

Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture Secretariat Quarterly Report

1st October- 31st December 2019

Summary

This report is a synthesis of key achievements and progress made during the period 1st October – 31st December 2019 (the second quarter of the Financial Year 2019/2020, and the second year of implementing the [operational plan-2018-2022](#) of RUFORUM [Vision 2030](#)). The Operational Plan is designed around four (4) flagship programmes with activities to support regional collective action and learning towards achieving the RUFORUM vision for *vibrant transformative universities catalyzing inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa*. The four flagship programmes include:

1. Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningfully contribute to Africa's Growth and Development (TAGDev) that seeks to transform African agricultural universities and their graduates to better respond to developmental challenges through enhanced application of science, technology, business and innovation for rural agricultural transformation.
2. Cultivating Research and Teaching Excellence (CREATE) seeks to realign universities' research and teaching functions into a more integrated model with a focus on problem solving and enhancing the capacity of the entire university academic practice and outreach system mainly.
3. Regional Anchor Universities for Higher Agricultural Education (RANCH) is designed to escalate the setting up of a network of linked universities as African anchor universities/African Centres of Excellence and academic leadership in agricultural higher education and learning.
4. Knowledge Hub for University Networking, Partnership and Advocacy (K-Hub) builds on RUFORUM's convening power and facilitates the creation, capture, organising, sharing and refining of information and content across teams and geographic locations – thus increasing access to the latest, up-to-the-minute, evidence based information and knowledge.

Below are the highlights of progress made:

1. RUFORUM convened the 15th Annual General Meeting on 2nd - 6th December 2019 at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. A total of **1003 (701 male, 302 female)** delegates from over **50** countries including Policy Makers, University Leaders, development partners, staff and students participated in the event. The 2019 RUFORUM AGM was

co-hosted by the Government of Ghana and the five Ghana public universities; University of Cape Coast; Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi; University of Development Studies, Tamale; University of Ghana, Accra; and, University of Education, Winneba. The meeting;

- a) Received reports from Secretariat on the progress in implementation of the RUFORUM Vision 2030;
- b) Admitted 20 new member universities bringing the network membership to 125 from 38 African countries, up from the 105 registered during the 14th AGM held in Nairobi in October 2018;
- c) Elected a new RUFORUM Deputy Board Chair, Professor Theresa Nkuo-Akenji, Vice Chancellor, University of Bamenda, Cameroon. Professor Theresa Nkuo-Akenji replaces Professor Ophelia Weeks, former President of University of Liberia;
- d) Recognized and awarded prizes to 20 young innovators/ entrepreneurs selected among 421 applications from West Africa as part of the 2019 RUFORUM Young African Entrepreneurs Competition (RUYAEC);
- e) Convened a Ministerial round table meeting that deliberated on how Member States can promote the new continental initiatives to promote Higher Agricultural Education, Science, Technology and Innovation. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Governments of Angola, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, eSwatini, Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and was preceded by a meeting of technical experts from the respective Governments. Development Partners also attended the meeting and included African Development Bank, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, BRIDGIN Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, and OCP Group. The resultant communique focused on:
 - i. Mechanisms including continental collaborative programmes for strengthening staff capacities and increasing the pool of women scientists in African Universities and other research and development institutions;
 - ii. Strategic interventions to catalyse graduate and postdoctoral training to bolster the capacity of universities to generate the requisite knowledge, skills and innovations;
 - iii. Investment in youth programs that advance requisite technical skills, entrepreneurship and uptake of digital solutions to expand innovation and employability; and,
 - iv. Establishment of Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Building Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity.
- f) During the Ghana Annual General Meeting, Ministers from the 18 African countries and Vice Chancellors held a half day dialogue. The dialogue focused on needed action to support advancement of Agricultural Higher Education, Science

Technology and Innovations, including how best to strengthen University-TVET interphase.

2. RUFORUM participated in several regional and global forums including:
 - a) The African Union Third Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology held on 10-13 December, 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting was held to provide a common platform for Education, Science and Technology experts to discuss and review progress on the implementation of key policies and programmes in Africa for the development of Education, Science and Technology. It provided opportunity to advocate for investment in Education, Science, Technology and Innovation towards the attainment of AU's Agenda 2063 and the Global Sustainable Development Goals. Through this participation, RUFORUM explored areas of further engagement and collaboration between RUFORUM, African Union Commission (AUC) and other partners. Further, RUFORUM presented two progress reports on a) Implementation of the tasks assigned to RUFORUM by the Committee of Ten Heads of State and Government championing Education, Science, Technology and Innovation- see [Link](#) and b) Implementation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) Priority One on Reducing Poverty and Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security- see [Link](#)
 - b) The 2019 High Level Forum of International Cooperation on Agriculture and Forestry Education Technology & the 2nd Annual Conference of Belt and Road/South-South Cooperation Agricultural Education, Science and Technology Innovation League (BRSSCAL) that took place in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, China from 17th to 19th October, 2019. In this meeting, RUFORUM officially signed the MoU with BRSSCAL (An organisation jointly established by China Agricultural University and 70 agriculture-related universities with support of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China);
 - c) The 10th Anniversary of the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme and Future Perspectives for South-South and Triangular Cooperation which took place from 25th to 27th November 2019, Kampala, Uganda. Specifically, RUFORUM presented its approaches to capacity development for research, and prospects for South-South Cooperation in Agriculture together with FAO and BRSSCAL; and,
 - d) The 10th Annual General Meeting of the Global Confederation Of Higher Education Associations For Agricultural And Life Sciences (GCHERA) Conference, and the 7th World Agricultural Prize Award hosted by Nanjing Agricultural University- 26-30 October 2019.

