

## **Remarks from Prof Adipala Ekwamu, RUFORUM Executive Secretary, during Webinar 2, 19 June 2020**

1. I welcome you to this Second Webinar that RUFORUM, a network of 126 Universities in 38 African countries is hosting. The overall aim of the RUFORUM Webinar Series is to galvanize dialogue and debate on critical issues affecting development landscape not only in Africa, but globally. Globally the biggest challenge today is COVID-19 pandemic and its impact in all facets of life. But Africa is also facing other challenges especially the invasion by desert locusts and the devastating impact of floods in especially Eastern and Southern Africa, which have grossly worsened the food insecurity situation in the continent. So the question then is how do we respond to these challenges? What measures do we need to put in place to mitigate the impacts and how best do we reposition our institutions to build resilience to cope up with future such challenges, and indeed technology advances?

2. Being a Network of Universities with a focus on developing responsive capacities and interventions to improve livelihoods in Africa, we have designed 12 Webinars that reflect on various facets of education, and also health, agriculture and food and nutrition security.
  
3. During the First Webinar on 10 June 2020 we listened to four University leaders from Africa (Makerere in Uganda, University of Free State in South Africa and University of Mohamed the 6<sup>th</sup> Polytechnique in Morocco) and Europe (Wageningen University and Research Centre in the Netherlands) who shared their experience on how their Universities have been affected by COVID-19 pandemic and how they are responding to the challenges posed by the pandemic. It was extremely valuable to hear perspectives from both within and outside the continent, and opportunity for regional and international collaboration was highlighted. For Today's Webinar, we have invited six experts from Development practice to share their perspectives and

recommendations on what universities need to do to reposition themselves in light of the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the changing landscape of education. WE are honoured to have perspective from the World Bank, BRIDGIN Foundation, the Minister of Higher and Technical Education from Zimbabwe; Association for Development of Education in Africa, WITS University, and Education for Sub-Saharan Africa). Subsequently we will hear from Policy makers and students.

Let me end by thanking our Moderator and Panelists for today, and also you participants: We greatly appreciate your participation. I invite you to join us on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2020 when we will be focusing on health issues related to COVID-19 and other Health Pandemics. Please register at [Link](#) and webinar ID : 878 3868 0099

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