth creation and Incubation	This action area recognizes that creation of businesses and entrepreneurship in general requiring engagement of other actors in the economy. Engaging them in training will enhance work readiness of the young people a major missing link in our current education format.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Investment in acceleration and growth for enterprise development Foster value addition by encouraging multi-stakeholder partnerships along diverse value chains Facilitate adoption of future of enabling and work expanding technologies
3. Research Development for and wealth creation	<p>This investment area recognizes that universities are indeed key sources of knowledge and must play a major part in innovation and development processes. Using this action area will</p> <p>a) Leverage the science and research capacity at the university for delivering solutions for development</p>	<p>Governments to establish a research innovation fund that enables universities and other ecosystem actors to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen extension and knowledge dissemination Promote a research agenda to enhance production and productivity <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Major food crops to reduce dependence on importation (import substitution) Use science to harness and validate indigenous knowledge and seeds for production resilience. Develop initiatives that prioritise response to climate change Engage governments to take-lead in investments that integrate R&D and enhance technology for last mile delivery Strengthen HEI's to expand the funds mobilization portfolio-resource mobilization Strengthen integrated national innovation systems that draw participation from multi-disciplinary, multi partner actors
	b) Make agriculture attractive to the youth by implementing programs and actions that improve productivity of young people of various categories	Governments to establish a research innovation fund that enables universities and other ecosystem actors to:



Emerging Issue	Action Areas/Focus	Proposed Intervention/ approach
		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Support student attachment to industry for internship, apprentice and skills acquisition 2. Beyond training and research and embrace mindset change, community engagement and outreach 3. Support productivity enhancing programs-mechanization, digitization/artificial intelligence and agro-processing 4. Establish strategic investments/infrastructure for young people to undertake experiential learning 5. Strengthen local markets to drive investments in R&D, business creation.
4. Partnerships for scale and impact	<p>Facilitate the creation of a national platform encompassing agri-food system actors that go beyond Agriculture.</p> <p>This action area recognizes the multiplicity of development processes that requires engagement of multiple actors in the national development ecosystems. Through this investment area, strategic partnerships will be harnessed and or developed from national to international levels to support education and agricultural development processes.</p>	<p>Governments and Universities to strengthen engagements at national level and through apex bodies such as RUFORUM to establish and or expand strategic partnerships that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create enabling environment that promote public private partnerships for increasing youth access to entrepreneurship development, job creation and employment 2. Engage multi-stakeholder education ecosystem actors (Universities, Research institutes, private sector) to collectively implement education and skilling programmes 3. Increase access to resourcing opportunities for supporting tertiary and higher agricultural education. This includes expanding the opportunities to access the World Bank ACE II Additional Funding II.



MINISTERS PRESENT

Name	Country	Signature
Prof Jacques Fame Ndong, Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education,	<i>Cameroon</i>	



Name	Country	Signature
<p>Mr Issa Tchiroma Bakary, Minister of Employment and Vocational Training,</p>	<p><i>Cameroon</i></p>	
<p>Mr Gabriel Mbairrobe Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development,</p>	<p><i>Cameroon</i></p>	



Name	Country	Signature
Dr Tom Erdimi Minister of State, Minister of Higher Education,	<i>Chad</i>	
Mrs Mdooko Nancy Chawola Deputy Minister of Education,	<i>Malawi</i>	