INTRODUCTION:

The narrative below gives details of RUFORUM Secretariat's activities progress and achievements made during the period 01 October-31 December 2019, the second quarter of the financial year 2019/2020. The report is arranged by RUFORUM [Vision 2030](#) Flagship Programmes.

Flagship programme: TAGDev-Transforming African Agricultural Universities for Africa's Growth and Development

a. Deliver four (4) short courses to strengthen agribusiness training in TVET institutions in partnership with the Universities

The Secretariat undertook an Agripreneurship and incubation training for instructors (120) and out of school youth in Bobi Community Polytechnic in Uganda and Baraka Agricultural College (47) in Kenya on competitive grants development focusing on advancement of agripreneurship at Gulu and Egerton Universities.

b. Recruit students (PhD, MSc, BSc and TVET students) to create Africa's new age of development practitioners and cadres

RUFORUM recruited 17 students (4 PhD and 13 MSc students) under the Community Action Research Program (CARP), specifically, Rain Water harvesting CARP+ at Bindura University of Science Education (8 MSc), Safflower CARP+ at Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (2PhDs; 2MSc), and Wool CARP+ at the University of the Free State, South Africa (2 PhDs; 3 MSc). This brings the total number of students recruited and supported under TAGDEV (direct and CARP) to 336 (142 Bachelors, 180 Masters and 14 PhDs).

c. Scale-out agribusiness incubation centres and accelerators at selected BTNET institutions, universities and communities to engage Africa's youth in innovation and investments in agriculture

Eight incubation hubs that were funded in quarter one (July 2019) commenced operation in quarter two. Overall, sixteen (16) RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Program (RECAP) incubation hubs are operational with 381 students involved in 90 students enterprises, 30 start ups and 46 jobs were created in the business enterprises.

Research teams implementing the 16 on-going RECAP projects were supported to share lessons at the 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting in Cape Coast, Ghana. The convening highlighted the need for the academe to appreciate the need to incorporate private sector participation; the need to refocus university academics from disciplinary based research to community action research; and, the requirement for public health concerns to be embedded in RECAP projects, with special emphasis on hygiene.

RUFORUM awarded a nurturing grant to Bugema University to strengthen University-Farmer Entrepreneurial Capacity and Community Engagement (STRUCA).

To date, 1046 TVET students, 927 out of school youth, 135 TVET instructors and 220 secondary school students have been trained in agripreneurship in the Baraka-Egerton University and Gulu University-Bobi Community Polytechnic – Northern Uganda Youth Development Program partnership.

d. Support field attachment of students (both MSc and BSc) to communities for experiential learning and further enhance the delivery of complimentary agricultural advisory services through Field Attachment Program Awards (FAPA)

Thirteen (13) MSc students were supported undertake field attachment. Eight (8) of these were working with communities in Northern Uganda (three (3) working with refugee communities and five (5) with other agricultural communities); two (2) were attached to the African Union Commission under the Overseas Volunteer Programme; and three (3) were attached to the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT)-Nairobi.

As part of the annual mandatory internship programme (August- October), 302 students (148 at Egerton University, 154 Gulu University) engaged with 5500 small holder farmers and 58 institutions in Uganda and Kenya as extension agents.

A further thirty three students (9 female, 24 male) including 27 undergraduates and six Masters students from Egerton University, Uganda Christian University Mukono, and Bayero University Kano, were supported to undertake field attachment in Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria respectively under the CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals (CRP-GLDC) supported by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (*ICRISAT*). The attachment enhanced the students' technical agricultural skills; improved their communication and leadership skills; strengthened team-working skills through working with the smallholders; and enabled them to obtain insight into farmers' indigenous knowledge.



Students undertaking participatory field evaluation of soybeans with smallholders in Kenya

e. Support the integration of University teams in interdisciplinary and multi-agency research through Community Action Research to strengthen commodity value chains for smallholder farmers and agribusinesses

The Secretariat continued to support implementation of interdisciplinary and multi-agency research in the 16 Community Action Research Programmes operational in Benin (Baobab value chain); Kenya (Cassava, Potato value chains); Uganda (Rice, Pig and Potato value chain); Ghana (Pineapple value chain) –Zimbabwe (Water Harvesting value chain); South Africa (Wool value chain); Botswana (Safflower value chain); -Namibia (encroacher bushes value chain); and, Sudan (Honey Bee, Natural Resources Management, vegetable and non-timber



Launch of the Crops (Solanum Potato) Regulations 2019 by Hon. Mwangi Kiunjuri, the CS for Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Irrigation

products value chains. Cumulatively, the CARP projects have engaged 156,000 indirect beneficiaries and 21,134 farmers (direct beneficiaries).

