

## CELEBRATING TWENTY YEARS OF EDUCATING AFRICA 2004-2024

Statements from Vice Chancellors of RUFORUM Member Universities in Africa



## ABOUT RUFORUM

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), was established by ten vice chancellors in 2004 from 5 countries in East and Southern Africa. The August 2024 membership standing at 175 universities in 40 countries. RUFORUM is registered as an International NGO in Uganda and coordinated by a Secretariat hosted by Uganda at Makerere University in Kampala. The organisation evolved from its predecessor, the Forum on Agricultural Resource Husbandry (FORUM) programme of the Rockefeller Foundation. In July 2014, RUFORUM signed a cooperation agreement with the African Union to support the implementation of the African Union Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy (STISA 2024), and in July 2024 it renewed the MoU with The Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) of AUC for the implementation of the Malabo Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), respectively.

## The founding universities



MAKERERE UNIVERSITY



UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI



UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

## Founding Board Members



**Prof. Brasão Mazula**  
Eduardo Mondlane University  
Mozambique



**Prof. Crispus Makau Kiamba**  
University of Nairobi, Kenya



**Late Prof. David Rubadiri**  
University of Malawi, Malawi



**Prof. Some D.K**  
Moi University, Kenya



**Late Prof. Everett M. Standa**  
Kenyatta University, Kenya



**Prof. Ezra Maritim**  
Egerton University, Kenya



**Prof. John Ssebuwufu**  
Makerere University, Uganda



**Prof. Levi Martin Nyagura**  
University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe



**Prof. Nick Wanjohi**  
Jomo Kenyatta University of  
Agriculture and Technology, Kenya



**Late Prof. Rukudzo Murapa**  
Africa University, Zimbabwe



## Celebrating RUFORUM @20

### Message from the Board Chair, Prof. Theresia Nkuo-Akenji

Dear Colleagues, partners and friends of the RUFORUM family,

I send you salutations from the University of Bamenda in Cameroon.

First and foremost, it is my pleasure and single honor to extend to you on behalf of our 175 member universities sincere compliments of the New Year. I wish you all many happy returns in 2025, as we begin a new journey.

Before I continue, dear friends, partners, and colleagues, please allow me to provide a brief overview of our organization. The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)'s journey began in 2004 when its founding universities' Vice Chancellors created it as a successor of the "Forum for Agricultural Husbandry". From only 10 member universities in five countries at its onset, the network has grown exponentially to reach 175 members in 40 countries as of December 2024.



In this special edition of the RUFORUM Newsletter, specifically in the Foreword section, we pay to all the 10 founding Vice Chancellors tribute as well as to the founding Executive Secretary. To all those who have since passed, I pray for their gentle soul to rest in perfect peace. To all those who are still among us, we wish them and their respective families, long and healthy lives, peace and prosperity.

The RUFORUM Network is coordinated by a Secretariat hosted by the Government of Uganda at Makerere University Main campus in Kampala. To overcome the challenge that resulted from the exponential growth of the network, the Board approved in 2021, the establishment of regional hubs. Two such regional hubs have so far been established; one in Malawi and one in Benin for Southern and Western Africa regions, respectively. As we work towards operationalizing these two regional hubs, I wish to reiterate our deepest gratitude to the Government of Uganda for hosting the Secretariat and to the Governments of these two countries for their kind cooperation in establishing these regional hubs for our network.

Dear colleagues, partners and friends of the RUFORUM family, RUFORUM is an Africa owned and Africa operated Capacity Building instrument at the disposal of Universities, African Governments, continental policy institutions and holds the potential to support the implementation of the Second Ten Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, the Africa we want and other policy frameworks. After 20 years journey in the continent, it has now become a continental Capacity Building Institution as far as Agriculture and related sciences are concerned. This achievement was made possible owing to the dedication and unwavering support from the Honorable Vice Chancellors of the member universities, African Governments, continental bodies and all our technical and financial partners. I wish they all find here, the expression of my profound gratitude for their support. To all our technical and financial partners in Africa and beyond, we look forward to sustained engagement and collective efforts to increase our collective footprints in all the geographic regions of Africa to build capacity of Africa's youth in support of the newly refreshed CAADP Strategy and Action Plan and CAADP Kampala Declaration.



This Special Edition of the RUFORUM's Newsletter is a groundbreaking instrument with the potential to link the network members with one another. On the next pages of the Newsletter, you will discover the faces of our current member University leaders and their University logos, be able to put names on faces and learn more about what is happening at our universities. I am confident that as you peruse the Newsletter, you will enjoy reading it while learning more about our Network, the Pride of Africa.

Thank you very much.

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## Celebrating RUFORUM @20

### Message from the Executive Secretary, Prof. Patrick Okori

Dear esteemed reader,

I bring you warm greetings from the RUFORUM Secretariat, here in Kampala, Uganda. The year 2024 marked a milestone in RUFORUM's journey of contributing towards enhancing our continent's development leveraging on our natural strength of agriculture and allied subsectors of the economy. At 20 years of age, RUFORUM remains focused on its core mission of enabling Africa University effectively and efficiently generate relevant solutions to underpin the continent's transformative development aspirations. In this issue, I am pleased to provide you with an overview of RUFORUM's journey during the past two decades as we celebrate its 20th anniversary. While doing so, I found it crucial to look retrospectively from the perspectives of the FORUM on Agriculture Resource Husbandry (alias FORUM), RUFORUM's predecessor; the past two decades of RUFORUM, and to look at the future of Africa's Agricultural transformation, economic growth and higher agricultural education.



#### The Forum for Agricultural Resource Husbandry – FORUM

FORUM was a capacity development program established in 1992 by the Rockefeller Foundation that was implemented in five countries (Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda and Zimbabwe), Foundation's focus countries at the time. The countries faced unique as well as shared challenges and opportunities at that time. Uganda and Mozambique had just emerged from conflict, whilst Kenya, was expanding its university education to meet the growing demand, while Zimbabwe was a young country post independence. All these countries had also been affected by the effects of macroeconomic structural adjustment programming that had limited funding for university education especially, post-graduate education. The FORUM initiative initially focused on crop sciences gradually expanding to other disciplines of agriculture. At inception FORUM's programmes aimed "to build national and local capacity in crop management research with capability to develop alternative management-variety-resource combinations, soil fertility and biological practices, agroforestry technologies, pest management approaches and related crop management techniques; and evaluate the biological, economic and ecological effects". FORUM was implemented through competitive grants to support student training at the master's degree level. To deliver on its mission, FORUM utilized interdisciplinary, participatory and system-level approaches and worked with stakeholders beyond universities including agricultural research institutes, civil society, private sector and smallholder farmers. The FORUM Secretariat was initially headquartered in Lilongwe, Malawi and later relocated to Nairobi, Kenya.

#### Achievements of the FORUM that underpin RUFORUM

##### a) Institutional strengthening

- FORUM helped stabilize colleges, faculties and schools of agriculture in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zimbabwe by providing resources, mission and peer support, during and after the structural adjustment programmes. It also contributed to staff retention in the participating universities and built their capacity for research, student supervision, scholarly and policy works.
- The program contributed to institutional development by creating high quality graduate training programmes whose research agenda directly addressed problems facing smallholder based agriculture.

b) Enhancing networking and engagement with other ecosystem actors

- FORUM actions catalyzed collaboration among universities and with other education and research for development actors including a broad range of farmers. This enhanced relevance and contribution of University led research and training to national development.
- Over its life FORUM enabled the creation and nurture of an Africa Institution for the benefit of Africa. This resulted in building the capacity of institutions and individuals that have progressively contributed to the continent's economic growth.

c) Science solutions for development

- FORUM strengthened the contribution of its members to knowledge generation, one hundred twenty three publications done in international and regional peer reviewed journals. The publications covered crop improvement, plant protection, soil sciences, economics and social sciences.
- Scientists supported by the productivity enhancing technologies such as improved bean and soybean and cowpea varieties, a highly effective seed-dressing innovation for the control of bean fly, a soil fertility improvement technology called 'Prep-Pac' that combines a slow release rock phosphate, a nitrogen source (urea) and an inoculant.

d) Training the next generation of scientists:

- There was significant improvement in the completion rate of graduate level training reducing the completion time from 4-7 to 2 years as required in masters degrees by course work and research.
- One hundred eighty eight (188) students were trained in east and southern Africa.
- Twenty-three percent of the graduates enrolled in a PhD program while 54% were employed, presumably, often because of contacts/relationships they developed during their training.

### From FORUM to RUFORUM

After a decade of implementation (1992 – 2002), the Rockefeller Foundation supported the creation of an African led and owned organization that was called, “ The Regional Universities Forum For Capacity Building in Agriculture-(RUFORUM). RUFORUM thus naturally became the successor of The Foundation's investments for building the Capacity of African Universities to effectively engage in growth of the continent's Agriculture sector. It initially, focused on Eastern and Southern Africa as its zone of influence before growing to become a continent wide agency that it is today. The new RUFORUM Secretariat was established in Kampala, Uganda hosted by the Government via Makerere University, one of its founder members following a successful bidding by Uganda through Makerere University.

### The RUFORUM's first decade journey (2004 – 2014)

The first decade focused on consolidation of FORUM achievements and expansion both sub-regionally and continentally. The growth was guided by a new strategic plan underpinned by a new vision of “Vibrant agricultural innovation systems with fully integrated universities that play a leading role in nurturing the systems through high-performing agricultural science graduates who are innovative and responsive to changing demands”. The RUFORUM network grew to include 32 universities from its initial ten members in 2004 drawing membership from three regions of Africa (Eastern, Central and Southern Africa). It expanded the scope of operations, to include PhD training as well as institutional and leadership strengthening. RUFORUM maintained most of FORUM training, networking and scaling agenda involving principal investigators, students, academic leaders (Principals and Deans), as well as collaboration with non-university stakeholders. New governance organs were created to stabilize the organization and strategic partnership forged. Consequently by the end of the first decade, RUFORUM had emerged as a key continental agency in capacity building for agriculture and policy information that it still is today. The new regional PhD and master's degree programmes that focused on emergent areas, catalyzed the resurgence of African University in development processes and practice.



### **RUFORUM's second decade (2014 – 2024)**

The second decade journey saw a steady growth in both scale and scope. The network's operations expanded to cover all university training programmes, i.e. Bachelors, Masters and doctoral degree. To address the question of a rebalanced human resource pyramid, work transitions for fresh graduates and gender and diversity asymmetry, especially of underserved demographics, RUFORUM expanded its scope of actions to include Technical, Vocational, Education and Training (TVET), entrepreneurship, gender and inclusion, and future of work activities. Science was strengthened by the introduction of post-doctoral training. The new thrust required expansion of the stakeholder ecosystem to include farming communities, private sector and partners in the Global North and Global South. By December 2024, the network had 175 member universities in 40 of Africa's 55 countries from all five geographic regions of Africa. To strengthen service delivery and relevance, RUFORUM board in 2021 created two regional hubs (for Western and Southern Africa), eastern Africa and other regions being served through the Secretariat.

At continental level, in 2014, RUFORUM signed a cooperation agreement with the African Union Commission (AUC) to support implementation of the Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA, 2024). It also entered various memoranda with key continental agencies in the global north and south respectively, during the same period. In 2024, an MoU with the AUC's Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Blue Economy and Sustainable Environment (ARBE) to support its agricultural growth and transformation flagship programs was signed.

During its second decade, RUFORUM implemented its first operational plan (2018 – 2022) that was aligned to regional policy development frameworks such as Agenda 2063 – The Africa We Want of AUC, “The Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), Malabo Declaration, the Continental Education Strategy (CESA), the Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Educational and Training (TVET), and the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A); among others. RUFORUM's operations were framed by its continental strategy, Vision 2030 that leverages on the continent's higher education and agriculture ecosystems to create and unlock opportunities for wealth and jobs especially for young people. During the same period, RUFORUM in partnership with the Mastercard Foundation launched the flagship program “Transforming African Agricultural Universities for Africa's Growth and Development” (TAGDev Phase 1 (2016 – 2024) now in its second phase (2024 – 2034). TAGDev aims 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.

Distinguished reader, during the second decade RUFORUM intensified its partnerships with the European Union Universities and within the continent implementing academic mobility that enabled staff and student exchange including 67 academic staff across disciplines; implementing user centered initiatives for students and agriculture value chain actors such as Community Action Research projects (CARP), and CARP+ (involving TVET), and the RUFORUM entrepreneurship challenge program (RECAP) to scale out best practices. RECAPs were implemented at over 20 other universities within the network. Member university academic staff and students also benefited from RUFORUM's skills enhancement in community engagement, online resource use, work preparedness, entrepreneurship, scientific writing, and data management.

### **The RUFORUM's Third decade journey (2024 – 2034): Looking into the future**

RUFORUM begins its third decade amidst a number of major continental and global underpinnings such as the Second Ten Year Implementation plan (STYIP) of the African Union Agenda 2063, The Kampala declaration for implementation of the Comprehensive Africa's Agriculture Development Program; The Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa, The Continental Education Strategy for Africa and several refreshed national and continental development blueprints among

others. These policy instruments all point to a shared vision of a continental set to reap from its young population and endowments for its development. Pivotal to achievement of these aspirations is the need for a strong human capital base. Indeed the STYIP has already set a plan of training 100,000 PhD level scientists over this decade many of whom must be within the Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEMs). The network certainly has a crucial role to play in that regard and has aligned its operational plan to deliver on some of these policy instruments.

A common thread running through many of the national to regional and global policy instruments is the role of science and innovation in generating solutions. Accordingly, during its third decade, RUFORUM will leverage its vast network to engage education and agriculture ecosystems actors in science for development actions. Last mile science and technology delivery mechanisms will be strengthened at country (National FORUMs) to sub-regional levels (Regional hubs), existing partnerships strengthened while new partnerships forged to serve our network in mission delivery. We shall continue to implement our transformative education agenda, cognisant of fourth industrial revolution technologies and opportunities that integrate the digital, biological, and physical sectors of the economy. We will strive to close the gender and diversity gap in our operations and enhance future of work skills development. RUFORUM will remain resolute in its mission to supporting transitions to resilient economies.

In conclusion, as we navigate through the challenges of the third decade journey, I wish to reiterate our deepest acknowledgement to all our partners and governments who continue to walk this journey with us. To the Secretariat staff, our board members and members of all RUFORUM Governance Organs and all others who supported us through this 20 year long journey, I extend my deepest appreciations and wish everyone a happy and prosperous New Year 2025.

Thank you.

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## FOREWORD



The year 2024 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture [RUFORUM].

Today's RUFORUM is the result of the gigantic work done by legendary visionaries – it's ten [10] founding Vice Chancellors – 1. Prof. John Ssebuwufu [Makerere University, Uganda], 2. Prof. Levi Martin Nyagura [University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe], 3. Prof. Crispus Makau Kiamba [University of Nairobi, Kenya], 4. Prof. D.K Some [Moi University, Kenya], 5. Prof. Everett M. Standa [Kenyatta University, Kenya], 6. Prof. Ezra Maritim [Egerton University, Kenya], 7. Prof. Rukudzo Murapa [Africa University, Zimbabwe], 8. Prof. David Rubadiri [University of Malawi, Malawi], 9. Prof. Nick Wanjohi [Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya], and 10. Prof. Brasília Mazula [Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique]; and it's founding Executive Secretary Prof. Adipala Ekwamu of Makerere University, Uganda. This is a perfect illustration of the quote by Isaac Newton, 1675 who once said: "If I could see further, it was because I was standing on the shoulders of giants".

Founded in 2004 by Vice Chancellors of only 10 universities in five countries of Eastern Africa (Kenya, and Uganda), and Southern Africa (Malawi, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe), the RUFORUM network has grown exponentially to reach 175

universities in 40 countries across all the five geographic regions of Africa. The network expansion is still ongoing as its constitution has not set a limit to its expansion. The 20 years journey of RUFORUM was made possible due to the commitment, unwavering support, and active participation of all our partners including those within the network and those outside the network, both within and beyond Africa.

