

Remarks from **Dr. Florence Nakayiwa**, RUFORUM Deputy Executive Secretary, Planning, Resource Mobilisation and Management during Webinar XII - *Students connecting globally to visualise and re-engineer universities for a better world post COVID-19* 30th September 2020

HE Professor Mrs Ameneeh; former President, Government of Mauritius, **Guest Speaker for this special webinar**

Professor Teresa Akenga, Vice Chancellor, University of Eldoret, Kenya – the **Discussant**:

Distinguished Panelists –

Mrs Chizoba Obianuju Oramu,- Nigerian PhD student at Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Lilongwe-Malawi

Ms Sophie Galema, PhD student, Wageningen University and Research (WUR), Netherlands

Ms Carmen Maria de Leone, Guatemala Fourth Year Student at EARTH University, Costa Rica

Ms Wu Yumeng, Undergraduate Student, North West Agriculture and Forest University, Shaanxi Province, China

Ms. Nour Hammad, PhD Student, American University of Beirut, Beirut-Lebanon

And one of our very own, **Irene Akite** a PhD Student in Gulu Webinar Moderator.

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

You are most welcome, thank you for joining the 12th RUFORUM Webinar entitled **Students connecting globally to visualise and re-engineer universities for a better world post COVID-19.**

This is a very special and student centric webinar within a series that commenced in June 2020.

The webinar series are part of a RUFORUM initiative to collectively explore different perspectives and galvanise actors into joint action and response to what the COVID -19 pandemic has brought on board. Who, ladies and gentlemen other than students, is better placed to bring new ideas and innovation for the future of higher education and the processes that they are inheriting from a not so compliant generation.

The webinar today, is capturing the perspective of the student and providing an opportunity for students to reflect on the higher education system, the opportunities and requisites that COVID-19 has generated to re-engineer not only higher education provision but the institutions themselves.

You will agree with me that even before the COVID-19 Education crisis, because this is what it is, the sector and especially higher

education was fraught with challenges. These have not gone away. We however, need to change our perspective, explore alternatives and apply different solutions, part of which have been presented by COVID 19.

Within Africa for example, it has always been 'catch up'. As the rest of the world was gliding into the 4th industrial revolution, we are still tinkering with the nuts and bolts of the 3rd. As a network of 128 Universities in 38 countries in Africa, at RUFORUM we believe that the pandemic has provided an opportunity to leap frog our processes to match other global universities and education systems.

How do we harness the value of networks and collaboration to access resources that are not readily available on the African continent? There is a window of hope that as the physical borders close, the technological borders have expanded.

The 12th Webinar, with panelists from across the globe gives a glimpse of the education system in a post-COVID era from the perspective of the students themselves. They explore how their education experiences are changing or how education offering should adjust to the new era. What is their view on virtual learning, and how do universities re-engineer to take advantage of the new normal?

We are at RUFORUM are delighted that this Webinar will also be addressed by Her excellence Professor **Mrs Ameneeh**, former President of Mauritius and Prof **Nkenga** the Vice Chancellor of the University of Eldoret in Kenya. These are eminent and seasoned educationists, not to mention the leadership and policy dimension that they bring to this discussion.

Join me Ladies and gentlemen in welcoming our panelists.

To all of you attending this webinar, we thank you for honouring our invitation to participate in this webinar. We look forward to hosting all of you again.

Irene our moderator for the day we greatly appreciate your participation.

The thirteenth and final regular webinar in this series focusing on **Global university partnerships for addressing emerging development challenges** will be part of the unprecedented Virtual RUFORUM 16th Annual General Meeting scheduled during the month of October 2020.

Please remember that the recordings for all Webinars are available on the RUFORUM Website.

I thank you.