The Potato CARP in Kenya has engaged with 5,000 smallholder potato farmers to start a potato cooperative union. In addition, the project has generated several outputs including [policy briefs](#) to regulate the standards for plant health, packaging and pricing of potato and potato seeds in Kenya.

Technologies generated from the Potato CARP include rapid propagation of seed potato using

apical rooted cuttings—a departure from the conventional multiplication using tubers, which spreads diseases and pests; and, a seed potato production unit with two crops with the Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS).



Students undertaking evaluations on indigenous knowledge of the traditional famine-food preparation and availability in North Darfur, Sudan under the vegetable and non-timber CARP

f. Synthesize and publish lessons emerging out of the implementation of CARP+ and RECAP

[Volume 3.2](#) of *Voices from the Field* focusing on the Baobab value chain was published. The publication builds on field stories that were published under [Vol. 3.1](#) describing experiences of moving research from the laboratories to the market. This particular publication demonstrates that through research unique technologies can be developed to support sustainable production and utilization of African natural resources.

In addition, seventeen (17) manuscripts were mobilised from Principal Investigators and students as part of disseminating models and lessons from the implementation of the various projects supported through the TAGDev flagship.

The CARPs have engaged with several institutions for the implementation and advancement of the CARP model. The CARP model implemented by universities and partners have leveraged up to US\$ 1,258,430 from various development partners and stakeholders to support advancement of activities under the model. Egerton and Gulu Universities engaged with 58 institutions including farmer organisations to support student field attachment and experiential learning. The agribusiness incubation hubs have engaged with 72 private sector agencies collaborating to mentor and nurture young students. Together with partners the RECAP teams have leveraged an additional US\$ 303,000.

g. Strengthen the professional capacity of university and TVET staff to implement new and revised curricula and education models

Professional capacity of University staff at Egerton (42) and Gulu University (47), was enhanced through entrepreneurship training. This will enable them to effectively deliver entrepreneurship courses to students in the respective universities.

Eighty eight (88) Principals and Deans were supported to undertake entrepreneurship and market place training during the 15th RUFORUM Annual General held at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. The training was designed to enhance the transformation agenda in entrepreneurship and catalysing the development of the entrepreneurship ecosystem in Africa. It highlighted the need for entrepreneurship as a driver of transformation within universities and individuals. The training recommended the need for Universities to embed entrepreneurship within their operations and curriculum; and, linking young entrepreneurs to mentors as well as utilise the peer mentorship program including from previous cohorts. Emerging from the training eleven (11) universities from Sierra Leone, Uganda, Sudan Tanzania, Malawi, Senegal, Lesotho and Rwanda have requested for specialised engagement and training in entrepreneurship for academic staff.

h. Finalize a book on agricultural tertiary education in Africa

During the quarter, several chapters for the Tertiary Agricultural Education (TAE) book were finalized. The editors are working to provide the final manuscript of the book that will be submitted for copy editing by March 2020. Once finalized, the book will provide vital information to policy and decision leaders about the reforms and investments needed within Africa's agriculture including Tertiary Agricultural education.

i. Explore opportunities for targeted support to strengthen lower levels of education value chains and for increasing youth employability

RUFORUM awarded a nurturing grant to [Research and Education Agency](#) to strengthen operations of a School-based Technology Dissemination and Youth Skill Development Centre in Eastern Uganda.

j. Organize the third Young African Innovators competition

The 3rd Young innovators competition was organised as part of 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting activities. The Call for nominations attracted 421 applications from 12 countries in West Africa including: Nigeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d’Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Twenty (20) winners were recognized and awarded prizes: three (3) female and seventeen (17) males from Benin (5), Gambia (1), Ghana (1), Nigeria (11), Senegal (1) and Togo (1).

The Young Entrepreneurs pitched their innovations to an International Audience of close to 1003 participants drawn from academia, business and industry during the RUFORUM Annual General Meeting at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. The Young Entrepreneurs had an opportunity to interact with the Chief Executive Officer of the BRIDGIN Foundation and his team for mentorship and business support guidance.

Emerging lessons and issues

1. The Community Action Research Programme is emerging as a key mechanism that provide a link between universities and the communities. If executed effectively CARPs have potential to leverage resources- financial, human and support services from different stakeholders.
2. Agribusiness and entrepreneurship are increasingly attractive to university staff, students and other stakeholders. This heightened demand implies a need for a more structured mechanism for offering the short courses and supporting activities in these two areas.
3. Innovation and Young entrepreneurship competitions provide an opportunity to recognize and motivate youth innovation. These target products that provide solutions to real life issues in their communities. The selected projects have potential for up scaling across similar configurations. However, there is need to integrate mentoring and handle IP issues.

Flagship programme: RANCH: Regional Anchor Universities for Higher Agricultural Education

2.1 Identify African universities to serve as Centres of excellence for leadership in strategic thematic areas to transform teaching, research and outreach for greater relevance

The initiative to strengthen African Agricultural Higher Education that will promote agricultural transformation was among the regional initiatives of focus at the Ministerial Round Table during the 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting. The Secretariat is

continuing to mobilize resources for launching Regional Anchor Universities/Regional Training Centres.