As RUFORUM starts its third decade journey, several new development have emerged and are driving economic development processes, which universities must consider in delivering their mission. Such new developments include youth bulge coupled with high rate of youth unemployment with 10-12 million youth entering the job market each year while the continent can offer employment to only three million graduates each year. Other new development shaping the trajectories of Africa's economic development are increased urbanization, conflicts, health crisis, gender imbalance, inequalities, climate change, advances in technological development and biotechnologies, digital agriculture and artificial intelligence, among others. It is therefore important for the RUFORUM network members to take a moment to (i) interrogate themselves on the key imperatives to be considered as the network starts a new decade (ii) discuss, share experiences, success stories, and lessons learned during the past 20 years; as the network starts a new decade journey.

This special edition of the RUFORUM's Newsletter is a compilation of statements collected from leaders of African Higher and Tertiary Agricultural Education and Research Institutions and Universities that make up the RUFORUM network. By publishing this Special Newsletter, RUFORUM aims at giving the honorable leaders of the network a platform to express themselves, hear the voices of each other on their perspectives on higher agricultural education, research and innovations to guide the network operations for the new decade.

The statements highlight the challenges and opportunities in the agricultural research and innovation landscape focusing on national level, sub regional, continental and global levels. The Honorable



Vice Chancellors, Rectors, Presidents and Directors of the RUFORUM network also shared their views, university and country based experiences and perspectives for advancing Africa's Higher Agricultural Education and RUFORUM's activities for driving agricultural transformation to feed Africa and create wealth in the continent. Most importantly, many of the statements stressed – out the RUFORUM value proposition to its network members including but not limited to:

- Regular access to scholarships and research financing opportunities
- Training of graduate students (PhD, Master, and Postdoctoral students)
- Access to entrepreneurship training to create a new generation of leaders that create jobs for themselves and others
- Setting up and supporting Agric entrepreneurship incubation centers at member universities
- Training programs for faculty members to improve their teaching methodologies, and research capabilities, especially in scientific data collection and management, ensuring they are well equipped to deliver high quality education and conduct impactful research
- Offering international Biennial and Triennial Conferences to enhance students' research skills and knowledge in agricultural sciences
- Provision of research grants and funding opportunities, to enable researchers address local agricultural challenges and contribute to sustainable development
- Partnership brokerage between institutions within the RUFORUM network by promoting collaborative research projects that facilitate knowledge exchange and the sharing of best practices.
- North – South Partnership brokerage
- Resource mobilization for the network
- Increasing the voice and participation of universities in national and global development processes

The publication contains statements collected from 56 Vice Chancellors, Rectors, Presidents and / or Director General of RUFORUM member universities across the continent. They come from 23 countries (Benin, Cameroon, Chad, DRC, Ethiopia, Ghana,

Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritius, Mogadishu, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, The Gambia, Uganda, and Zimbabwe) of the 40 where RUFORUM member universities are based. With a representation of 32% of member universities from 57.5% of the countries in the network, the statements depict situations that generally prevail in the African Higher Agricultural Research and Innovation, and Education ecosystem. Therefore, the rich and diverse content of the statements in terms of country specific context, challenges, opportunities, experiences, lessons learned, success stories, recommendations and future prospects by our network leaders constitutes a fairly good guiding document for advancing human capital development to drive agrifood systems transformation required to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals [SDGs] and the aspirations of Agenda 2063, the Africa We Want.

Therefore, it is my pleasure to extend our deepest gratitude to all our network leaders who took time to respond to our request by delivering quality write – up of their statements, photos, and university logos in a timely manner, in spite of their busy schedules. Our sincere gratitude is also to all our partners both within and outside the network, within Africa and all over the world for trusting RUFORUM and for the continuous support to RUFORUM for successful mission delivery as a continental capacity building institution in agriculture and related disciplines. The Strategic Partnerships office staff [Mr. David Ekepu and Ms. Nada Musa who supported the statements' collection process] and Ms. Becky Namubiru, the Publication Assistant are here deeply acknowledged.

The RUFORUM Executive Secretary Prof. Patrick Okori is acknowledged for the overall leadership as well as the entire RUFORUM Secretariat for the unwavering support that made possible, the publication of this Special Newsletter to celebrate RUFORUM for the 20 years journey.

Happy Anniversary RUFORUM. Best wishes to the Network with this third decade journey

**Dr. Sokona Dagnoko**

Head of the Strategic Partnerships Unit

Makerere University, Uganda  
Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe  
Vice Chancellor



Established in 1922, as a technical college, Makerere became part of the University of East Africa in 1963, offering degrees awarded by the University of London. In 1970 it became an independent institution when the University of East Africa split into three independent

universities including the universities of Nairobi and Dar es Salaam.

Since 2011, the university has operated under a collegiate system, comprising ten constituent colleges including the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES), each functioning as a semi-autonomous unit.

The Genesis of RUFORUM at Makerere University  
RUFORUM evolved from the Rockefeller Foundation Program (FORUM) initiated in 1992 to strengthen faculties of agriculture in 10 universities in East and Southern Africa (in Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, and Zimbabwe). At the end of the FORUM Program in 2002, the Rockefeller Foundation solicited bids to host the successor organization (RUFORUM). Subsequently, the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under the leadership of Hon. Eriya Kategaya (RIP) submitted a winning bid to host the RUFORUM Secretariat in Uganda and offered space at Makerere University. A Memorandum of Understanding was subsequently signed between RUFORUM and the Government of Uganda (Ministry of Education and Sports). RUFORUM became operational in 2004 with a Secretariat at Makerere University Main Campus.



Supporting quality agricultural higher education and research in Africa

The task of providing quantity higher agricultural education and research to enable sustainable production of healthy and nutritious food for rapidly expanding populations, especially in Africa, is daunting. Universities have a crucial role in meeting this challenge while working together with research organizations, national governments, farmers and businesses. Makerere is one of such universities in Africa that is training the next generation of agriculturalists and equipping them with the skills needed to operate effectively in a dynamic environment, responding to challenges and capitalising on emerging opportunities. We are contributing new knowledge that continues to enhance agricultural productivity and help to improve the livelihoods of farming households.

Despite the limited resources at our disposal and large increases in student numbers at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, Makerere University has been very deliberate on Agricultural research through its various projects at the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences (CAES). This is bolstered by groundbreaking research output through the Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute Kabanyolo (MUARIK) which was established as a farm in 1953, and upgraded to a fully-fledged Research Institute in 1992 under the then Faculty of Agriculture. RUFORUM has made commendable efforts to support CAES to revise curricula and adopt learning and teaching methods that prepare students for the workplace, whether in employment or self-employment. This is a continuing process and partnerships with universities in Africa and other regions of the world continue to add value.

RUFORUM and Makerere University benefit from an exchange of experiences from other initiatives. For example, through the RUFORUM member universities network, Makerere collaborates on academic programmes with universities across

the continent in which a range of mechanisms are used to enhance the practical knowledge and skills of students. These mechanisms include, Staff and student academic mobility, Graduate Trainship Programs, capacity strengthening of career centres, re-orientation of university teachings towards field-based training, collaborative proposal writing and research, and the establishment and facilitation of platforms for cooperation with the professional sector. Makerere also took leadership in the Graduate Fellowship Scheme, training more than 20 PhDs for Africa.

Some of the achievements so far

Since its establishment, RUFORUM has supported the training of 2,909 students (2,053 MSc, 627 PhD, and 229 Bachelors Students) from all over Africa, in different African Universities as part of building Africa's Capacity for Capacity Development and promoting pan-Africanism, of whom 98% work in their countries or region. Some of the products of RUFORUM-supported research, such as two soybean varieties developed in Uganda at MUARIK are now being grown throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. RUFORUM has also mobilized over US\$236 million for African Universities that is channeled through Uganda to the various countries for strengthening postgraduate education in Africa. Specifically, RUFORUM has contributed over US\$50.5 million through research, scholarships and institutional support to universities in Uganda. Most of the support has come to Makerere University as the oldest and largest university in the country.

A good will message

As RUFORUM celebrates its 20th anniversary of facilitating the creation of vibrant transformative universities that are catalysing sustainable inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa, Makerere University congratulates the network of 175 universities on the milestones of the past 20 years and looks forward to the continued partnerships.

Makerere has embarked on positioning itself as a research-led university. We aspire to generate new knowledge in the various fields such as Technology,

Medicine, Agriculture, Business and other Sciences, with the objective of improving livelihoods of individuals and communities locally and beyond. In this regard, the University has developed new research strategies and directions and strengthened graduate training and management, and will continue strengthening partnerships with networks like RUFORUM, which provide leverage for agricultural research.

As a thought leader of knowledge generation for societal transformation and development, Makerere University is building on the so many vital achievements in research and innovations over the last 100 years to establish and sustain partnerships with industry players like RUFORUM to transform its research into commercial products. And through strategic partners like RUFORUM, Makerere University has repositioned herself as a leader in graduate training, and innovations that promote knowledge transfer and respond to the developmental and social wellbeing of society.

In the context of changing global trends and increasing competition in higher education, we have made it a priority to further strengthen our academic development and research as well as student experiences. Part of this includes leveraging our wealth of experience in liberal arts and applied sciences education as well as research to collaborate with eminent universities to further our research ambitions, collaborate with industry players and elevate our reputation in the international academic arena.

Makerere University as a founder member of RUFORUM and is one of the main beneficiaries of the Competitive Grants System. We are therefore grateful to RUFORUM for the support to our students and staff to undertake projects that are deemed strategic to generate research and development solutions.

In conclusion, and most importantly, we undertake to accord all necessary support to our students to secure timely completion of their training and research programmes.

As we Build for the Future.



Eduardo Mondlane University (UEM), Mozambique  
Prof. Dr. Manuel Guilherme Júnior  
Rector



UEM is proud to be a founding member of RUFORUM. Since its foundation, in August 1962, UEM has been referenced as a leader in Higher Education in Mozambique in the training of staff in Agriculture.

Despite the current challenges marked by the growing demand for postgraduate

education, infrastructure development, and staffing, UEM remains engaged in creating the conditions to fulfill its role as a driver of agricultural development in Mozambique and Africa, in general, through teaching, research, innovation, and extension in

collaboration with other African universities through RUFORUM. The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture [RUFORUM], a network of more than 170 African Universities, is committed to training highly skilled staff and producing knowledge through research and innovation that serves the rapid development of agriculture, fight against poverty, and address the challenges posed by climate change in Africa. This network of Universities plays a fundamental influencing role in the changes brought about by the University Eduardo Mondlane for the improvement of teaching and learning, research, innovation, and extension and in the policies and strategies for the development of Agriculture in Mozambique.

Therefore, we congratulate RUFORUM for 20 years of achievements and look forward to more years of successes and partnerships. The UEM counts and will always count on the Organization.



Africa University, Zimbabwe  
Rev. Prof. Peter Mageto  
Vice Chancellor

On behalf of Africa University, it is a profound honor to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture [RUFORUM]. As one of the founding members of this transformative network, Africa University takes immense pride in the milestones achieved and the enduring impact RUFORUM has made across the continent.

Since its inception in 2004, RUFORUM has stood as a beacon of collaboration, innovation, and excellence in higher agricultural education. The forum's unwavering commitment to capacity building has empowered countless students, researchers, and academic institutions, fostering a new generation of leaders equipped to address Africa's agricultural challenges with ingenuity and resilience.

Africa University's involvement with RUFORUM

has enriched our own academic and research endeavors. Through collaborative projects, extensive networking, and robust policy advocacy, we have witnessed first-hand the power of collaboration and shared vision in driving agricultural development. The synergy created within RUFORUM has also contributed significantly to the broader goal of achieving food security and sustainable development



across Africa.

As we celebrate this momentous occasion, we also look forward to the future with optimism and determination. The challenges facing Africa's agricultural sector are vast and complex, but with continued dedication to capacity building, digital economies, innovative research, and strong policy advocacy, we can turn these challenges into opportunities through academia-industry partnerships.

At Africa University, we remain steadfast in our

commitment to the ideals of RUFORUM. We will continue to contribute to and benefit from this vibrant network, ensuring that our educational and research Programmes are aligned with the evolving needs of Africa's agricultural landscape. Together, we will build a brighter, more sustainable future for our continent.

Congratulations to RUFORUM on two decades of remarkable achievements. May the next twenty years bring even greater successes as we work together to transform agriculture and uplift communities across Africa.

Haramaya University, Ethiopia  
Dr. Jemal Yousuf Hassen  
President



As President of Haramaya University, one pioneer member university from Ethiopia, it is a great pleasure and honor to reflect on what RUFORUM meant and remains to be for Africa's higher learning agricultural institutions. Over a decade, the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity

Building in Agriculture [RUFORUM] has been a beacon of innovation and resilience in the transformation of agricultural higher education across Africa. With unwavering dedication, RUFORUM has empowered universities, fostered research, and nurtured the next generation of leaders who are poised to address the continent's agricultural challenges.

Established with the ambition to create a coordinated and responsive agricultural education system, RUFORUM has evolved into a consortium of prestigious universities in African countries. Their vision of a vibrant agricultural sector championed by skilled graduates and cutting-edge research initiatives has driven transformative changes across the continent.

One of RUFORUM's cornerstones is its commitment

to strengthening member universities and amplifying their impact. Through targeted funding, capacity-building and graduate training Programmes, policy advocacy and collaborative networks, RUFORUM has enhanced the ability of these institutions to deliver high-quality education and research. From curriculum development to infrastructural improvement, RUFORUM has invigorated universities, enabling them to better serve their students and communities.

Research is the lifeblood of RUFORUM's mission. By fostering partnerships and providing research grants, RUFORUM has catalyzed numerous research projects tackling pressing issues such as food security, entrepreneurship, women empowerment, climate change, and sustainable agricultural practices. These collaborative endeavors not only advance scientific knowledge but also offer tangible solutions that resonate within communities, influencing both policy and practice.

Central to RUFORUM's success is its focus on developing human capital. Through scholarships, mentorship Programmes, and practical training opportunities, RUFORUM has touched the lives of thousands of students. These initiatives have cultivated a cadre of professionals equipped with the expertise and leadership skills necessary to spearhead agricultural transformation in their respective countries.

RUFORUM fosters collaboration among universities to enhance educational curriculum, share resources, and facilitate research. By creating a network of

member universities in different African countries, RUFORUM has helped institutions collaborate on joint projects, share expertise, and elevate educational standards. Through partnerships with international organizations like European Union, USAID, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Mastercard Foundation, the AUC, the World Bank, etc., RUFORUM attracts funding and technical expertise to support agricultural education and research initiatives. These collaborations often lead to the creation of scholarships, grants, and capacity-building Programmes for students and faculty. For example, with support of RUFORUM, Haramaya University initiated two regional masters Programme [MSc In Agrometeorology and Disaster Risk management and, MSc in Agricultural Informatics & Communication Management] where students from different African countries are hosted.

As part of resource mobilization, RUFORUM assists member universities in writing and submitting

grant proposals to various funding agencies. Their collective efforts and strategic proposal writing have successfully garnered substantial financial resources to enhance research capabilities and infrastructure at member institutions. For example, RUFORUM played a key role in the establishment of Haramaya University's African Center of Excellence in Climate Smart Agriculture and Biodiversity Conservation, funded by the World Bank.

Haramaya University will continue to be committed to RUFORUM's future engagement, an engagement which is rooted in progress and success. RUFORUM will remain a crucial pillar in the ongoing quest for agricultural excellence and sustainability in Africa. The coming years promise further advancements and a sustained impact, ensuring that RUFORUM is central to Africa's agricultural renaissance.

Happy 20th anniversary RUFORUM!



