

Setting the scene by Prof Adipala Ekwamu, RUFORUM Executive Secretary, during the virtual workshop on capacity building of Sub-Saharan Africa agriculture in the education context

1. Thank you, our facilitator, Dr. Hlami Ngwenya, from the University of the Free State in South Africa; Thank you our distinguished Panelists; and Thank you Participants: I well come you to this virtual workshop on capacity building of sub-Saharan Africa agriculture which will focus on the usefulness of Agricultural Massive Open Online Courses (AgMOOCs). This virtual workshop has been made possible by the support of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and I Thank the Management of COL, represented by Dr Venkataraman Balaji, who is the Vice President of COL. We deeply appreciate the work you are doing to support SSA agriculture.
2. We know that several efforts have been made to build the capacity of Sub-Saharan Africa agriculture by different actors over time. However, we have not yet met the needed critical number and caliber of trained graduates. SSA is weak and uncompetitive for lack of

capacity in terms of infrastructure, skills, and policy environment, among others. One of the approaches being pursued by RUFORUM and its partners is to adopt the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) by universities in the delivery of agricultural teaching and learning in the form of Online Courses. This virtual workshop, which came as a result of collaboration between COL and RUFORUM, is very important and is targeting leaders within African Higher Agricultural Educational institutions in order to rally support for development and uptake of Agricultural Massive Open Online Courses (AgMOOCs).

3. Being a network of 129 Universities in 38 African countries with a focus on developing responsive capacities and interventions to improve livelihoods in Africa, we have been holding several convenings that reflect on various facets of higher education, agriculture, and food security. This virtual workshop is certainly one of these convenings which will allow us engage with various stakeholders to discuss the development and implementation of AgMOOCs. The various partners attending this workshop will provide useful inputs in developing solutions to the challenges

of conventional teaching and learning while exploring the Opportunities provided by AgMOOCs.

4. It is our expectation that as an output of the workshop, a proposal for the process of developing and delivering AgMOOCs in SSA region will be developed and agreed upon with guidance by the facilitator, Dr. Hlami Ngwenya from the University of the Free State in South Africa. I know that the two-and-a-half-hour practice-oriented workshop has three sessions to provide a platform for raising awareness and facilitating joint learning of opportunities and challenges of AgMOOCs based multi-level capacity building

5. Let me end by thanking our Facilitator and Panelists for today, and also you participants: We greatly appreciate your participation. I hope that you will be able to agree on the best way forward in advancing the implementation of AgMOOCs as means of building capacity in our African universities. Thank you

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