2.2 Support Universities to pursue partnerships with industry to spin out start-ups based on commercialisable research outputs and knowledge products

Ninety (90) student enterprises under the RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Program (RECAP) have trademarks. Of these, thirty (30) start-ups are independent and operational outside the universities while others adopted the industrial park/incubation model for production and points of sale within the universities.

Emerging lessons and issues

1. Continuous engagement with policy makers, development partners, private sector and other stakeholders will be essential for the initiation and effectiveness of this flagship and for consolidation of some of the RUFORUM initiatives.
2. The linkage with the private sector and industries needs to be nurtured to generate mileage from the incubation hubs and centres as well as promote students appreciation of the business sector operations beyond the trademark and student enterprises. Universities have to make deliberate efforts to engage industry and the private sectors, for both research and product development funding.
3. Support towards establishment of hubs of excellence and academic leadership in higher agricultural education, science, technology and innovation in RUFORUM will require focus in the coming periods. Resource mobilization efforts and support from Member States governments remain one of the critical avenues to explore for scaling up the training and research investment efforts.

Flagship programme: CREATE-Cultivating Research and Teaching Excellence

a. Facilitate Academic Staff Development (ASD) through the Regional Academic Mobility (RAM) and Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) programs

The Secretariat continued to facilitate the placements of University staff for PhD training in different universities under the Graduate Teaching Assistantships (GTA) Programme. The GTA is an initiative by African Vice Chancellors to strengthen staff capacities by providing especially PhD training in different African universities on a cost-sharing basis. Fifteen (15) additional staff placements (13 male, 2 female) from eight Universities; Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources; Uganda Martyrs University; University of Nairobi; Moi University; Egerton University; University of Cape Coast, Mbarara University of Science and Technology and University of Rwanda were made. The cumulative total of GTA placements is 127 in 32 Universities in the RUFORUM Network. The target is to train 325 PhDs by 2022.

b. Support establishment of RUFORUM Academic and Research Chairs (RARC) to train the next generation of science leaders for the agricultural and other sectors and enhance the competitiveness of African universities

This activity similar to the Centres of Excellence under RANCH is still in the nascent stages. Proposal development, fund solicitation from various development partners and negotiations are ongoing.

c. Develop mechanisms for increasing the participation of Women in science, technology and innovation (ST&I) interventions in RUFORUM member universities

To establish the status of participation of women in Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) in Africa, five country studies (Uganda, Sudan, Liberia, Mali and Mozambique) were undertaken. The case studies commissioned under RUFORUM and the Forum for Women Vice Chancellors in Africa (FAWoVC), provide a baseline that will be used to measure progress on the interventions to increase the participation of Women in Science, Technology and Innovations. Additional case study will be conducted in Sierra Leone during first quarter of 2020.

A Symposium was held on Women participation in ST&I during the RUFORUM Annual General Meeting, 2-3rd December 2019 at University of Cape Coast Ghana. The dialogue involved 41 participants (37 female, 4 male) and recommended:

- a) Making use of evidence of disparity of women in ST&I to lobby for change;
- b) Rewarding individuals or institutions that have endeavoured to enhance adoption of ST&I by women; and,
- c) Scheduling career talks from prominent female scientists to instil mind set change especially for the girl child.

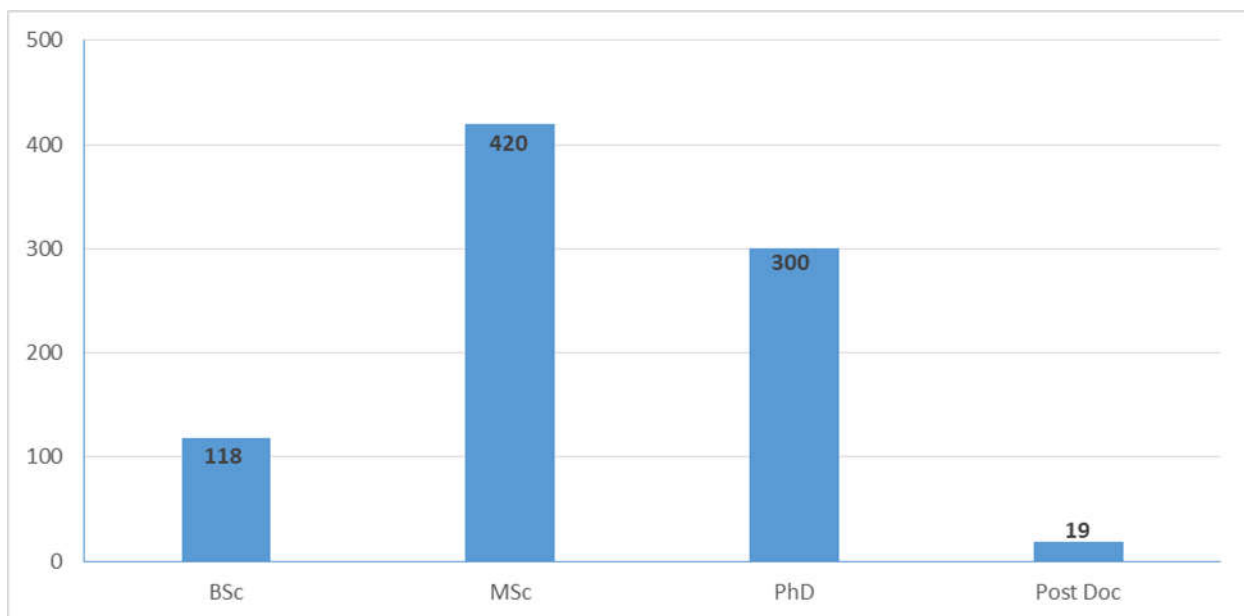
During the RUFORUM AGM, Female Vice Chancellors and other leaders held a mentorship and interactive session on 6th December 2019 with 50 women and 36 male emerging scientists. Amongst others, it was recommended to explore innovative ways to nurture future female leaders; creating centres of “gender advocacy”; and, enhancing mentor-mentee relationship. Amongst the Senior leaders who attended the Mentoring session included Prof. Stella Williams, *Nigerian Women in Agricultural Research for Development*; Prof. Mabel Imbuga, Former Vice Chancellor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology; Prof. Alice Pell, Former Vice Provost, Cornell University; Dr. Goretti Nabanoga, Deputy Principal College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences Makerere University; and, Prof. Luisa Santos, Eduardo Mondlane University.