The National University of Lesotho [NUL] is one of the oldest members of the RUFORUM network that joined in 2009. Hence, NUL has witnessed the past two decades of the journey of RUFORUM. Below are a few highlights of the network achievements during the past 20 years of capacity building, networking and policy advocacy in Africa:

Capacity Building – RUFORUM is intensively and extensively involved in capacity building of youths in terms of training by offering members of the network with access to opportunities such as:

- (i) Graduate Teaching Assistantship [GTA]
- (ii) Postgraduate Fellowship Programmes
- (iii) Traineeship for Young graduates
- (iv) Youth projects' competition award
- (v) Scholarships for PhDs and MSc positions in the framework of the Intra Africa PATH project
- (vi) Research grants to University lecturers so that MSc students are trained in research methodology and analysis of result and writing
- (vii) Deans and Vice-Chancellors fora for discussion on current and emerging issues in agriculture and how to mitigate these challenges and also

The National University of Lesotho (NUL), Lesotho  
Prof. Olusola Isaac Fajana  
Vice Chancellor

build capacity to mainstream mitigation strategies into the higher agricultural education.

#### Networking

- (i) RUFORUM is in the forefront of bringing African Universities together in terms of harmonisation of higher agricultural education Programmes/curriculum
- (ii) RUFORUM is in the forefront of seeking funding/resources for African universities in the development of agriculture
- (iii) Placement of students and researchers in other international universities for 'cross-pollination' of knowledge and ideas in the area of agriculture





### Policy advocacy in Africa

RUFORUM is also participating in policy formulation towards an African unified policy on higher agricultural education in every country as a standard to be adopted in all African universities. This will further strengthen and improve agricultural productivity, leading to sustainable agriculture and lowering the poverty level all over Africa.

The National University of Lesotho's perspectives for the upcoming decade are:

- To shift from the traditional modules to modern modules in the development of curriculum so as to address current and emerging issues that limit agricultural productivity. These modern issues, such as climate change with its accompanied effect of global warming, affects all aspects of agriculture
- Incorporation of modern learning/teaching methods that will facilitate faster delivery of teaching and also faster understanding

and assimilation of knowledge that is being disseminated

- More focus should be on agricultural skill acquisition in terms of methods that will make agricultural graduates more practically oriented after leaving the four corners of the university
- Introduction of short and relevant credits courses into the curriculum that target on skill acquisition to boost agricultural productivity
- E-farming courses be introduced into higher agricultural education at all levels to boost agricultural productivity in Africa.

All these new innovative learning methods if properly implemented in the African agricultural learning ecosystem will lead to a sustainable agricultural productivity in Africa.

We wish RUFORUM a happy 20th anniversary.

University of Gezira, Sudan  
Prof. Salaheldin M. Elarabi  
Vice Chancellor



The RUFORUM had kept its strategies to catch up its goals in an excellent manner with a high standard of follow-up and assessment. For more efficient outcomes in the future, I am pleased to propose what I can call "Concentrated Potential Based Research and Capacity Building Programmes". This is a kind of research

and capacity building that should concentrate on the potentials that African sub-region or countries have. This is because of the diversity of climate in different areas of Africa which returns different agricultural products. In this aspect, the SWOT principle can be adopted to define and determine country/region- products' theory. Simply, this theory states clearly which region, country, or area can

accommodate a special and successful research or training Programme based on its agricultural potentials that will end up with a real outcome which in turn can be implemented in other areas, countries and regions of similar potentials. This will allow more modifications of such projects and will also prevent the repetition of research work. The overall outcome of such work will result in a roadmap for research and training throughout the whole continent.

Another issue of worth-mentioning is what if we think to establish a central agricultural academic institution (say RUFORUM University OR Africa Agricultural University) where-in RUFORUM will achieve its goals easily. In such institution, the highly skilled researchers, academic faculties and expertise can carry out their research work coming up from their ideas emerging from their experiences. They can also hire talented young researchers from the whole African countries to do a targeted research work to fulfil the development strategies in their countries. Capacity building and training Programmes can also be proposed in such institution to bridge the gap of the development

needs for each country or region. Such central institution will benefit from the experiences of African scientists from all over the world who worked for decades at international organizations having their research potentials available in this institution. They will find a platform to exchange their ideas, transfer their knowledge to bridge the gap between Africa and other developed countries. This will definitely lead to localization of technology in Africa. It will also be more important to think about industrialization of the agricultural products which will give an added value to these products. This will create job opportunities leading to a better life standard for our societies resulting in better food quality, better health care and better education. Education will lead to a better future for our societies.

RUFORUM activities have been of high effects on the continent agricultural personnel capacity building. This is well achieved by dense training Programmes, research work that is focusing on agriculture activities and the discussion sessions taking place through different assemblies inter-country and intra-country. RUFORUM has successfully created networks between different countries so that exchange of data and expertise became easy and effective leading to day-after-day development of specialists and young

researchers. RUFORUM has also made a good base for advocating policies for African countries to benefit from its activities. However, the approach of agricultural high education in Africa has to shift from theory to practical and experimental learning. Thus, curricula need to be developed to meet these requirements and the lecturers should change their minds to be able to facilitate on field-learning and farmer's interactions and discussions. In this aspect, investment in agricultural education may become a way-out to think differently in developing this sector by adopting new ideas for teaching and a good-based training for students [more modernized curricula]. This will equip the future young generations with high skills and knowledge to ensure food security and economic prosperity.

One of the brightest and shouting activities leading to the encouragement of youth to develop their capabilities in agriculture is the exhibitions that are accompanying the annual RUFORUM Statutory Meetings and conferences. This is leading to a further encouragement of attendees from other countries to deal with the new ideas being highlighted in the conferences.

We congratulate RUFORUM on its 20th anniversary.



University of Kordofan, Sudan  
Prof. Dr. Abdalla Mohamed Abdalla  
Vice Chancellor

With due respect, we would like to very much appreciate the eminent role played by the reputed RUFORUM in the realm of development of the tertiary education, emphatically agricultural one. On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of RUFORUM, we would like to share our ideas to be integrated with other perspectives for distinguished and sustainable contribution for the welfare of our beloved continent.

In this context, we believe that nowadays many challenges posed in Africa such as poverty, food insecurity and security unrest are being aggravated by recurrent drought episodes and evident climate variability and change. Such grievous situation substantiates robust interventions based on rational planning to get through these challenges. Higher agricultural

education institutions are envisaged as the impetus to rectify and contain these challenges.

Since early 1990s, Sudan experienced unprecedented horizontal expansion in higher education institutions with emphasis on agricultural education to meet the needs for the skilled cadres. However, that expansion was not coupled with quality considerations, i.e. production and transfer



of new technologies and innovations to boost the agricultural productivity and production with sustainable use of natural resources. Consequently, we perceive that higher agricultural education should be harnessed for environment and community problem-solving as necessitated by novel curricula that equip the graduates with professional skills enabling them to be ready for running agribusiness and entrepreneurship. One of the challenges facing agriculture in Sudan, is the issue of power, though the country is endowed with environmentally friendly renewable energy sources. Therefore, the higher education curricula should focus on such viable energy sources. It is worth-mentioning that the

ongoing war in Sudan since April 15th 2023, higher education has witnessed devastating repercussions in terms of teaching and learning infrastructures, staff members and equipments. Therefore, alternative hybrid methods such as online and electronic teaching and learning should be considered side by side with face-to-face teaching methods. Finally, further staff members training and exchange in addition to networking with RUFORUM member Universities is indispensable.

The University of Kordofan wishes RUFORUM a happy 20th anniversary.

Uganda Martyrs University (UMU), Uganda  
Prof. Patrick E. Kyamanywa  
Vice Chancellor



With over 5 decades of post-colonial self-rule, Africa as a continent, people and economic player, is at its last count on the launch to a great powerhouse in all aspects of social, economic and political global development. The global geo-politics today favours Africa. Home to 30 percent of the world's natural

resources, 24 percent of the world's agricultural land; 60 percent of the world's uncultivated arable land, the youngest and fastest growing population, and the fastest growing economies, Africa is well suited to become a major mover and shaker of the future. However, to fully harness this potential requires a focused and strategic engagement of all stakeholders most especially the institutions of higher learning, governments and international non-governmental organisations to offer leadership, policy and funding. The relevance of universities can only be demonstrated through solid and sustainable socio-economic transformation of the communities they serve.

The challenges we face today include the loss of indigenous agricultural knowledge and practices; loss of indigenous, robust and environmentally friendly agricultural inputs; the rapid adoption and spread of genetically modified high-input-intensive agricultural solutions which have economically excluded the communities; and the inadequate [in most cases absent] curriculum provision for community exposure and problem solving by the students of agriculture. There is loss of relevance and sync between the higher agricultural education, research, policy landscape, practice and the communities.

Africa's agricultural universities have come together through the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture [RUFORUM] to leverage the available pool of expertise, research and innovative minds, and to develop local capacity to champion evidence-based transformative and sustainable agricultural practices and policies. The power of partnerships cannot be over emphasized. Public, private and civil society organizations coming together around a strategic cause ensures everyone is on board. However, the future of Africa's higher agricultural education and research, RUFORUM's efforts and policy advocacy need to get back to the communities, emphasizing co-creation by all critical stakeholders; systematic collection, management and use of data; and providing transformative solutions that will be sustainable for Africa's food

production and environmental protection. Doing so, will contribute towards achievement of Goal 2 of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) – “To end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.” SDG 2 is central to the achievement of the other goals

either as a direct or indirect driver. We must all be active players in this if it is to become a reality.

Congratulations RUFORUM on your 20th anniversary.



Kyambogo University, Uganda  
Prof. Eli Katunguka Rwakishaya  
Vice Chancellor

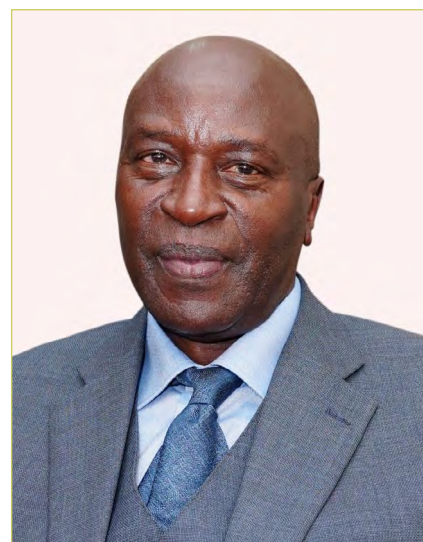
The quality of agricultural education and training is a key driver of Africa's agricultural sector which is a major contributor to economic growth, food security, and poverty reduction. Coupled with a youthful population and abundant natural resources, there is need to empowering future leaders, researchers, and practitioners through agricultural education. The strategic direction of Uganda's Development Plan [VISION 2040] takes agro industrialization as a key driver of the country's economy due to the dominance of agriculture as a source of livelihood.

Indeed this is in-line with the Global aspirations of SDG2 & 9, to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture as well as promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation. It is also cognizant of SDG 8 that seeks to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. In addition, it contributes to Agenda 2063 (Goal5) which seeks to have modern agriculture for increased production and productivity.

Kyambogo University is therefore contributing to the Human Capital Development of the country through training graduates in regard to the quality and relevancy of higher education in science and technology for stimulating economic growth and development. The realization of this mandate is heavily influenced by challenges which cut across the several Higher Education Institutions on the continent. These include; limited physical and human resources, skills gaps that reduce the graduates employability and effectiveness in contributing to agricultural development, relevance of curricula to contemporary issues, and gender disparities in agricultural education

and leadership positions. There are several strategies for improvement that could be adopted through Capacity Building and Networking at national, regional and global level. These include:

1. Enhancing Funding and Infrastructure: Investments in agricultural education must be prioritized by governments and stakeholders. This includes upgrading infrastructure, providing modern equipment, and ensuring continuous professional development for educators.
2. Industry-Academia Collaboration: Strengthening partnerships between educational institutions and the agricultural industry can address the skills gap. Internships, apprenticeships, and joint research initiatives can provide students with practical experience, enhancing their employability.
3. Curriculum Modernization: Updating curricula to reflect current scientific and technological advancements is essential. Modules on climate-smart agriculture, digital farming, and agribusiness management can better prepare students for contemporary challenges.
4. Promoting Gender Equality: Increasing female participation in agricultural education through





scholarships, mentorship Programmes, and supportive learning environments can help bridge the gender gap and empower women in agriculture.

RUFORUM's Contribution to Capacity Building and Networking at Kyambogo University. Kyambogo University has benefited from the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)'s capacity building and networking initiatives to address the challenges of Africa's agricultural education and research. Capacity Building initiatives at Kyambogo University have focused on; Postgraduate Training, Research Grants, and Staff Training under the GTA Programmes. Support to Networking and Collaboration has been enhanced through Regional Networks that facilitate collaboration on research and educational Programmes, Annual Conferences that bring together academics, researchers, policymakers, and industry stakeholders for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and dissemination of research findings, and Partnerships with International Institutions to enhance the global competitiveness of African agricultural education through joint research projects, exchange

Programmes, and capacity-building initiatives. RUFORUM emphasizes the importance of innovation and entrepreneurship in Higher Education Institutions so as to transform agriculture production and productivity. Such initiative that Kyambogo University wishes to engage in Agribusiness Incubation and Innovation Platforms to increase the interactions between researchers, trainees and industry players to allow for co-creation and ownership of research and knowledge outputs.

In conclusion, the future of Africa's agricultural sector is intricately linked to the quality of its agricultural education. Addressing existing challenges through enhanced funding, curriculum modernization, industry collaboration, and gender inclusivity is paramount. RUFORUM's contributions to capacity building and networking are crucial in transforming agricultural education across the continent. By empowering the next generation of agricultural leaders, researchers, and entrepreneurs, Africa can unlock its agricultural potential and achieve sustainable development.

The University of Kyambogo congratulates RUFORUM on its 20th anniversary.

Mzuzu University, Malawi  
Prof. Wales Singini  
Vice Chancellor



Africa's higher education training needs to continue with transformation agenda through faculty capacity building at high level and infrastructure development for quality teaching and learning and also for conducting

cutting edge research. RUFORUM has done tremendously well in capacity building through grants and its Graduate Teaching Assistanship [GTA] Programme, connecting higher education institutions and policymakers through various interventions. We need to sustain the interventions during the RUFORUM upcoming decade.

Congratulations RUFORUM on your 20th anniversary commemoration.



University of Juba (UoJ), South Sudan  
Prof. Robert M. Deng  
Vice Chancellor

In response to RUFORUM's email of June the 13th, 2024 [that was channelled via Prof. John Akec the immediate former Vice Chancellor], I am thrilled to share the following short perspective statement on Africa's Higher Agricultural Education and RUFORUM's activities of capacity building in agriculture, networking and policy advocacy in South Sudan.

At the onset, the University of Juba (UoJ) a higher learning public entity in South Sudan, established in 1975, was mainly to train human cadres to address the developmental needs and rationally exploit the country's vast natural resources. The College of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies [which comprises seven departments i.e., Agricultural Sciences; Animal Production; Environmental Studies; Fisheries; Forestry; Geology and Mining, and Wildlife] was one of its four founding colleges and the main motive behind opening of the University.

Due to the civil war and deterioration in security situations, UoJ was temporarily relocated to Khartoum, and during its sojourn in Khartoum that lasted almost two decades (1989 - 2011), UoJ rose to prominence as one of the best universities in the country, it witnessed phenomenal and unprecedented growth, in terms of infrastructure, number of colleges, schools, centres, and Programmes of quality; the student population grew to over 15,000. But while all these developments were taking place in Khartoum, nothing was practically done to develop the infrastructure at the Juba campus. This has become the greatest challenge for successive university administrations. When the first South Sudanese Vice-Chancellor was appointed in late 2006, he inherited not only a monster but had to struggle with the huge daunting task of relocating the University back to Juba amidst mounting political pressure and public expectations. However, with the independence of South Sudan [ on the 9th of July 2011 ], UoJ lost a very significant number of its staff, the entire main library with over 90, 000 titles deed, and financial and physical assets to Sudan, which subsequently in 2012 encapsulated into establishment of Bahry University in Khartoum North, Sudan. But while there was

consensus that the University of Juba had to return to its original campus in Juba, there was no matching financial support to back up that process.

