


## **Remarks from Prof Adipala Ekwamu, RUFORUM Executive Secretary, during Webinar 6 on 31 July 2020 on Universities and Research Institutions Supporting Family Farmers During and Post COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa**

Ladies and Gentlemen, the overall aim of the RUFORUM Webinar Series is to galvanize dialogue and debate on critical issues affecting development in Africa. On 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020 we discussed the broad landscape of Agricultural sector in Africa, which is the key focus of RUFORUM operations ([Link](#)), and we agreed on a renewed focus especially to target interventions to build resilience of farming communities and other actors along the agricultural value chains. We agreed to hold a follow up discussion on this which we are doing in this Webinar. It is therefore a great honour and privilege to host this distinguished group of Speakers today and you participants.

On behalf of the RUFORUM Network, I record our thanks to African Governments and their Partners,

towards development of the agricultural sector as the engine for economic growth, business and improved livelihoods in the continent. Certainly, under the African Union's Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) we have made significant strides but we need to do significantly more to weather the current challenges facing especially smallholder farmers and associated weak market linkages.


Ladies and Gentlemen, the founding of RUFORUM in 2004 was inspired by the decision in 2003 by the African Heads of State and Government to address the issue of the rampant Poverty and Food and Nutrition insecurity in the Continent and the subsequent launch of the Comprehensive African Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP). Accordingly the Vice Chancellors of African Universities in 2004 founded the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) as a platform for engagement of African Universities to support the CAADP processes especially in terms of research and strengthening institutional and human capacities for



delivery of the CAADP and other development processes in the continent.

RUFORUM activities have therefore focused on strengthening engagement of African universities with rural communities to enhance their agricultural productivity ([Link](#)), supporting research to generate technologies and innovations ([Link](#)), and using research to train the next Generation of Scientists for Africa ([Link](#)). We greatly appreciate the partnerships with African Union Commission, Member State Governments, Partner research organisations like CORAF, engagement with Farmer organisations and groups, and partnership with FAO and others- we must strengthen this partnerships if we are to achieve impact at scale and develop responsive capacities at various levels.

In line with the theme of this Webinar on **Universities and Research Institutions Supporting Family Farmers During and Post COVID-19 Pandemic in Africa**, to give you some insights of what RUFORUM does: I kindly request you to view the short video documentary ([Link](#)).



Let me end by thanking FAO for accepting to co-host this Webinar with us, our Moderator and Panelists for today, and you participants: We greatly appreciate your participation. We look forward to hosting you during our next Webinar on 13 August 2020 on **Education from foundations and skills advancement in science, technology and innovation: considering fundamentals for transforming Africa ([Link](#))**.

31 July 2020