The Regional Initiative to Strengthen Staff Capacity and increase the pool of women scientists in African Universities and other R&D institutions (RISCCA) was among the five continental initiatives adopted by the Ministerial Round Table during the 15th RUFORUM Annual General

Meeting. This is in line with the recommendations of Ministerial meeting held on 23rd October 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya

d. Escalate doctoral training to increase the pool of science leaders in Africa

With support from various development partners including Social and Environmental Trade-offs in African Agriculture (SENTINEL Project) of the United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI); and Mastercard Foundation (CARP) and the Graduate Teaching Assistant Programme by member universities, RUFORUM continued to support doctoral training on the African Continent. The total number of students at different stages of academic study is 300. Fifteen (15) are scheduled to graduate by end December 2019. A pipeline view of students undertaking studies during the year is shown below.



e. Provide opportunities for postgraduate training for students from fragile States and other disadvantaged communities

Thirty five (35) students from eight universities in six countries categorised as small and fragile states¹ (Democratic Republic of Congo-13, Liberia-4, Nigeria-4, South Sudan-4, Sudan-7 and

¹ <http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/892921532529834051/FCList-FY19-Final.pdf>

Sierra Leone-3) have been supported to undertake studies under the Graduate Teaching Assistantship Programme in RUFORUM Member universities including at Makerere University (Uganda); Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (Tanzania); and at Egerton University, University of Eldoret, Kenyatta University, and Moi University (Kenya). Five additional students from Kano State in Nigeria (3), Democratic Republic of Congo (1) and Liberia (1) were recruited during the quarter.

f. Provide opportunities for Masters and PhD graduate students to share research findings, to obtain mentorship support, skills enhancement and to engage with scientists in the agricultural and education space

RUFORUM supported 294 students (199 male, 95 female) to attend the 15th Annual General Meeting in Cape Coast Ghana, 2-6 December 2019, as part of the broad initiative to train innovative and employable graduates with practical research experience relevant to smallholder farmers. The students were supported undertake poster presentations (52 posters) and social media training (62). Post doc Fellows and the graduate students attached to each Fellow shared research findings, status and updates about the research undertakings.

The Principal Investigators (PI) and the students attached to the Community Action Research Programs and the respective value chains shared research findings and update during the 15th Annual General Meeting. The Principal Investigators received feedback and additional guidance from the RUFORUM Technical Committee.

Other trainings undertaken during the RUFORUM AGM of 2-6 December 2019 included thesis proposal development and scientific writing (73 Male and 27 female); scientific data management (69 Male and 24 female); accessing scientific publications in AGRIS and AGORA; and, social media training (44 male, 18 female). The trainings enabled students learn and unlearn conventional procedures which opened room for acceptance of logical and systematic approaches to key aspects such as problem identification/ analysis and literature review; and attained several skills including use of tools such the Fog Readability Index and the Journal Author Name Estimator (JANE).



Students engaging in the Thesis Proposal Development, Scholarly Writing and Presentations training

g. Support the implementation of RUFORUM Post- Doctoral Fellowship Programme

RUFORUM continued to implement the Post-doctoral Fellowship programme (19 Fellows) linked to training 137 students (PhD 42; MSc 70 and BSc 25) as research teams composed of mentors, supervisors and mentees. The Fellows continued to produce [knowledge products](#). Fellows and graduate students were supported to present research findings and to obtain feedback and mentorship from professionals during the 15th RUFORUM Annual General meeting. To-date 12 publications have been generated, while two (2) Masters and eight (8) undergraduate students have completed studies.