Currently, At the Juba campus, UoJ have haphazardly close to 29,000 undergraduate students and 4,000 postgraduate students, approximately 750 academic staff, over 1000 administrative, technical, and support staff; 105 postgraduate, undergraduate, diploma, and certificate Programmes [of which 43 are postgraduate Programmes]. The student population and the faculty are spread across 23 schools, 2 colleges, 4 specialized centres, and 3 institutes, all cramped into facilities designed for less than 1,000 students before being relocated to Khartoum. That has severely compromised the learning environment as well as the learning outcomes. It is a truism that the University grew considerably while in exile in Khartoum and had to be brought back to its original but returning to a small and dilapidated campus with an overgrown student population, and in unplanned, unguided expansion is no Sunday school picnic, but rather a recipe for a disaster at best. Indeed, they pose many problems and tricky challenges that the new University Administration will continue to grapple with.

It is no brainer that with the birth of South Sudan as a country in 2011, UoJ is expected to stand responsive to the national task at hand, imparting the necessary skills required in undertaking agricultural training and research, rational and sustainable utilisation of the natural resources, whilst contributing substantively to agricultural and rural development. But if the country must achieve progress in attaining food and nutrition security it required, UoJ must meet its daunting tasks



i.e., its national mandate constructively, it must have the appropriate required facilities and environment for training of a quality human capital and a steady flow of budgetary allocation, but most importantly it is incumbent that the government of the day has to ascertain the quality of cadres it requires.

UoJ must then embrace science substantively and what science and research can bring to South Sudan's agriculture and rural development. UoJ must objectively adjust its vision, mission and objectives, as well as, substantively adjust its agricultural curriculum, adapting appropriate new teaching and learning models and techniques and emphasise practical applications, to advance agriculture [both crops and livestock production] and rural development. Besides its teaching, research and public service Programmes, UoJ has developed working partnerships via a memorandum of understanding with several agricultural technical vocational centres, agricultural financial institutions, and governmental and non-governmental organisations, with the main motive of imparting practical technical skills to the rural communities, utilising the use of interactive learning while making use of new methods of communication. At the salient pitch, UoJ is open to collaboration with universities in both the global north and south and UN agencies to develop a food system, that is resilient to stress and shocks whilst addressing food and nutrition insecurity issues inherent to the current protracted crises South Sudan is experiencing.

At the outset and in the interest of this statement, it is reflective, refreshing and worthy to note that the University of Juba fully joined the network of the RUFORUM Universities in 2013, with great hope and expectations of addressing together some peculiarities of South Sudan's food and nutrition insecurity and rural development [i.e., development of human capital required for food system transformation; eradicating the pandemic food & nutrition insecurity, rational utilisation of the country's vast natural resources, environmental degradation and the effects of climate change and transforming

the faculty to be responsive to those peculiarities in a robust manner.

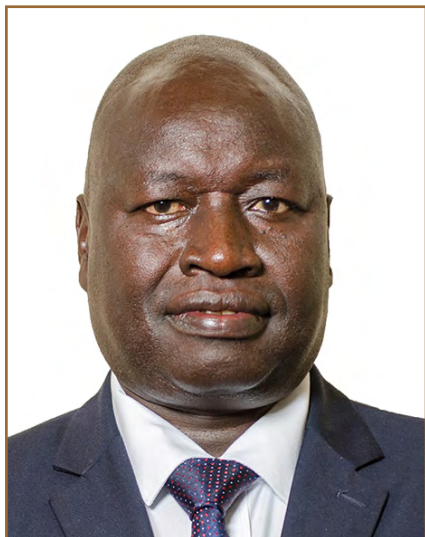
As UoJ new team leader, I take this opportunity to thank the Executive Secretary of the RUFORUM for his able leadership and for this timely moment of taking stock of our accomplishments reflectively. We shall remain greatly indebted to RUFORUM its RECAP (RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Programme) project which culminated in the MSc Programme [in Entrepreneurship and Agribusiness], as well as the opportunity for funding 4 postgraduate scholars and facilitation of curriculum development for a PhD Programme in Climate Change and Natural Resources Management, besides participation in the RUFORUM annual general meetings.

As we strive to establish and strengthen various aspects of agricultural education in this collaboration and partnership, I would like to reaffirm our commitment to the shared objectives and realignment with the RUFORUM's strategic thrusts. It is in that context we invoke for urgent need to develop a shared tool, that periodically takes stock of the progress and accomplishment, and provides members with an instrument of action-reflection-action, or a system that provides RUFORUM, beneficiaries and stakeholders with systematic and periodic feedback on the implementation and delivery of the RUFORUM activities and interventions, with an early indicator of progress or failure, so that a timely intervention[s] [or informed decisions] and adjustment can be undertaken, for the timely realisations of the shared strategic thrusts [i.e., the African Universities' Agenda for Agricultural Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (AHESTI) and the continental agenda and pledges]. It is the education that can bring the desired quality of life to Africa, it could not be better stated than the quote of Nelson Mandela that "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

We thank RUFORUM for 20 years in service of Africa's agricultural higher education.



University of Eldoret (UoE), Kenya  
 Prof. Thomas Kimeli Cheruiyot  
 Vice Chancellor



The University of Eldoret was established upon the award of Charter in 2013, having been a constituent college of Moi University and was founded in 1946 by the white settlers initially as a Large-Scale Farmers Training Centre. The University is Science, Environment / Natural Resource, Agriculture and Technology based

institution and has grown steadily from the initial Schools of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Science to the current 7 schools with 34 academic departments and a student population above 14,000. The total University acreage is 1,054, part of which is set aside for agricultural production, especially Seed production and Dairy improvement Programme.

The UoE pursues the principle of “Continuous engagement with smallholder farmers” and it does this through the Outreach center which has developed robust collaboration with farmers and the communities within its vicinity. Most postgraduate research work is performed on the farmers’ fields and with the farmers. The Motto of the University is “Flame of Knowledge and Innovation” and we are strong in agricultural research and have developed many innovations, especially crop varieties of wheat, barley, maize, sorghum, potatoes, Dolichos

and pyrethrum.

The University is currently involved in agribusiness incubation along four value chains namely Dairy, Fisheries, Mushroom and grain flour. We have the annual Agribusiness Trade Fair (ABTF), which is a one-stop shop involving the University, industry service providers and the farmers. Of course, policy makers both at the National and County levels are not left out. Last year 2023, this event attracted over 13,000 farmers, 25 sponsors and about 70 exhibitors.

The University of Eldoret is a very active member of RUFORUM. The UoE has had collaborative research projects through RUFORUM from the FORUM days to the first CARPs (Community Action Research Projects); many Graduate Research Grants (GRGs) and now one of the participants in the TAGDev 2.0 (Transforming Africa’s Agricultural Universities to Meaningfully Contribute to Growth and Development) project. We are happy to be a member of RUFORUM, a network of more than 170 African universities and therefore, a befitting gateway to collaboration and partnerships with international players. Through RUFORUM and with RUFORUM we have increased our networks, and impact locally and even internationally. RUFORUM provide good fora for policy advocacy and its many activities have enabled us to increase the internationalization of our academic Programmes and improve our visibility worldwide.

Happy 20th anniversary!





University of Abomey-Calavi, Republic of Benin  
Prof. Avlessi Felicien  
Rector

The University of Abomey-Calavi (UAC) is Benin's first public and multidisciplinary university established in 1970 with more than 50 years of experience and expertise in partnerships. At the University of Abomey-Calavi, more than 80 000 students were enrolled in 2023 with about 1/3 of them women. UAC's vision is to build a more modern, autonomous and, radiant university that trains quality human resources and offers all users a friendly and harmonious working space for the development of Benin and Africa.

As it is, the Univesity of Abomey-Calavi has numerous perspectives for Africa's Higher Agricultural Education. Among them, the curriculum modernization should be a priority and should integrate for Africa's higher agricultural education the skills such as precision farming, data analytics, and remote sensing. Also, the sustainable agricultural practices such as agroecology, food systems, and agroforestry should be integrated into the curricula to address environmental concerns and climate change issues. Moreover, research and innovation should be focused on local agricultural challenges and developing innovative solutions tailored to regional needs. Moreover, the Higher Agricultural Education should offer in Africa continuous professional development for faculty members to keep them updated with the latest advancements in agricultural sciences. Another perspective is partnership at national, regional and global level. At institutional level, the Higher Agricultural Education should find the best way to actively engage with policymakers to influence agricultural policies that favor sustainable development and innovation.

RUFORUM, as a regional institution, already plays a crucial role in supporting these efforts through its capacity building, networking, and policy advocacy activities, which are essential for the advancement of agricultural education and sustainable development in Africa. To build on these perspectives, RUFORUM should continue and/or extend its activities to (i) strenghten networking among African Agricultural universities to facilitate collaboration, knowledge exchange, and joint research projects; (ii) facilitate

workshops and short courses to enhance the skills of faculty, researchers, and students; (iii) provide scholarships and research grants to support postgraduate studies (e.g GTA initiative) and innovative research projects (e.g GRG and CARP initiatives); (iv) implement leadership skills



Programmes toward young scientists and agricultural professionals; (v) host regular conferences and meetings (eg. triennial conferences and Annual General Meetings) to bring together academicians, researchers, farmers, innovators and industry professionals to discuss current issues and share best practices; (vi) create robust alumni networks to leverage their expertise and connections for the benefit of current students and faculty; [vii] bridge the gap between research and policy by ensuring that research findings are translated into actionable policy recommendations; (viii) organize policy dialogues and forums that bring together policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to discuss and influence agricultural policies and; (ix) produce policy briefs, reports, and other publications that highlight key agricultural issues and propose solutions based on research evidence.

By working together, universities and organizations like RUFORUM can create a more robust and responsive agricultural education system that meets the continent's unique challenges and opportunities.

The University of Abomey warmly congratulates RUFORUM on its 20th anniversary.

Université Evangélique en Afrique (UEA), DR. Congo  
 Prof. Ngongo Kilongo Fatuma  
 Rector



The Université Evangélique en Afrique (UEA) is a prominent private interdenominational evangelical Christian university located in Bukavu, South Kivu province, in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Since its establishment, UEA has been dedicated to provide high-quality education

and fostering academic excellence within a Christian framework. The university has made significant strides in various fields, including agricultural education, which is crucial for the socio-economic development of the region. UEA is committed to enhancing higher agricultural education in Africa by focusing on several key areas:

1. Variation in training offerings and ongoing identification of training needs: According to societal needs, the UEA continues to conduct market studies and assess training needs. This allows it to launch additional diverse training Programmes that meet the demands of the community.
2. Innovative Curriculum Development: UEA prioritizes the development of curricula that are responsive to the needs of the agricultural sector in Africa. This includes integrating modern agricultural techniques, sustainability practices, and the latest research findings to prepare students for the challenges of contemporary agriculture.
3. Research and Development: The University emphasizes research that addresses local and regional agricultural issues. By fostering a research-intensive environment, UEA aims to contribute to the development of new agricultural technologies and practices that can improve productivity and sustainability.
4. Community Engagement: UEA believes in the

importance of community involvement and works closely with local farmers and agricultural stakeholders. Through extension services and outreach Programmes, the university disseminates knowledge and innovations to enhance agricultural practices in the surrounding communities.

5. Capacity Building: Recognizing the need for skilled professionals in the agricultural sector, UEA is dedicated to build the capacity of its students through practical training, internships, and collaborations with industry partners. This hands-on approach ensures that graduates are well-equipped to meet the demands of the agricultural industry. The UEA also organizes continuing education Programmes for alumni in certain fields to update their skills and equip them with new tools to better address current challenges.

As a member of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) since 2014, UEA is actively involved in RUFORUM's initiatives aimed at strengthening agricultural education and research across Africa. RUFORUM's activities are aligned with UEA's mission to foster agricultural development through the following approaches:

1. Capacity Building in Agriculture: RUFORUM supports UEA by providing training opportunities for faculty staff and students, facilitating access to scholarships, and promoting the development of advanced skills in agricultural research and management.
2. Networking: RUFORUM provides a platform for UEA to collaborate with other universities and research institutions across Africa. This networking facilitates the exchange of knowledge, resources, and best practices, enhancing UEA's ability to contribute to regional agricultural development and compete for several grant projects in consortia.
3. Policy Advocacy: Through RUFORUM, UEA is engaged in policy advocacy for improving the

agricultural sector. RUFORUM's efforts to influence agricultural policies ensure that the needs and challenges of African agriculture are addressed at national and regional levels, creating a more supportive environment for agricultural education and research.

4. Research Grants and Projects: RUFORUM provides research grants and supports collaborative projects that enable UEA to undertake significant agricultural research. These projects often address critical issues such as food security, climate change, and sustainable agriculture, contributing to the broader goals of

agricultural development in Africa.

By integrating RUFORUM's resources and expertise with its own strategic objectives, UEA is well-positioned to make a substantial impact on agricultural education and development in the Democratic Republic of Congo and beyond. The collaboration with RUFORUM enhances UEA's ability to produce skilled graduates, generate impactful research, and drive agricultural innovation in Africa.

Congratulations RUFORUM for the 20 years achievements.



In a global context, food security remains a pressing issue of the utmost importance. The vital role of higher agricultural education is therefore clearly established as a constant priority – particularly so on a continent that has vast potential to provide in global agricultural needs.

In the context of our continent, higher agricultural education serves crucial additional purposes, such as contributing to economic and rural development, working towards poverty reduction, and ensuring environmental sustainability.

The role of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture [RUFORUM] in strengthening African universities' capacity to serve the agricultural sector and cultivate a new generation of skilled professionals can never be overstated. Support provided and initiatives launched have enabled African universities to co-create sustainable, workable solutions to the complex challenges confronting our sector worldwide. What adds value to RUFORUM's initiatives is the fact that they are usually not executed in isolation, but ultimately form part of a larger, integrated value chain that leads to wider benefit – supporting other industries and increasing sustainability for future generations.

The University of the Free State [UFS] shares significant common ground with RUFORUM – particularly when it comes to values such as excellence, sustainability,

and accountability.

RUFORUM's focus on reaching out to our continent's youth resonates with our mission of using higher education as a vehicle to inspire excellence and transform lives through quality, impact, and care. Our university's physical location in

a province that has been termed the 'breadbasket of South Africa' underlines our prerogative to use agricultural education as a means to provide sustainable livelihoods and increase productivity and effectivity through the implementation of the latest innovations in agricultural research and tuition.

Our shared values and vision have translated into very successful collaboration ventures with RUFORUM over the past 20 years. One of these takes the form of a thriving research and community project that focuses on building competitiveness for communal farmers by developing the wool value chain in the Free State province of South Africa. The overall objective of the project is to transform communal

University of Free State (UFS), South Africa  
Prof. Anthea Rhoda  
Acting Vice-Chancellor and Principal



woolgrowers' production from an underachieving enterprise to a profitable, sustainable, and renewable venture. With initiatives such as these, we meet the drive for greater commercialisation, developing new skills to support farmers in becoming better entrepreneurs. Assistance towards infrastructure is also provided, while the needs of farmers and other role-players in the value chain, such as market access, are identified and catered for. The UFS has also recently signed an agreement with RUFORUM – funded by The Mastercard Foundation – providing significant funding for student bursaries over the next ten years, ensuring access to quality agricultural education for the most deserving students.

RUFORUM remains a valuable collaboration partner for our institution, enabling us to accomplish our vision of achieving maximum societal benefit through our teaching and learning, research, and engaged scholarship endeavours. We congratulate this champion of agriculture capacity building, networking, and policy advocacy in Africa on its 20th anniversary, and look forward to increased collaboration in the years to come.

