

## Briefing Note

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To Vice Chancellors/ RUFORUM Board Members

### **Participation in the UN Food Systems Summit 2021**

The UN FOOD SYSTEMS SUMMIT 2021 under the theme “Transforming food systems is crucial for delivering all the Sustainable Development Goals,” is scheduled to take place in October 2021. The UN special envoy for the Summit is our very own Dr. Agnes Kalibata, Executive Secretary Alliance for the Green Revolution for Africa (AGRA) and former Minister of Agriculture for Republic of Rwanda.

The Summit is expected to launch bold new actions, solutions, and strategies to deliver progress on all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), each of which relies on healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable food systems. The Summit aims to:

1. Generate action and measurable progress towards the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; identify solutions and leaders, and issuing a call for action at all levels of the food system;
2. Raise awareness and elevate public discussion about how reforming our food systems can help us all to achieve the SDGs by implementing reforms that are good for people and planet;
3. Develop principles to guide governments and other stakeholders looking to leverage their food systems to support the SDGs; These principles will set an optimistic and encouraging vision in which food systems play a central role in building a fairer, more sustainable world;
4. Create a system of follow-up and review to ensure that the Summit’s outcomes continue to drive new actions and progress.

The build up to the Summit which commenced in 2020 includes several dialogues, activities and designations. These have been structured to facilitate maximum participation from the different stakeholders and to ensure that the objectives of the Summit are fulfilled. RUFORUM initial engagement with the Summit was the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020 Webinar hosted in partnership with Wageningen University during the 2020 RUFORUM webinar series. The pre-United Nations Food Systems Summit webinar under the theme *Working Together for Resilient Food Systems: Towards a Europe – Africa Platform for Research and Innovation* set the scene for RUFORUM member Universities and other research institutions to reflect on the agri-food systems in Africa and specifically the role of research and innovations.

Further, Professor Adipala Ekwamu Executive Secretary RUFORUM has been designated as one of the 100 UN Food Systems Champions. This is a recognition that RUFORUM is a key player in the agri-food sector.

The Multi-Actor Food Systems Champions Network is expected to mobilize a diverse range of people in every region of the world to engage more deeply and develop into a broad and inclusive coalition for transformation of the world's food systems through coordinated action before, during, and after the Summit. Champions are expected to:

1. To mobilize their networks in support of the Summit in order to contribute ideas for solutions to food systems issues, and communicate and amplify relevant Summit and food systems messages;
2. To provide advice and support to the Action Tracks and Levers of Change by helping to identify gaps, key questions, or concerns, offering advice on substantive discussions and emerging recommendations, and also by sharing ideas for action
3. To participate in relevant Food Systems Summit processes, (co-) organize independent dialogues, participate in country and global food systems dialogues.

As such, RUFORUM has developed the attached engagement roadmap to guide her participation in the UN Food Systems Summit 2021.

This briefing serves to:

- 1- Give you the update on the potential participation of RUFORUM and the runner up to the Summit
  - 2- Forward the attached statement from RUFORUM Vice Chancellors requesting the Summit to dialogue more on Africa specific issues especially strengthening small holders farming systems and transition to agribusiness opportunities
  - 3- Request that you participate in the activities outlined in the roadmap as appropriate
  - 4- Request that at country level you work with the Member States focal persons to catalyse dialogue and garner needed input towards the Summit declaration
  - 5- Request that you university supports engagement of its members in research to strengthen Africa's Agri-Food systems resilience and enhanced and sustained productivity
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