Emerging lessons and issues

1. Presentation of research findings and training of graduate students support beneficiaries to generate quicker results on key development areas of focus. They provide the potential for cross institution sharing and learning.
2. There is need for additional scoping and benchmarking to facilitate the establishment of the RUFORUM Academic and Research Chairs. Partnership with institutions that have been successful in implementing the research chairs initiative will help towards the realization of this key output under the CREATE flagship.

Flagship programme: K-HUB-Knowledge hub for university networking, partnership and advocacy

- a. **Review RUFORUM National Forums guidelines to align to the OP 2018-2022 and convene four forums to provide a platform for stakeholders to articulate demands for university services, advocate for change, and provide feedback on the utility of university services**

Apart from Kenya and Uganda where National Forums have been coordinated under the TAGDev flagship, National Forums have been hosted within the framework of higher education days and partners meetings. The forums/higher education days bring together policy makers, the private sector and higher education institutions for the development of higher agricultural education. While these higher education days provide interaction and dialogue space, there is need to develop guidelines that will engender a more sustainable engagement between the RUFORUM member universities and the national policy and other stakeholders. This will be an area of focus in the coming period.

b. Widen and enhance online and offline Information Technology (IT) platforms to facilitate and enhance systematic access to information through continuous analysis of user requirements

The Secretariat developed and updated the [website](#) for the 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting to share updated information with the participants. Social Media engagements continued to vary as follows (Twitter: 7024; Facebook: 22 205; YouTube: 271 subscribers; Flickr: 34 followers; and the RUFORUM Website 380 new users).

c. Facilitate universities to deliver relevant and practical training exploiting the latest electronic means to deliver and enhance the student learning experience

As part of activities under the FAO-RUFORUM collaboration, a webinar on Education for Effective Nutrition in Action (ENACT) was organized on 14th November 2019. The Webinar focused on integrating the Sustainable Development Goals in the curricular in universities.

d. Provide training on the merits of Open source software to facilitate universities in the use of Open Access software to provide complimentary agricultural extension and advisory services

RUFORUM signed Memorandum of Understanding with Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) to formalise the partnership for training in Open Access Software. As part of the collaboration, PhD students under the Sentinel Project secured Open Geospatial Software (QGIS, SAGA, GeoNode, Marble, gvSIG Desktop, QGIS Desktop and GRASS GIS) during the 15th RUFORUM AGM in Cape Coast, Ghana to enable them finalize research on time with cutting edge tools.

e. Promote publication of Africa's research outputs in the African Journal of Rural Development and other related publications

RUFORUM produced a special issue on Forestry with nine manuscripts under Volume 4, issue 1 of the [African Journal for Rural Development](#). The Journal has continued to provide

opportunity for universities within and outside Africa to share research outputs and outcomes to rural development. The Secretariat also published several articles and videos related to the 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting including;

1. Fifteen thought pieces on various aspects of higher education were shared (see [link](#))
2. Will technical and vocational education address skills gap? See [Link](#)
3. New Africa-China masters for agricultural education. See [Link](#)
4. RUFORUM-FAO partnership boosts digital resource access. See [Link](#)
5. Leaders call for greater African HE collaboration. See [Link](#)
6. Women in STEM leadership – The need for policy. See [Link](#)
7. Growing female STEM academics starts in schools. See [Link](#)
8. AAU Live Coverage: Africa Dialogues with Prof. Patrick Lumumba on How Africa Can Work Again. See [Link](#)
9. AAU Live Coverage: Forum for Women Vice Chancellors in Africa (FAWoVC). See [Link](#)

f. Examine the knowledge priorities of the network stakeholders and the extent to which the RUFORUM knowledge products and services meet the objectives of the relevant RUFORUM strategies

A survey on ICT Capacities and knowledge priorities in member Universities was initiated in quarter 1 and the data collection is still ongoing (See the survey [link](#)). The report will be finalised during the 3rd in quarter (end of March 2020).

Emerging lessons and issues

Engagement between universities with policy makers and other stakeholders under the national forums remains a viable option for advocacy, resource mobilisation and sharing lessons with the different actors. The institution of a structure that sustainably promotes the national forums will provide a learning point for all member universities in the Network.

Flagship programme: PROGRAM SUPPORT – Technical, administrative and logistical support

- a. **Convene the 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting (AGM), meetings of the Board and its committees- the Finance and Administration Committee, International Advisory Panel (IAP), Technical Committee (TC) and the Committee of Principals and Deans to guide the network to fulfil its corporate mission**

The 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting was held 2-6th December, 2019 hosted by RUFORUM member universities in Ghana led by the University of Cape Coast. Activities

included scientific, policy, development partner, female Vice Chancellors and student based engagements, among others. RUFORUM Governance activities and meetings included:

- a) The 15th RUFORUM Business Meeting was held 6th December, 2019 at the New Examination centre, University of Cape Coast-Ghana. The meeting that involved **174** participants received status report about the RUFORUM Network and provided guidance on the financial and programme implementation. The AGM also confirmed the venue for the 2020-16th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting in Morocco. Further, the AGM approved establishment of an Audit Board sub-committee, and to support operations of the Principals and Deans Committee, which has become large, (200 members), a Sub-Committee for Principals and Deans was created. The AGM also endorsed establishment of a Board Audit Committee, to be separate from Finance and Administration Committee. Professor Luke Mumba, Vice Chancellor of University of Zambia, will Chair the Committee for a period of three years (2020-2022).
- b) The 18th RUFORUM Board Meeting held 5th December 2019 at Elizabeth Adabor Conference Hall, University of Cape Coast, Ghana elected Prof. Theresa Akenji from University of Bamenda in Cameroon as the RUFORUM Deputy Board Chair to replace Professor Ophelia Weeks, former President of University of Liberia.
- c) The RUFORUM International Advisory Panel (IAP) meeting held 3 December, 2019 at the School of Graduate Studies, University of Cape Coast, Ghana recommended that Member States request the African Union Commission (AUC) to reach out to the World Bank to obtain support for implementation of the Strengthening Higher Agricultural Education for Agri-Food Transformation in Africa (SHAEA) project. Further recommended that RUFORUM Secretariat engages with both the AUC Human Resources, Science & Technology and the Rural Economy and Agriculture Directorates to take advantage of the opportunities focusing on capacity building collaborative engagements.
- d) The 16th RUFORUM Technical Committee and TAGDev Steering Committee Meeting held 5th December 2019 at Ridge Royale Hotel, Ghana recommended that RUFORUM fully articulates the dynamics of the Graduate Teaching Assistantship Programme (GTA) by publishing a communique for the attention of Principals and Deans of the respective Member Universities. Further recommended that during implementation, oversight at the respective Universities, the GTA be accorded special attention by Vice Chancellors/University Presidents.
- e) The 16th Principals and Deans business meeting held 5th December, 2019 at the School of Medical Sciences Auditorium, University of Cape Coast Ghana resolved to revamp the RUFORUM National Forums and the GTA initiative.

b. Convene at least one meeting of high net-worth individuals to deliberate on support and investment for higher agricultural education, science, technology and innovation in Africa

The Secretariat convened a Ministerial round table meeting as part of activities of the 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting in Cape Coast, Ghana to advocate for African Governments' Investment in Agricultural Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (AHESTI). The meeting was attended by representatives of the Governments of Angola, Benin, Burundi, Cameroon, eSwatini, Ghana, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, and was preceded by a meeting of technical experts from the respective Governments. Development Partners included African Development Bank, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, BRIDGIN Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, and OCP Group. The meeting endorsed the five continental initiatives for strengthening Africa Innovation Capacity, increasing its competitiveness, enhancing Youth employability and entrepreneurship. The meeting further urged the Africa Union Commission to request inclusion of RUFORUM in funding opportunities to Africa. The resultant communique focused on:

- i. Mechanisms including continental collaborative programmes for strengthening staff capacities and increasing the pool of women scientists in African Universities and other research and development institutions;
- ii. Strategic interventions to catalyse graduate and postdoctoral training to bolster the capacity of universities to generate the requisite knowledge, skills and innovations;
- iii. Investment in youth programs that advance requisite technical skills, entrepreneurship and uptake of digital solutions to expand innovation and employability;
- iv. Establishment of Higher Education Centres of Excellence for Building Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity; and,
- v. A call for Development Partners including African Development Bank, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, Islamic Development Bank, European Union, World Bank, Carnegie Corporation of New York, Mastercard Foundation and OCP Group, amongst others, to support investments in Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa.

c. Support hosting of the 3rd Meeting of the Forum for Women Vice Chancellors in Africa (FAWoVC)

The second symposium for the Forum for Women Vice Chancellors in Africa (FAWoVC) was held as part of the activities for the 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting in Cape Coast, Ghana. The Meeting involving 100 participants deliberated on key issues to be addressed in the Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) ecosystem in regards to gender inclusive development in ST&I and made recommendations on the role of different actors in the ST&I

ecosystem in promoting gender inclusive development of ST&I in Africa; developed a programme of action to strengthen gender role and inclusivity in especially the African Universities Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation agenda and other initiatives; and, agreed on a mentoring plan for young scientists.

d. Hold high level dialogues with senior African policy leaders

As part of initiatives to reach out to policy makers and government officials, RUFORUM hosted Higher Agricultural Education National Days. The Days bring together, Academia, private sector, community leaders and policy makers. To date meetings have been held in Liberia, Mali and Zambia. These National Days provide an appropriate platform to initiate national forums, which is part of the policy development and advocacy medium to promote the link between higher agricultural education and the challenges facing rural communities and capacity of universities to transform the Agricultural Sector. It is planned to hold future Higher Education Days in 2020 in Malawi, Sierra Leone and Sudan.

During the quarter, the meeting in Ghana was part of activities for the 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting. Policy Makers in Ghana (five Ghanaian Government Ministers and technocrats) were represented in different activities during the AGM, and the academia and other stakeholders had an opportunity for dialogue. Areas of focus included increased partnership and how the private sector can promote R&D in universities and research centres.

e. Establish strategic partnerships - strategic alliances with other organizations to create a sense of common values and mission

Several achievements were registered through existing partnerships with institutions including:

- i. The 2019 High Level Forum of International Cooperation on Agriculture and Forestry Education Technology & the 2nd Annual Conference of Belt and Road/South-South Cooperation Agricultural Education, Science and Technology Innovation League (BRSSCAL) that took place in Fuzhou, Fujian Province, China from 17th to 19th October, 2019. In this meeting, RUFORUM officially signed the MoU with BRSSCAL (An organisation jointly established by China Agricultural University and 70 agriculture-related universities with support of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, and the Ministry of Commerce of the P. R. China).