Congratulations RUFORUM on your 20th anniversary.

Dr. John Garang Memorial University of Science and Technology, South Sudan  
Prof. Dr. Abraham Matoc Dhal  
Vice chancellor



R U F O R U M ' s activities of capacity Building in Agriculture, Networking and Policy Advocacy in Africa is a composite of three broad comprehensive Programmes geared toward building a strategy of African thinking of building a technology focusing on agriculture-led growth in the

continent. Therefore, by deduction, the perspective for Africa's higher agricultural education is a formidably effective technological strategy through which African universities can contribute to poverty reduction, hunger elimination particularly with an aim of achieving food security, economic growth and development of African countries via development of agricultural sector and rural areas enhancement.

Indeed, Africa's higher agriculture education, in perspective is a built-in of the technology of

development for African continent. This implies that emphasis in higher agriculture education as an instrument of development in African countries represent African technology of development or Africanology. Meaning that African development engineered by development of African agriculture. Considering the role of universities in Africa as problem solving institutions through research, training and capacity building they are in the forefront in the form of RUFORUM to develop a technology which if applied strategically should ensure improvement in higher agricultural education in Africa.

More important to note, commitment by Heads of African states in terms of contribution toward economic growth and development and sustainability is the driving force in which African governments developed the "Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme" [CAADP] as an agenda for 2063. The CAADP priority areas include extension of the areas under sustainable land management and reliable water control systems, improving rural infrastructure and trade-related capacities for market, and improving agriculture research, technology dissemination and adoption. The initiative is to help African access, increasing of food supply, reducing hunger, and improving responses to food emergency crisis, countries eliminate hunger and reduce poverty



by raising economic growth through agriculture-led development. The emphasis of economic growth in the development agenda is instrumental in the sense that the universities usually translate policies into practical actions through provision of higher agricultural education, training and outreach Programmes for communities' development in the rural areas as well as preparing youth and women for economically gainful employment in the African countries. This has been one major role of faculties of agriculture in most of the African universities on the continent. This entails that the universities have scientific role to play and to promote the economies of African countries through direct involvement by way of teaching and training students' agricultural courses to enable students acquire skills and knowledge in the agricultural specialities. Of course, Universities worldwide are problem solving institutions. In Africa they represent research institutions that generate data and analyse data, impart knowledge, promote modernization, science and technology.

In this context, RUFORUM's activities of capacity building in agriculture are instrumental. They translate Africa's commitment of African countries agenda of agriculture-led growth by providing trained and qualified staff cadre to teach in the faculties of agriculture in African universities as a prerequisite of technological development and its dissemination. Dr. JGMUST being a member of RUFORUM as a participant has benefited a great deal from the RUFORUM Programmes for instance, in Botswana, two candidates are being trained one for Ph.D. and one master's degree, two Ph.D. in Cameroon, and others are in Kenya and so on to mention a few. Soon or later, Dr. JGMUST mainly college of Agriculture will likely receive back qualified teaching staff with capability of training students in Agriculture, science and technology, the ability to demonstrate and practically involved in farming industry to improve higher agricultural education needed to enhance development of agricultural sector and rural development in South Sudan and in African continent in a broader context. The university has recently introduced rice farming project for the first time. Harvest was highly successful. Over 25 farmers were trained and given seeds, The area of rice cultivation is to be expanded and new cultivation will start by 1st week of July 2024. The rice being cultivated is of African variety done in collaboration with ROC HMEC South Korea. Also, the university

expanded its vegetable farming and through its outreach Programme trained over 731 farmers in Jonglei State in 2023. The university participation in higher agricultural education is immense. It has established research and training centre at Awecrial County consisting of agricultural farm of 2 km by 2km.

Moreover, Networking and policy advocacy in Africa in terms of imparting information, knowledge, skills and technology has been effective on higher agricultural education as a vehicle for agriculture development geared towards improvement of economic growth and development in the African continent. Precisely, RUFORUM being a Network of 175 African universities from 40 African countries is effectively sustaining efficient networking among the universities in collaboration with African universities through holding of annual conferences, dissemination of technical education in higher agricultural training, skills and knowledge provisioning. At present some of the ministries of higher education with South Sudan being one of them have established technical universities in response to meet the requirements to food security, poverty alleviation with an objective of achieving prosperity and development.

The perspective for Africa's higher agricultural education is formidably technological drive that can necessarily facilitates African countries to develop technology of development using the concept of agriculture-led growth in the continent. This process can be construed or conceptualized as Africanology or African technology of development. RUFORUM's activities of capacity building to promote higher agricultural education in terms of training, education of youth and women, provision of skills, and technical knowledge is instrumental in translating African development policies and agenda in to practical application through research and development in African countries. Finally, networking, policy advocacy, imparting information, knowledge, skills and technology have been fairly and effectively ensured through RUFORUM's 175 member universities of 40 African countries via RUFORUM holding of annual conferences in collaboration with African governments. Suffice it to say, the perspective for Africa's higher agricultural education is a success though there are obstacles of development in the continent. The thinking hinged on African principles of poverty reduction, removing of food insecurity

through agriculture-led growth is forcefully an indicator of success in development of African countries. The commitment by African countries to ensure success is immense. What is needed is a big push in terms of funding both by African countries and partners.

Happy anniversary to RUFORUM!

#### Acknowledgement:

The statement has used literature drawn from various sources of African development agenda particularly CAADP, Malabo Declaration, NEPAD, Dr.JGMUST reports and RUFORUM materials.



Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology, Tanzania  
Prof. Maulilio John Kipanyula  
Vice Chancellor

The Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology [NMAIST] in Arusha is a research-based institution and one in a network of Pan-African Institutions of Science and Technology [AISTs] located across the African continent. NMAIST was established in 2009 and dedicated to offering postgraduate and postdoctoral studies. The objectives of the AISTs are to: catalyze the development of world class science and technology in Africa in ways that can stimulate economic growth and generate employment, and turn brain drain into brain gain, provide the best facilities for graduate and post-doc studies and research, bridge between research and industrial development through; strong link with industry for technology transfer and establishment of technology parks around the AISTs for seeding innovations, with technology-cum business incubators for spin-off technological firms. These objectives of the AISTs couple well with the mandate and roles of RUFORUM, which is a network of agricultural Institutions across the continent. NMAIST has received several projects including the graduate grants, the CARP and Graduate Teaching Assistantships. Participating in the capacity

building activities being organized by RUFORUM such as Biannual conferences, has helped NMAIST network closely with other partners in the region, thereby facilitating the realization of its regional mandates. NMAIST boasts of her membership in the RUFORUM network and will continue to maintain it while expanding her regional influence.



Congratulations RUFORUM on your two-decade journey.

Ndejje University, Uganda  
Rev. Canon Prof. Olivia Nassaka Banja  
Vice Chancellor



Africa is still held back by social, economic and environmental challenges to be able to fully improve the livelihoods of about 1.5 billion people. Thus, empowering the African Universities to nurture their own human resource that can generate and adapt solutions to the community

challenges is a commendable intervention by RUFORUM. This AGM brings us together to share ideas, knowledge and experiences. However, after comparing notes on the individual institutional progress, the vision of RUFORUM would be realized fully by putting in place means of developing this network. One way would be to support staff exchange Programmes in the agricultural and supporting professions. Where finances can allow, student exchange visits can be a complement to this knowledge diffusion process. These site visits eventually allow the development of the enabling factors of successful Programmes in hosting universities and this can help visitors to tackle challenges at their home institutions.

In the area of inclusion, targeted support of underprivileged students by RUFORUM has enabled them access university education. So far Ndejje University has received support to 71 students on full Bachelors Scholarship, though there are still more deserving students. In bid to create a core of more analytical graduates, can students who excel at Bachelors level be supported to advance to masters and PhD level? This extra training is a potential enabler to scholars to perform adaptive research and consolidate the knowledge required to improve

the livelihood of the community and steer national development. Furthermore, sandwich training can create flexibility in integrating the diverse knowledge and experience into appropriate technology that can be adapted to solving local challenges.

Private universities have become indispensable partners in graduate training of the surging population where the relatively fewer public universities cannot absorb all the qualifying university entrants. Uganda is implementing competence-based education as one of the strategies for sustainable development. In support of this, STEM Programmes, such as Agricultural Sciences, need to re-align the curriculum delivery. Effective teaching of Agriculture involves transfer of knowledge, skills and development of attitude through practical exercises and learning excursions, among other approaches. Such practical skilling requires additional investment in specialized infrastructure and teaching resources. This inevitably raises the unit cost of training a student in this profession. As such, RUFORUM has a role to advocate for government to extend grants to private universities. Support is required to enable these universities to handle the increasing student enrollment. This proportionately require investment in sufficient infrastructure to effect practical teaching, research, technology incubation, as well as commercial farm production for self- sustenance. This approach can be a trajectory to achieving innovation, industrialization and commercialization to fulfill the five-pillar education model.

In conclusion, I regard RUFORUM's support to staff and student exchange Programmes, enhancing graduate training, and advocacy for government support to private universities as key ingredients to the delivery of the five pillars of the education model.

Ndejje University congratulates RUFORUM for its 20th anniversary



Uganda Christian University (UCU), Uganda  
Prof. Aaron Mushengyezi  
Vice Chancellor

Agriculture employs about two-third of Africa's population and, it is estimated that the industry contributes 30-60 % to most country's Gross Domestic Product on the continent (Gardiner & Mabogunje, 2023). However, despite the importance of the industry, many African governments invest only utmost 10% of their national budget in agriculture, compared to other countries and regions where agriculture is equally important such as South and Southeast Asia. Moreover, not much of that budget is spent on Research and Development in agriculture. By 2017, there were at least 300 government, higher education and NGOs doing agricultural research for development in Southeast Asia [Gert-Jan et al., 2020]. Such efforts in the latter have brought about at least fourfold increment in cereal yield in the last 30 years, compared to only double yield in Africa over the same period.

Agricultural productivity in Uganda is below its potential – constrained by limited use of modern farming methods. This speaks to a lingering need for investment in more trained scientists in the agricultural field to support productivity of the industry and overall economic growth where RUFORUM has excelled. RUFORUM has lobbied and advocated over the last 20 years for capacity building and strengthening in agriculture. RUFORUM has significantly contributed to efforts towards ensuring that both women and men attain higher education with many women supported in attaining their post graduate degrees. It has also built leadership capacity among women and youth in Africa. RUFORUM integrated key stakeholders in raising awareness of the challenges of graduate training, particularly in Agriculture, in Africa. This is in addition to coordinating actions that have promoted the change we see today. To date, the hand of RUFORUM is visibly felt in over 150 African universities.

There is a strong positive relationship between educational achievement and long-term per capita economic growth (Altinok et al., 2017). Given that most African countries strongly rely on agriculture and its allied agrifood systems, the contribution of African governments to higher education in

agriculture will likely correspondingly lead to the faster achievement of the continent's economic growth [World Bank, 2019]. By 2021, at least 10% of college-aged Africans were enrolled and studying in universities. While this percentage is likely higher now in 2024, by the



2000s sub-Saharan African governments had only increased expenditure on education by about 6% (World Bank, 2019). This is insufficient as universities especially agricultural ones stand at the center and tremendously impact the performance of other actors in agrifood systems including ministries, policy institutes, extension systems and development partners (World Bank 2006; 2019). There is need for governments to provide more support to universities and agricultural Programmes therein. Governments need to fund agricultural research, innovations and draw measures to ease access to knowledge and information data banks and cutting-edge findings. For example, through inclusive agricultural higher education financing schemes and subsidized institutional subscriptions/access to world class scientific journals for African Universities, among others. There is also urgent need for universities to revise and design more hands-on and innovative agricultural curricula with community engagement. These would drive problem-based innovation and agripreneurship to provide employment and solutions for African and global agricultural needs. These global agricultural needs include more yielding and nutrient dense crops that are also pest and disease resilient, fit consumer cultural tastes, preferences, and emerging dietary transformation due to rising incomes, urbanization and, curricula that embrace digital solutions for soil water and nutrient monitoring and management. In addition to climate modelling,



pest and disease early warning systems, farm to fork traceability, and precision agriculture are key, among others. There is also need to put in place enabling infrastructural facilities for advanced transdisciplinary agricultural research and development. These include functional and stocked laboratories in addition to field experimentation centers.

Whereas RUFORUM celebrates 20 years, there is more need for deliberate efforts to include both male and female scholars, staff, students and leaders in agriculture related research and activities. This is in addition to the need for more mentorship. There is urgent need for disruptive change of the status quo and increase female enrollment of students for agricultural tertiary Programmes and intentional efforts for their progression, retention, and continuation in the field as well as leadership. IFPRI emphasizes that to strengthen Africa's agricultural research capacity, there is need for not only increasing the percentage of participating women but having them in senior positions of power. It is at such stages where these women can actively take part in influential decision making as scientists, professors, and managers as they provide unique insights.

In the African Union Agenda 2063: "The Africa We Want", accelerated agricultural growth and transformation is placed at the forefront to achieve prosperity and improved livelihoods. RUFORUM as a consortium with at least 163 African Universities in 40 countries is already impactfully driving towards that African Union goal. This is through its support for Agricultural universities and Programmes across the continent to bring about Africa's growth and development through support for higher agricultural

education training of the African youth. At Uganda Christian University alone, RUFORUM has supported 5 scholars to attain their advanced agricultural degrees.

Now is the time to strengthen and empower multi-stakeholder forums. These will review, redesign, and implement "African-tailored" strategies and policies that address local, national, regional, and eventually global agricultural challenges. This could be achieved through more investment in higher agricultural education. With about 55% of Africans between 15-35 years accounting for the region's labor force (United Nations, 2016), that group should be the target for Africa's transformation, agricultural empowerment and regional economic growth and development through higher agricultural education. Agricultural universities and Programmes should be the heart of regional and national education value chains; given the importance of agrifood systems to sustainable livelihood and economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa.

Congratulations RUFORUM for celebrating your 20th anniversary.

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Mbarara University of Science and Technology  
(MUST), Uganda  
Prof. Celestino Obua  
Vice Chancellor



Mbarara University of Science and Technology's [MUST] vision of becoming a "Centre of Academic and Professional Excellence in Science and Technology" and mission "To provide equitable quality and relevant education and Research with particular emphasis

on Science and Technology and its application to community development" directly align with the goals of strengthening Africa's Higher Agricultural Education. We believe universities play a critical role, using science and technology, in driving agricultural transformation that benefits our communities.

With a Bachelor degree Programme in Agriculture and Livelihoods at MUST, the institution equips graduates with the knowledge, practical skills, and scientific understanding necessary to address Africa's agricultural challenges. Additionally, through the Centre for Innovation and Technology Transfer Innovation & Research, our faculty and students are supported to conduct research that generates solutions for improved agricultural productivity, sustainability, food security, and community development. MUST applauds RUFORUM's activities in supporting these areas:

**Resource mobilization through grant writing:** Since 2015, RUFORUM initiated MUST into RUFORUM network and leveraging on its vast network of institutions and also facilitated writing of MUST's largest ever homegrown grant project "Pharm-Biotechnology and Traditional Medicine Center" (PHARMBIOTRAC) (P151847) from the World Bank

through Republic of Uganda. This was followed by a series of other grants such as "Establishing Regional Incubation Centre and Agribusiness Incubation Hub" at PHARMBIOTRAC to promote entrepreneurship spirit among staff and students. RUFORUM continues to support MUST in other large resource mobilization initiatives including the on-going effort seeking infrastructure support from BRIDGIN Foundation to construct "High-Tech Innovation Incubator and Contract Manufacturing Centre for Mbarara University of Science and Technology", among other initiatives.

**Capacity Building** through RUFORUM's Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) Programme for staff and graduate students to enhance the abilities of universities such as MUST and RUFORUM partner universities to build institutional capacities as well as deliver high-quality education and research, thus strengthening our contribution to community development.

**Networking** through RUFORUM, MUST was connected to RUFORUM universities network, thus giving MUST a platform for collaboration to share best practices and learn from other African institutions, hence accelerating innovative approaches in Agriculture, technology and generally higher education.

RUFORUM's policy advocacy efforts ensure that agricultural research and education, crucial for community development, are prioritized at a regional and continental level.

By working together, MUST and the RUFORUM consortium can empower African universities to play a leading role in building a more prosperous, food-secure, knowledge-based development for the continent of Africa.

Happy 20th anniversary RUFORUM.



Rural Polytechnic Institute of Training and Applied Research (IPR/IFRA), Mali  
 Prof Lassine Soumano  
 Director General

IPR/IFRA of Katibougou has maintained good relations with RUFORUM for a long time. Since joining the network in 2016, the institute has regularly taken part in the various forums held each year. In September 2019 a strong delegation from RUFORUM visited Mali through IPR/IFRA and other universities. Among others, they participated in the Mali Higher Education Day (MaHED), organized by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and IPR/IFRA. Currently, IPR/IFRA is working in partnership with the Institute of Rural Economy and Agricultural Research [IREAR], on an agri-incubation project for young entrepreneurs with financial support from RUFORUM through the establishment of an agri-incubation hub at IPR/IFRA. Several of these young entrepreneurs are beginning to integrate into the country's agro-industrial system. Through RUFORUM, one Malian student received a grant and successfully completed his Master at the University of Cape Coast in Ghana.

The IPR/IFRA Agricultural education system is based on good training and agricultural research, the results of which are intended to improve productivity, access to financing and marketing. Our institution is resolutely committed to contributing to the transformation of agriculture in Mali and the sub-region through training of quality graduates and agricultural research. This is why we are considering to:

- Integrate networks of universities with the same aims and the same visions as IPR/IFRA, like RUFORUM;
- Encourage the emergence of strong producer networks, capable of self-financing and meeting needs for agricultural inputs and equipment;
- Consolidate the promotion of the entrepreneurial culture of producers in order to promote their institutional development which will enable them to become autonomous and assert themselves as agents of change;

- Develop in conjunction with producer communities, resilience strategies in the face of climate change ;

- Extend the IPR/IFRA across the different agro-ecological zones of the country with the establishment of centers so that researchers

are closer to producers, in order to take their concerns into account in research Programmes.

- Initiate, where possible, exchanges of training Programmes, mobility of students and teachers between partner universities for better integration between teacher-researchers, and this will require the establishment of a platform for coordination.

- Advocate for the involvement of higher education institutions with an agricultural vocation in decision-making processes at the national level and in the sub-region, to provide better guidance to agricultural and agrifood policies in order to establish sustainable food security.



IPR/IFRA is delighted to be a member of the RUFORUM network and looks forward to further engagement in the new decade. Happy anniversary to RUFORUM.

University of Mauritius, Mauritius

Prof. Sanjeev K. Sobhee  
Vice Chancellor



As Vice Chancellor of the University of Mauritius, a proud institution boasting a Faculty of Agriculture, I am deeply invested in the future of Africa's agricultural sector. The statement regarding the heightened importance of higher agricultural education resonates deeply,

particularly in the face of unprecedented challenges like climate change and pandemics.

Climate change disrupts weather patterns, threatens water security, and exacerbates pests and diseases. COVID-19 exposed the vulnerabilities of global food supply chains. These factors, coupled with Africa's growing population, paint a concerning picture. We need a paradigm shift in agricultural education to build resilience and ensure food security.

Here's where universities like ours, and the vital work of organizations like RUFORUM, come to the forefront. We envision a future where higher agricultural education is:

- Our graduates should be equipped with the knowledge and skills to tackle climate challenges. This includes expertise in sustainable farming practices, water conservation techniques, and climate-smart crop varieties.
- Universities must foster a culture of innovation, encouraging research into drought-resistant crops, biotechnologies, and digital solutions for precision agriculture.
- We need graduates who can become not just farmers, but agri-preneurs. Equipping them with business acumen and market knowledge empowers them to create sustainable livelihoods and contribute to the growth of the agricultural

sector.

- Sustainable animal production practices, including responsible breeding, veterinary care, and pasture management, are also crucial for a robust agricultural sector. Educating future generations on these practices will ensure a secure supply of animal-derived protein and contribute to a more balanced and nutritious African diet.

RUFORUM's focus on capacity building, networking, and policy advocacy aligns perfectly with this vision, specially, their efforts in:

- Strengthening university research: This fosters the development of solutions relevant to Africa's specific needs.
- Facilitating faculty exchange: Sharing knowledge and best practices across institutions fuels innovation.
- Promoting policy dialogue: RUFORUM's advocacy ensures that agricultural research translates into concrete policies that support farmers, including those who raise livestock.
- Investing in transformed higher agricultural education: as championed by RUFORUM, is not just about securing food security; it's about building a more resilient and prosperous Africa. We must equip the next generation of agricultural leaders with the knowledge and skills to navigate these complexities and build a brighter future. Let us work together, as universities and organizations across the continent, to cultivate a new era of African agriculture that encompasses both sustainable crop production and responsible animal husbandry.

#### Building Food Resilience in Mauritius

In Mauritius, the government is placing significant emphasis on developing food resilience systems. The goal is to become more food and nutrition secure, reducing our reliance on imports and ensuring a healthy future for our citizens. The University of Mauritius, and our Faculty of Agriculture in particular, are aligned with this critical national objective.



We at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Mauritius, have undertaken a comprehensive review of our Programmes of study. Our aim is to make the field of agriculture more attractive and relevant to our youth. This ensures a strong pipeline of future agricultural leaders who can respond effectively to the government's policies and contribute to a more resilient food system in Mauritius.

Furthermore, our Faculty of Agriculture offers not only a strong foundation in core agricultural disciplines but also exciting areas of specialization that add significant value to our Programmes. These include:

- **Biotechnology:** We equip our students with the latest advancements in biotechnology, enabling them to contribute to research on pest resistance, crop improvement, and sustainable food production methods.
- **Food Science and Technology:** This field of study focuses on the entire food value chain, from farm to fork. Graduates gain expertise in food processing, preservation, safety, and value addition, addressing critical aspects of food security and nutrition in Mauritius and beyond.

- **Agri-business Entrepreneurship Unit:** Recognizing the importance of business acumen in agriculture, we have established a dedicated unit. This unit equips students with the entrepreneurial skills they need to thrive in the agricultural sector. They learn to develop business plans, secure funding, and navigate the complexities of agricultural marketing.

These specialized areas, alongside our core curriculum, ensure our graduates are well-rounded professionals, prepared to tackle the challenges and embrace the opportunities within the agricultural sector.

The University of Mauritius, as a member of the RUFORUM Network, recognizes the importance of collaboration. We can learn from and share knowledge with African institutions, tackling common challenges like climate change and empowering small-scale farmers, whether they focus on crops or livestock.

Congratulations RUFORUM on your 20th anniversary.



In the pursuit of sustainable development, agriculture stands as a cornerstone that not only sustains livelihoods but also drives economic growth and ensures food security. As we navigate the challenges of the 21st century, it becomes increasingly clear that a renewed focus on agriculture is not just prudent but imperative for the future of our communities and nations.

1. **Enhancing Access to Higher Education in Agriculture through Sponsorship**  
Education stands as a pivotal avenue for revitalizing agriculture. With this recognition, we can think of a bold initiative: a 50% fees sponsorship/waver Programme aimed at agriculture and related disciplines. This Programme seeks to draw young minds into agriculture by alleviating financial burdens associated with education. By investing in the education of our youth in these fields, we empower them to innovate and take the lead in transforming our agricultural

landscape.

## 2. Shifting Mindsets: Honoring Agriculture

A significant barrier to agricultural advancement is the misconception that agriculture is a pursuit for those who have no other options. This mindset must be reset across our entire populace.

Agriculture is not merely a fallback but a noble and indispensable profession that sustains life itself. It is a profession that demands innovation, resilience, and dedication. By instilling a renewed respect and honor

Karatina University, Kenya

Prof. Linus M. Gitonga

Vice Chancellor



for agriculture, we can inspire future generations to embrace it as a fulfilling and impactful career choice.

### 3. Reforming Land Tenure for Enhanced Agricultural Productivity

Our current land tenure systems, particularly in regions like the Mount Kenya area, often hinder agricultural productivity. Fragmented and small landholdings pose significant challenges for scaling up agricultural operations. Exploring alternative models that promote consolidation of land while safeguarding the rights of smallholders could unlock the potential for higher productivity and economic stability. This reevaluation is crucial as we seek sustainable solutions to feed our growing population and ensure food security.

### 4. Soil Enrichment: The Key to Food Security

In addressing our food security challenges, enriching our soils takes center stage. Fertilizers and other soil enrichment techniques are pivotal in enhancing soil fertility and productivity. Whoever masters the science of soil enrichment holds the key to unlocking sustainable food production. Investing in research and development in this field is paramount to achieving long-term agricultural sustainability.

### 5. Moving Beyond Rain-fed Agriculture

Climate variability and changing weather patterns continue to challenge rain-fed agriculture. Diversifying our agricultural practices to include climate-resilient

techniques such as irrigation, greenhouse farming, and water conservation strategies is essential. By reducing our dependence on rainfall, we can mitigate risks and ensure consistent agricultural output throughout the year.

RUFORUM plays a pivotal role in advancing higher agricultural education, capacity building, networking, and policy advocacy across Africa. Through its collaborative efforts with universities, research institutions, governments, and development partners, RUFORUM strengthens the capabilities of African universities to deliver quality agricultural education and research. By fostering partnerships and promoting knowledge exchange, RUFORUM facilitates innovation and entrepreneurship in agriculture, thereby empowering African youth to drive agricultural transformation.

As we embark on this new decade journey towards revitalizing agriculture, collaboration and innovation must be our guiding principles. By prioritizing education, reshaping perceptions, reforming land tenure, investing in soil health, and embracing climate-smart practices, we pave the way for a sustainable and prosperous agricultural sector. Let us seize this moment to reaffirm agriculture's pivotal role in shaping a resilient and food-secure future for generations to come.

Happy anniversary RUFORUM!

University Cheikh Anta DIOP of Dakar, Senegal  
Prof. Ahmadou Aly Mbaye  
Rector



**Africa, like the rest of the world, is currently facing such big challenges such as the effects of climate change, food insecurity, conflict, gender imbalances, rising inequalities, and more. To mitigate them, international, regional, and subregional [UN SDGs 2030,**

Agenda 2063, CAADP, ECOWAP, etc.], and national policies and agendas are being implemented and Higher Education is supposed to have a great contribution to their implementation.

As far as food security [relying very tightly on agriculture] is concerned, higher education is expected to play a major role in building capacity [production of high-level human resources], producing knowledge and technologies, and supporting African communities.

Universities are supposed to revise, adapt, and expand their curricula to generate skilled professionals in a context of resources scarcity. They must also build tight relationships with communities

and especially rural ones for food security and safety in a fast-changing world.

In this context, there is a great need to build sustainable and equitable partnership, at national, regional and international levels, for a positive and long-lasting impact on global challenges and on African societies. Therefore, RUFORUM as a network of agricultural universities in Africa, have a great role to play. As a very relevant and strong education network, RUFORUM can give a greater impetus to the modernization of agriculture in Africa, mainly through research and outreach, capacity building, networking, and policy advocacy. More specifically, it can generate a greater impact in the following areas in Africa:

- Increasing its engagement and visibility in francophone Africa;
- Overcoming language barriers related issues;

- Supporting scientific leadership, mainly among early career agricultural scientists [training, publications, resource mobilization, etc.];
- Building relevant strategies for joint resource mobilization activities of member institutions;
- Facilitating the pooling of scientific infrastructures [sharing facilities];
- Enhancing mobility [students, staff and faculties] within member institutions;
- Harmonizing agricultural curricula [Mapping of trainings, research and research facilities].

The Université Cheikh Anta DIOP is pleased to congratulate RUFORUM on its 20th anniversary and look forward to further engagement with French speaking countries of the network.



Université de N'Djaména, Chad  
Prof. Mahamat Saleh Daoussa Haggar  
President

My statement focuses on the following points:

- RUFORUM's role in capacity building, networking, and policy advocacy in agriculture
- My hopes for the future of agricultural higher education in Africa

I am convinced that agricultural higher education has a crucial role to play in Africa's development. By training the next generation of agricultural leaders, conducting innovative research, and disseminating improved agricultural technologies, African universities can contribute to transforming the continent's agricultural sector and ensuring food security for all.

I am also grateful for the important work that RUFORUM is doing to support agricultural higher education in Africa. RUFORUM's programs and initiatives have had a positive impact on the lives of many African students, teachers, and farmers. I am confident that RUFORUM will continue to play

a leading role in preparing the future for African agriculture.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the RUFORUM newsletter. I look forward to reading the statements of the other Vice-Chancellors and celebrating RUFORUM's achievements over the past 20 years.



Happy 20th Anniversary, RUFORUM!

Université du Sine Saloum El-Hâdj Ibrahima  
NIASS (USSEIN), Senegal

Prof. Ndèye Coumba Touré Kane  
Rector



The University of Sine Saloum El Hadj Ibrahima Niass (USSEIN) is an agricultural university of excellence for food security, sustainable development, and prosperity. As is the function of any university, USSEIN will provide knowledge, but it will focus on the

know-how and the attitude required in a professional context for sustainable development. The main objectives of USSEIN are the following:

- Train human resources to be able to meet the needs of agricultural and rural development and to develop knowledge and technologies adapted to local development and regional integrity;
- Provide competitive and open training to young people to enable them to take advantage of the opportunities offered by local development and regional integration
- Promote an inclusive approach that takes into account the traditional contributions of communities in adaptation and innovation strategies;
- Build a partnership between farmers, researchers and extension workers in order to develop appropriate sustainable technologies;
- Bring the quality of both training and research up to international standards
- Meet the diversified training needs of an increasingly heterogeneous group of learners [students enrolled in short or long-term courses, people interested in short-term vocational training or retraining, etc.];
- Instill within graduate schools and research Programmes a research spirit geared towards agricultural innovation and development, and services to the community.

- Train skilled individuals capable to manage innovations and suggest forward-looking measures;
- Contribute to regional integration and to the consolidation of the African space for higher education.

USSEIN will strive to develop success-oriented teaching methods with student satisfaction at the center of its approach. The academic project is meant to cover all the aspects of the agricultural value chain and to offer related courses and research units. Entrepreneurship training constitutes an important aspect of the university. The university is a multicampus one with three (3) Campuses in three regions which are organizing four (4) Teaching Research Units (TRU) with 12 Departments:

1. TRU Agronomy, Livestock, Fisheries-Aquaculture and Nutrition Sciences with 4 Departments and 1 institute [Agronomy and Plant Production, Livestock, Breeding science and technique, Management of fishery resources fishing and aquaculture, Nutrition and Food and Peanut Institute]
2. TRU Fundamental and Engineering Science with Departments of Mathematic, Computer Science, Hydraulics, rural engineering, machinery and renewable energies, Food science and technology and the Halls of technology
3. TRU Social and Environmental Sciences with Departments of Environment, biodiversity and sustainable development, Social Sciences and the Institute of climate change Research
4. TRU Economics, Legal Sciences and Tourism Departments [Tourism, Hotel and Gastronomy, Legal and political sciences and Economics and Management]

Due to its development-oriented specificity, USSEIN will set up a continued training service for people involved in all aspects of the agricultural sectors, according to the needs they have expressed.