Dr. Alice Mutiti Mweetwa-Deputy Executive Secretary RUFORUM after MoU Signature with China Agricultural University

- ii. The Tenth Anniversary of the FAO-China South-South Cooperation Programme and Future Perspectives for South-South and Triangular Cooperation event took place from 25th to 27th November 2019, Kampala, Uganda. RUFORUM presented its approaches to capacity development for research, prospects for South-South Cooperation in Agriculture together with FAO and BRSSCAL.
- iii. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations provided US\$ 119,698 to RUFORUM to support implementation of studies on food security in Eastern Africa and to conduct studies on enhancing capacities of youth to advance family farming in Eastern and Southern Africa. The MoU will be renewed in 2020.
- iv. RUFORUM Secretariat participated in the 10th Annual General Meeting of the Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences (GCHERA), and the 7th World Agricultural Prize Award hosted by Nanjing Agricultural University- 26-30 October 2019. GCHERA Members, specifically-EARTH University / American University of Beirut and RUFORUM are exploring collaboration under a south –south community engagement program. Dr Amushendje Theopoline Omagano of University of Namibia was nominated by RUFORUM as part of the GCHERA Steering Committee.
- v. Together with AGRINATURA, RUFORUM organized a brainstorming meeting to explore funding opportunities available in Europe for Europe-Africa partnership in research and capacity building projects. This was on 3rd December 2019 in Cape Coast, Ghana
- vi. RUFORUM participated in The African Union Third Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Education, Science and Technology held on 10-13 December, 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The meeting provided opportunity to

advocate for investment in Education, Science, Technology and Innovation towards the attainment of AU's Agenda 2063 and the Global Sustainable Development Goals.

vii. During the quarter, RUFORUM formalized partnership with several institutions including Education sub-Saharan Africa (ESSA); Arab Organization for Agricultural Development (AOAD); and, Research and Education Agency (RAE).

f. Recruit a team of managers and program leadership professionals in line with the approved functional analysis so as to support delivery of the Vision RUFORUM 2030

RUFORUM [advertised](#) for the positions of Technical Specialist-Research and Development and Manager- Programme, Results Measurement & Learning. This is part of efforts to enable RUFORUM realize the previously approved Vision 2030. The recruitment process is ongoing

g. Undertake Annual internal and external audits

The financial year 2018/19 External Audit was finalized and the report presented to the RUFORUM Board Meeting held 5th December 2019 and, the 15th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting held 6th December 2019 at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana. An unqualified audit opinion was issued by the External Auditor.

h. Prepare and submit at least 10 proposals to support implementation of the RUFORUM Vision 2030

Several research for development and training proposals were developed during the period and submitted to different Foundations and Development Agencies including, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and Carnegie Cooperation of New York. These will be followed in 2020.

i. Undertake STI country case studies in six countries: Liberia, Mali, Sierra Leone, Mozambique, Sudan and Uganda

Science, Technology and Innovation (ST&I) country case studies were undertaken in Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, Sudan and Uganda and results presented during the 15th RUFORUM AGM. The country study reports were discussed by the Forum for Women Vice Chancellors in Africa as the baseline for the interventions to be undertaken under the gender-based assessment of the science, technology and innovation higher education ecosystem. The Sierra Leone case study will be conducted in 2020.

The Uganda Ministry of Science Technology and Innovations in partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports, Busitema University/Forum for Women Vice

Chancellors in Africa and RUFORUM also organised a one day stakeholders meeting to discuss integration of Science, Technology and Innovation in the Secondary School curriculum and validate the gender-based assessment of the status of science, technology and innovation in the higher education ecosystem in Uganda. The stakeholders meeting was part of the ongoing consultations on policy for compulsory science education in Uganda. Participants included educationists, policy makers, research institutions and the general public.

Emerging lessons and issues

1. Membership to the RUFORUM Network has exponentially increased, from 10 in 2004 to 125 in 2019. This warrants a reconfiguration of the Network structure and activities in order to meet member universities' needs, including the convenings and governance meetings.
2. The expanded Membership of RUFORUM calls for diversification of resource mobilization efforts and structure to meet the growing membership activities.

Planned activities for the period January-March 2020

1. Recruit students (PhD, MSc, BSc and TVET students) to skill Africa's new age of development practitioners and cadres.
2. Scale-out agribusiness incubation centres and accelerators at selected BTVET institutions, universities and communities to engage Africa's youth in innovation and investments in agriculture.
3. Finalize the book on agricultural tertiary education in Africa.
4. Develop mechanisms for increasing the participation of women in science, technology and innovation (ST&I) interventions in RUFORUM member universities.
5. Prepare and submit at least 10 proposals to support implementation of the RUFORUM Vision 2030.
6. Finalize RUFORUM Second Tracer Study.