USSEIN just after its affiliation to RUFORUM was granted through RU/MCF/RECAP/2019/01: "Agro-Processing incubation hub, reducing waste and



improving nutrition through student microenterprises” as part of the RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Programme [RECAP]. This RECAP 2019 Project over 2 years had despite the Covid-19 pandemic, made possible to set up the first elements of USSEIN incubator. The RUFORUM’s support was the spearhead of the current USSEIN incubator. The incubator where students, youth and women from communities and staff’s ideas on agrifood’s

transformation of agricultural products are scaled-up and valorized into lucrative start-ups.

USSEIN is also committed in the new project TAGDev 2.0 Programme which seeks to enable the planting of 11,000,000 trees for building a green resilient Africa.

We congratulate RUFORUM on its 20th anniversary.



Université de Dschang, Cameroon  
Prof. Roger Tsafack Nanfosso  
Rector

The traditional missions of universities in the Central Africa Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) region are teaching, research and support for development. In some countries, the development of multilingualism is implicitly added (Cameroon for its bilingualism, Equatorial Guinea for its linguistic insularity). The organisation of higher education is then subject to both national and regional approach. At national level, higher education is governed by national policy laws, which are slowly but progressively being replaced by regional legislation. At regional level, as in Europe where there is a ‘European Higher Education Area’, the organisation of higher education since 2005 is encompassed under a “Community of inter-university exchange Programme” in order to build a “Higher Education, Research and Vocational Training Area”. How can RUFORUM through its activities of capacity building in agriculture, networking and policy advocacy help improve the five challenges faced by the region?

The first challenge is that of mass enrolment, reflected in a shortage of physical student capacity. The number of students has grown exponentially in almost all countries, about 685,000 to date. From one university per country at independence, the region now has around 30 as a result of this situation. Two effective responses are developed to address this massification: [i] the liberalisation of higher education, with opening up to the private sector [620 private higher education universities and institutes to date] often without any real quality control but with a powerful capacity to enrol that is limited only by the possible inadequacy of families’ financial resources; and [ii] the adoption of Distance Open Training

(DOT) and Massive Online Open Classes (MOOCs)] successfully tried out since the Covid-19 crisis, which enable learners to be kept at a distance and at home. RUFORUM has a lot of expertise to accompany the universities to elaborate nice and accurate DOT and/or MOOCs.



The second challenge is that of infrastructure in terms of quantity and quality, with packed lecture theatres and/or obsolete laboratories. Some universities have as many as 5,000 students in the first year in certain options, which is typical of overcrowding, whatever the size of the lecture theatre. In the laboratories, students crowd around the minimal equipment that exists, making the transmission of knowledge difficult and slow. This challenge is also amplified by an overcrowding of social faculties that contrasts sharply with a depopulation of STEM faculties. RUFORUM is well-known to be connected with top donors that can pay some attention to universities infrastructures. It is somehow strange that there is no Agricultural School at the regional level, which RUFORUM can take as a challenge for the CEMAC.

The third and perhaps most pressing challenge is the lack of funding for higher education. In CEMAC region, higher education generally accounts for less than 2% of national budgets. This situation has led to the professionalisation of teaching through the introduction of courses of study which are much more expensive to access than traditional courses [generally between \$400 and \$2,000, or even up to \$30,000 in some countries and for some courses]. RUFORUM can advocate among its rich Members of Government network to highlight the issue of increasing the higher education budget in the region.

The fourth challenge is the shortage of teachers [lecturer/student ratio vary between 1/50 and 1/150], combined with a shortage of specialist teachers in many fields including agriculture. In some countries, foreign development workers are still present to support local teachers. RUFORUM has developed many capacity building Programmes as well as some PhD training [exchange] Programmes among members universities. Perhaps time has come to strongly increase the number of participants in there. The last challenge is that of an entrepreneurial university that is vigorously involved in ensuring the effective employability of its graduates. Universities

have long been seen as institutions that produce the unemployed or the underemployed, but they must now play their part in creating direct and indirect jobs. It is in this context that incubators and/or accelerators are being set up here and there to enable the creation of companies with more or less close links to the university [university companies] on the one hand, and the creation of traditional companies on the other, sometimes with the participation of previously identified business angels. In addition, university foundations have been set up to solicit national and international philanthropists to raise funds in order to create jobs for graduates. On both sides, RUFORUM has huge experience to share with universities and countries as well. Mission should be organised in the region to collect problems, benchmark, and diagnostic and pose balance solutions.

As RUFORUM embraces its third decade journey, member universities in Cameroon and CEMAC look forward to increased RUFORUM footprints in the region.

The University of Dschang wishes RUFORUM a happy 20th anniversary.

Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology (JOOUST), Kenya  
Prof. Emily Achieng' Akuno  
vice Chancellor



Agriculture in Africa is undergoing unprecedented structural transformation and facing numerous challenges, including the growing impact of climate change, rapid dietary changes driving demand for processed foods, the rise of medium-scale farms, improved market access, enhanced access to

information, and the expansion of the manufacturing and service industries. These shifts in the agrifood systems necessitate a different mix of expertise and multi-skilling within the increasingly youthful agricultural workforce. Unfortunately, Africa's higher education institutions are not producing graduates with the all-round skills to address these gaps.

Moreover, the role of the higher education system in enhancing agricultural innovation through entrepreneurship is crucial. In pursuit of an innovation-driven, knowledge-based economy in response to globalization, universities should establish innovation hubs aimed at capacity building and incubating promising innovations and ideas, particularly among the youth. These hubs should foster partnerships with the private sector to support

collaborative entrepreneurship Programmes with other communities of practice, including other higher learning institutions.

Addressing the challenges in the agrifood systems requires a complete paradigm shift in agricultural higher education. This shift entails adopting a transdisciplinary approach and forming partnerships with technical and vocational institutions, universities, the private sector, and other relevant actors within the innovation systems. Individual African universities must scale their impact regionally by partnering with other universities through joint training Programmes

and forming regional applied research consortia.

Universities should create interactive innovation spaces that contribute to national and regional policy support and reforms. The reforms should aim to produce a new breed of agricultural graduates equipped with the competencies and skills necessary to tackle the current challenges in Africa's agrifood systems.

Congratulations RUFORUM for the two-decade journey.



University of Nigeria Nsukka, Nigeria  
Prof. Charles A. Igwe  
Vice Chancellor

The University of Nigeria envisions a transformative approach to Africa's higher agricultural education, emphasizing innovative research, technology integration, and sustainable practices to address the continent's unique agricultural challenges. The institution is committed to cultivating a new generation of agricultural professionals equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to drive economic growth, ensure food security, and promote environmental sustainability across Africa. In alignment with this vision, the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) plays a pivotal role. RUFORUM's initiatives focus on enhancing the capacities of universities to deliver quality education and impactful research in agriculture. Through its extensive network of member institutions, RUFORUM facilitates collaborative projects, fosters academic and professional exchanges, and supports the development of robust agricultural policies. By advocating for policy reforms and leveraging partnerships, RUFORUM enhances the ability of African universities to contribute meaningfully to

the continent's agricultural development and resilience.

Together, the University of Nigeria and RUFORUM are instrumental in driving forward a comprehensive and cohesive strategy for agricultural education and development in Africa, ensuring that the sector remains vibrant and capable of meeting future demands.

The University of Nigeria Nsukka wishes RUFORUM a happy 20th anniversary.



University of Gadarif, Sudan  
Prof. Ibtisam Eltayeb El Jack  
vice Chancellor



In Sudan, there are approximately 31 faculties of agriculture dedicated to advancing agricultural work in both the plant and animal sectors. Among these, the Faculty of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences at the University of Gadarif,

established in 1994, that aims to graduate qualified personnel for the agricultural sector and to conduct applied scientific research to serve the sector effectively, faces low student enrollment in agricultural sciences. Gadarif State has 256 Km as shared boarder with Ethiopia; and is characterized with rich soil fertility. About 80% of the economical activities depend on agriculture. Gadarif State is one of Sudan's largest agricultural states known for rain-fed agriculture. Additionally, agricultural productivity is declining across all crops due to the lack of application of modern agricultural techniques. This issue is often addressed through horizontal expansion rather than vertical one, leading to increased costs and additional burdens.

Despite significant individual efforts in agricultural research, the adoption of these research outcomes by the state or private sector has been weak. Moreover, the region faces significant challenges in agricultural financing and lacks adequate agricultural extension services for farmers. The absence of collaborative research among regional universities and the limited exchange of expertise among professors and students further compounds these issues.

To address these challenges through collaboration between the University of Gadarif, RUFORUM, and regional universities, we propose the following solutions:

1. Collaborative Research Hubs: Establish research hubs that bring together expertise from

Gadarif University, RUFORUM, and other regional universities. These hubs will focus on developing innovative agricultural practices and technologies tailored to the specific needs of Gadarif and similar regions.

2. Resource and Facility Sharing: Develop agreements for sharing resources and facilities between Gadarif University and regional universities. This includes access to advanced laboratories, research equipment, and agricultural fields, which will enhance the quality and scope of research and training.
3. Faculty and Student Exchange Programmes: Implement exchange Programmes for faculty and students to facilitate knowledge transfer and build expertise. These Programmes will provide opportunities for collaborative research, professional development, and cultural exchange, enriching the educational experience and research capabilities.
4. Community Outreach and Farmer Training: Develop joint community outreach Programmes to disseminate research findings and innovative practices to local farmers. Establish farmer training centers supported by Gadarif University and regional partners to improve agricultural practices and productivity.
5. Curriculum Development and Innovation: Collaborate on the development and modernization of agricultural curricula. Incorporate the latest research findings and practical applications into the curriculum to ensure graduates are well-prepared to meet market demands and contribute to the agricultural sector.
6. Policy Development and Advocacy: Conduct joint studies and produce policy briefs that address critical agricultural issues. Work together to advocate for policies that support research adoption, innovation, and sustainable agricultural practices, influencing decision-makers at both the state and regional levels.
7. Integrated Value Chains and Market Access: Partner on projects that develop and integrate agricultural value chains, helping farmers increase their income and market access. Support initiatives that add value to primary



agricultural products through processing and improved logistics.

8. Independent Gadarif Initiatives: The University of Gadarif will also undertake specific initiatives to address local challenges. This includes establishing dedicated research projects focusing on rain-fed agriculture, developing local farmer cooperatives to improve market access, and creating tailored extension services to provide farmers with practical, on-the-ground support.

Through this collaboration with RUFORUM and

regional universities, the University of Gadarif aims to leverage its strategic location in the agriculturally rich region of eastern Sudan to significantly enhance agricultural education, research, and development. By addressing the outlined challenges and leveraging the proposed solutions, we aim to contribute significantly to the sustainable advancement of agriculture in Sudan and across Africa.

The University of Gadarif congratulates RUFORUM on its 20th anniversary.



Kabale University (KAB), Uganda

Prof. Joy C. Kwesiga  
Vice Chancellor

Congratulations RUFORUM It is with gratitude that I add my voice to those of many who have witnessed RUFORUM's development as an agent of transformation through the years.

First, I would like to discuss RUFORUM's affiliation with Kabale University. This affiliation has been instrumental in strengthening the University's research and outreach Programmes, providing students with the opportunity to gain valuable hands-on experience in agricultural research and development. RUFORUM's support has also helped Kabale University to become a leading educational institution in the region.

As a result of our strategic location in the Great Lakes region, Kabale University is geographically in the heart of Uganda's agriculture industry. As a result, agriculture and related environmental sciences are core areas of interest for our teaching, research, and innovation activities. Our faculty and students are actively engaged in research in areas such as crop production, agro-meteorology, soil science, agribusiness, and others. Our research is conducted in close collaboration with governmental organizations; industry partners and development partners. We are committed to developing innovative solutions to the challenges in Uganda's agriculture sector.

This partnership with RUFORUM provides us with a much-needed stepping stone into a crucial area of specialization – relevant agricultural education that speaks to community needs. It will also enable us to develop innovative agricultural technologies that relate to the 'strained' tropical highland ecology,

where we are situated. This, in turn, will provide economic and social benefits for the whole country.

It goes without saying that the agricultural sector is responsible for the transformation of Uganda, along with the related sectors.

The partnership with RUFORUM will thus help us and other institutions further strengthen our efforts towards sustainable and inclusive growth. We have built collaborative and synergistic engagements with our faculty through RUFORUM's support in capacity building and technology transfer. Our staff have greatly gained from the Graduate Teaching Assistantship [GTA] Programme where they have been hosted and supported by sister universities, as we have in turn hosted and supported colleagues from other institutions. We deeply value this initiative by RUFORUM, as it inculcates the spirit of sharing amongst members. Our staff have, again, benefitted from the young researchers' workshops which have served as a springboard for further formal studies and higher awards.



The RUFORUM Annual Conferences held in different parts of Africa are a great opportunity for exposure and professional growth, especially for young academics. I also wish to emphasise the benefit of side-events. RUFORUM organises meetings for higher education leaders [Vice Chancellors / Rectors / Presidents] for strategic discussions and information provision, including inspiration speakers that challenge such leadership. Regions are also provided with space to consider their particular challenges and debate solutions.

It is through such a platform that the Forum for African Women Vice Chancellors was born, has been supported and continues to gather annually and network and lay strategies for gender inclusiveness in the African higher education sector. This is indeed vital, for African women are the backbone of agriculture. RUFORUM recognises that women leaders of universities have a great role in pushing its goals. We are grateful for this support and look forward to a stronger Forum, for the benefits are many.

We are pleased to note that RUFORUM has also made progress in its work, and it is a joy to be

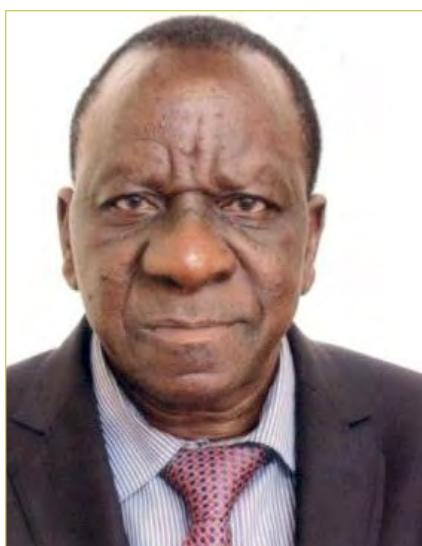
celebrating 20 years of transformation. Likewise, we are pleased to celebrate the many milestones reached through the RUFORUM partnership. Further, we congratulate RUFORUM on its achievements not only in the academic sphere, but also in the areas of educational policy, research capacity development, and institutional growth. We hope that we will continue to work together in the years ahead to enhance our higher educational institutions for the betterment of our citizens and our countries and our continent.

Our appreciation goes to the founders of RUFORUM, under the leadership of the founding Executive Secretary, Professor Adipala Ekwamu, and all those who have provided support. We appreciate the work of the current group led by Professor Prof. Patrick Okori, and wish them success.

On behalf of the wider community of Kabale University, I wish RUFORUM many, many years of achievements through transformative agricultural training, capacity building, research and innovation. There is hope that more is possible for RUFORUM has already charted the path.

Long Live RUFORUM!

Great Zimbabwe University (GZU), Zimbabwe  
Prof. Rungano Jonas Zvobgo  
Vice Chancellor



Great Zimbabwe University as a member of RUFORUM, seeks to ride on RUFORUM's key drivers: private sector engagement, partnerships and scaling best practices, academic mobility, use of ICTs and Graduates employability and entrepreneurship

to contribute meaningfully to Africa's agricultural development. This is achieved through collaboration with other universities, communities and key

stakeholders, which is pivotal in encouraging research and innovation to address agricultural challenges.

It is my conviction that RUFORUM plays a pivotal role in shaping Africa's agricultural higher education by fostering collaboration, innovation and graduate empowerment. It's Vision for 2030 aims to create sustainable prosperity through transformative universities. This Vision resonates with Great Zimbabwe University's strategic thrust which is guided by Vision 2030 as a development plan for the transformation of the nation into a middle income economy by 2030. This thrust is further fortified by Zimbabwe's Higher and Tertiary Education Ministry's Education 5.0 which emphasises the translation of knowledge into goods and services through a heritage based curriculum for industrialisation and modernisation. Great Zimbabwe University, like other Universities in Africa, should leverage on the natural resources and heritage on the continent in

order to industrialise the economy through innovative agricultural research, training and outreach. Agriculture is pivotal in food security, establishment of agro-industries and the socio-economic development of the African continent.

However, the agricultural sector remains vulnerable to future pandemics and droughts, heat waves, flooding, pests and plant diseases caused by climate change. Furthermore, the world population is projected to grow to approximately 9.8 billion by 2050, hence there is also the added burden of producing enough food to feed this growing population against the backdrop of these challenges. The OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2022-2031 states that agricultural production needs to increase by 28% over the next decade while, at the same time, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In that respect, it should no longer be business as usual for universities in Africa. Meaningful education must lead to the production of goods and services. African universities must therefore be intentional about transforming their curricula in order for them to remain relevant. Consequently, universities, research institutes, development partners, industry and civic society, should work together to seek innovative and climate smart solutions for current and future problems affecting agriculture. The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Africulture [RUFORUM] has been working for the past 20 years to facilitate such a collaboration in a coordinated manner.

Congratulations RUFORUM.

I thank you.



The University of Bamenda (UBa), Cameroon  
Prof. Theresia Nkuo-Akenji  
Vice Chancellor

Training Africa's youth in an era of transition agriculture – a Central African perspective

The post-colonial agriculture landscape of most African countries is dominated by shifting cultivation rooted in cultural, labour-intensive practices as well as cash crop farming for the export market. Despite various efforts to move the needle towards mechanization and increased processing to reduce post-harvest losses, the attitudes have remained stubbornly the same. The result is evident – many young people view agriculture strictly as farming and consider it a task consigned to the rural dwellers who are largely marginalized by the 'elitist' education system. The barriers often cited to improving agriculture and food systems in general include lack of access to credit facilities, weak farm to market road infrastructure, lack of improved farming tools and limited access to various markets. However, there is need to revisit the agriculture training Programmes to render them more inclusive of other sub-disciplines and produce graduates capable of functioning in the formal sector as agriculture supply chain experts, process engineers, plant and animal health experts, entrepreneurs, certification and quality control experts. The need to reduce the manual labour input in the food production process is scintillating. However, the mechanization process must be approached

with caution in a continent that has huge energy shortages. Rapid change risks are triggering a total disruption of the food production system. That is why I speak of Transition Agriculture – a scenario where the continent shifts from traditional farming methods towards less labour,

less surface area ploughed to high returns and supply to regional markets. Transition Agriculture takes cognizance of climate change and resilience strategies plus adaptation but weaves indigenous knowledge and allied disciplines in the training Programmes. It has import reduction and subsequent total substitution at its base and improved intra-African trade to generate new markets, at its centre. This is particularly true in Central Africa where a significant proportion of its grains such as rice and wheat are imported. Transition Agriculture prepares

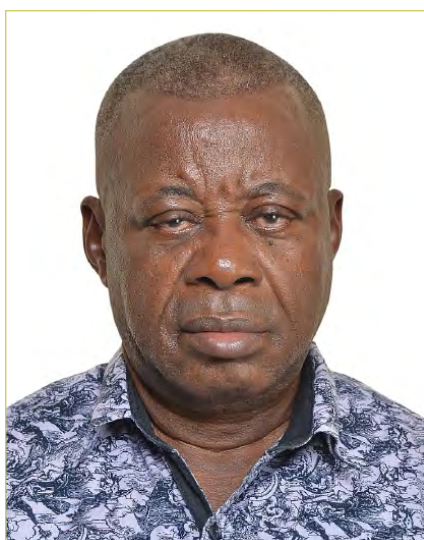


the continent for robust reactions and responses to global tensions and economic shocks such as the Russia-Ukraine war. The continent does not need a new “Green Revolution” slogan but a training scenario that brings in community participation and the vision

of a continent in transition proud of engaging its youth to drive change through agriculture.

I am pleased to congratulate RUFORUM on its 20th anniversary.

University of Kisangani (UNIKIS), Democratic Republic of Congo  
Prof. Jean-Faustin Bongilo Boendy  
Rector



instability.

Africa's agricultural education systems are often underfunded and lack sufficient resources. According to the World Bank, Sub-Saharan Africa spends an average of 5% of its GDP on education, but only a small fraction of this is allocated to higher education and even less to agricultural education. A report by the African Development Bank indicates that many African universities receive less than 1% of their country's education budget. There is a need for more modern facilities, up-to-date curricula, and qualified faculties. Many African agricultural universities operate with outdated facilities. For instance, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) reported that less than 25% of agricultural universities in Africa have access to up-to-date laboratory facilities. In a study by the World Bank, it was found that many institutions lack the necessary infrastructure

Africa's higher agricultural education faces both significant challenges and immense opportunities. Enhancing agricultural education is crucial for sustainable development as the continent grapples with food insecurity, climate change, and economic

to support modern agricultural education and research, with over 50% of surveyed universities reporting inadequate classroom and laboratory space. Additionally, there is often a gap between academic research and practical application, limiting the impact of agricultural innovations on local farming communities.

However, there are significant opportunities. As of 2023, approximately 60% of Africa's population is under the age of 25, presenting a potential to harness the energy and creativity of young Africans for agricultural innovation. Technological advancements, such as digital agriculture and biotechnology, offer new avenues for improving productivity and sustainability. Furthermore, integrating traditional knowledge with modern practices can create more resilient and context-specific solutions.

The University of Kisangani (UNIKIS), a member of RUFORUM, is located in the city of Kisangani in the northeast of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Founded in 1963 by Protestant missionaries as the Free University of the Congo (French: Université libre du Congo, ULC), it became part of the National University of Zaire (1971-1980) before being separated and managed by the Congolese Government in 1981 through Ordinance-Law No. 81-144. Currently headed by Professor Jean-Faustin BONGILO BOENDY, the Vice-Chancellor, the university is supported by a managerial committee including the General Secretary for Administration, the Budget Administrator, the Academic Registrar, and the General Secretary of Research.



In 2021, the Vice-Chancellor introduced the LMD system [Bachelor, Master, Doctorate], which offers two modes of training: academic training oriented towards research, and applied training focused on professionalization. The Faculty of Management of Renewable Natural Resources has been operating on the LMD system for more than 12 years. However, this system requires adequate infrastructure, such as new laboratories, capacity building for teaching staff, and sponsorship for students who lack essential resources like computers.

RUFORUM has played a significant role in enhancing the capacity and capabilities of the University of Kisangani. Its support encompasses various areas, including academic development, research enhancement, and institutional capacity building. RUFORUM has supported the training of postgraduate students at the University of Kisangani by providing scholarships, facilitating research opportunities, and offering international Biennale and Triennial conferences to enhance students' research skills and knowledge in agricultural sciences. One notable example is Mr. Germain Batsi Toroba, who is currently undertaking his PhD studies at Mzuzu University (ACENUB) through RUFORUM's connection. Another success story is Dr. Angele Ibanda, a lecturer at the Faculty of Management of Renewable Natural Resources, who completed her PhD studies in Plant Breeding and Biotechnology at Makerere University, also supported by the Inter-University Cooperation to Train Scientists for African Agriculture (CSAA), an Intra-ACP mobility project, and the next generation of scientists" of Carnegie Cooperation of New York" through RUFORUM. RUFORUM has also provided training Programmes for faculty members to improve their teaching methodologies, and research capabilities, especially in statistics, ensuring they are well-equipped to deliver high-quality education and conduct impactful research.

RUFORUM has provided research grants and funding opportunities, such as the Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) Programme, to support various agricultural research projects at the University of

Kisangani. This funding has enabled researchers to address local agricultural challenges and contribute to sustainable development.

RUFORUM has encouraged partnerships between the University of Kisangani and other institutions within the RUFORUM network by promoting collaborative research projects. In 2022, the University of Kisangani participated in the Scoping study on existing CIS/CSA relevant units/engagements in the RUFORUM member universities. These collaborations have facilitated knowledge exchange and the sharing of best practices.

As expectations and future directions, the University of Kisangani recommend (i) increased investment in agricultural research and other domains, focusing on human resources and infrastructure (ii) Promote value chain approaches and agribusiness to increase productivity and achieve sustainable development, (iii) Build and strengthen solidarity and collective action through partnerships, (iv) RUFORUM should promote transparency and integrity in project management, ensuring that staff members who have played a crucial role in securing research funding are recognized and retained as a strategy to strengthen research initiatives at the university, and (v) Mobilize resources that support human capital development to enhance the university's capability in research, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

RUFORUM has significantly contributed to the development of the University of Kisangani by enhancing its academic and research capabilities. However, continued efforts are needed to secure sustainable funding, improve infrastructure, expand faculty training, and strengthen student support systems. By addressing these areas, the University of Kisangani can further enhance its impact on agricultural education and research, contributing to the sustainable development of the DR Congo and the broader region.

Congratulations RUFORUM for your 20 years achievements.





Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta  
(FUNAAB) Nigeria

Prof. Olusola Babatunde Kehinde  
Vice Chancellor

- To achieve the much needed transformation in higher agricultural education in Africa, Universities have central roles in building an enabling environment. One of such roles that always requires limited attention is that of advocacy for favourable policies. However, Universities in Africa and their stakeholders are increasingly making significant progress with reference to advocacy and engagement with policy-decision makers.

- Perspectives for Africa's higher agricultural education and RUFORUM's activities include:
- Investing in African universities to develop graduates with in-demand skills to drive groundbreaking research that advances Africa's development.
- Driving innovation in agriculture to deliver practical solutions that improve the lives and incomes of smallholder farmers.
- Leveling the playing field in agriculture by fostering gender equity and social inclusion in education, research, and innovation
- Strengthening regional and international collaboration to develop joint solutions for shared agricultural challenges
- Supporting evidence-based policy-making and advocacy for agricultural development vis-à-vis:
- Bridging the gap: Connecting research and data to informed agricultural development policies.
- Building on facts: Empowering evidence-based

decision-making for a thriving agricultural sector.

- Revolutionizing agriculture: Fueling entrepreneurship and innovation to create new jobs and propel the agricultural sector forward.
- Addressing climate change, sustainability, and environmental conservation in agricultural education and research.



By focusing on these areas, RUFORUM plays a critical role in shaping the future of African agricultural education, research, and innovation, ultimately contributing to improved food security, sustainable development, and economic growth in the region.

Congratulations RUFORUM.

Koforidua Technical University, Ghana  
Prof. John Owusu  
Vice Chancellor



The youth in Africa now find agriculture education unattractive, and shy away from it. There is a trend where the few who pursue agriculture-related Programmes at the undergraduate divert to do postgraduate Programme in other fields.

Agriculture is the mainstay of most African countries, therefore we cannot allow it to be relegated to the background. We need to find a way of making it attractive to the youth, who, in fact are the future leaders. The youth are now attracted to technology. Therefore, technology-driven agriculture can find a place in the life of the youth in Africa. Consequently, there is the need to revise our curricula to reflect the current trend in agriculture.

Apart from this, the issue of climate change is making

the traditional method of agriculture difficult to achieve its purpose. Climate-smart agriculture should therefore, be emphasized in Africa.

Post-harvest loss of agricultural products is still high in Africa. This is a serious threat to the environment and a recipe for climate change, so we need to take decisive action to lay much emphasis on processing of our farm produce.

Over the years, the role of the RUFORUM regarding capacity building of its member universities, has been a laudable one. This has helped to support many who would have otherwise not been able to have access to postgraduate education. Networking activities of RUFORUM has also helped to share knowledge, ideas, experiences, etc across the continent of Africa, and even beyond. Its advocacy in the area of higher education and policy issues have helped to shape agricultural policies in Africa. RUFORUM should, therefore, continue to work hard to expand the opportunities for African scholars, extend its network and do more advocacy work to ensure that policies address the challenges of African Agriculture more effectively.

Happy 20th Anniversary RUFORUM.



Midlands State University (MSU), Zimbabwe  
Prof. Victor Ngonidzashe Muzvidziwa  
Vice Chancellor



Agricultural education in Africa should be the engine for the transformation of lives and the industrialisation of the rural communities. The majority of our people live in rural communities and are dependent on subsistence

farming. For these to join the money economy, there is need for transformation of the agrifood systems into industrialised agrifood systems. The Africa's Higher Agricultural Education should bring the gap between theory and practical in order to meet the food demand for the ever-increasing human population of the world. Universities and colleges training agriculture graduands should play an increasing role in the attainment of this vision. Universities training agriculture should focus on the five major pillars, namely teaching, research, community engagement, innovation and industrialisation. Once these are achieved, transformation of the agrifood systems is possible. Through community engagement and

community-university cooperation, we ensure that our learners learn within communities and share the knowledge they get from universities. Faculty staff too have an opportunity to share the research and innovation knowledge gained to transform rural agricultural systems.

Through support from the government, our institution is developing science solutions for the country to strengthen the agricultural value chains such as the goat value chain and indigenous fruit chain. The university does this without leaving communities behind. The Midlands State University has moved to partner with communities in massive irrigation development and small grain value addition plants in Zimbabwe.

Through this project, the university aims to bring the Agriculture Faculty right into the communities. Rural industrialisation can only be achieved if we tap into traditional agricultural knowledge systems. We therefore value the ideas from communities and the heritage resources found in these.

We also believe in the link between the university and the industry to enhance our agricultural training. The university has thus forge linkages with various institutions in the country and outside to ensure the researchers in university solve real problems affecting the agricultural industry. Further to this, our universities have adopted the agro industrial parks

concept where the university actually participates in industrialisation activities through innovative researches and value addition projects. This has been instrumental in affording learners with the institutions experiential learning. We are also taking the agro industrial park concept to the communities through our university – community partnerships.

RUFORUM has for years been involved with Universities in Africa, building their capacities through graduate training and research skills training. MSU has been a proud member RUFORUM community of universities and institutions since 2019. We believe our vision dovetails with RUFORUM vision. MSU has actively participated in RUFORUM activities online and through attending all the Annual General Meetings held since 2021. Through this association, MSU has managed to collaborate and share knowledge with other Universities and Institutions as well as the academic and research community. MSU, like other universities on the continent has benefited from RUFORUM graduate training, directly and indirectly through the capacity building of its staff. A sizeable percentage of our staff have benefitted from the RUFORUM nurturing grant or the RUFORUM Graduate assistantship programme. Other staff members and students have benefited from the various capacity building trainings offered through RUFORUM such as the trainings on Research Methodologies and Data Analysis.



Agriculture is the leading economic sector in Benin. It contributes about 32.7% to the country's GDP, 75% to export revenues, and 15% to state revenues and provides around 70% of jobs. Benin is currently emphasizing the development of the agricultural sector to address three major challenges: 1) meeting food needs, 2) increasing incomes and 3) improving the productivity and attractiveness of agricultural activities. The National University of Agriculture (UNA), as Higher Agricultural Education Institution (HAEI), strives to train competent technicians capable of effectively addressing these challenges to contribute to the country's economic growth, social welfare and to the wellbeing of the population.

Université Nationale d'Agriculture (UNA)  
Republic of Benin  
Prof. Agossou Bruno Djossa  
Rector

UNA emphasizes applied research, especially to overcome constraints in agricultural production to improve productivity; co-create in industry-university linkages and seeks for job and entrepreneurship-oriented training. In applied research,





endogenous techniques and practices are used to develop technological packages that can easily be adopted by grassroots producers. It covers mechanization, renewable energies in agriculture, etc. to reduce labor intensity while enabling cultivation and management of large-scale farms.

UNA also works to strengthen contacts with professionals, companies and state institutions involved in the agricultural field to bridge training and the realities of the professional world. As such UNA will also gain the trust of these actors to use their facilities as support for internships and educational outings, and to co-develop applied research on topics of interest to them, preferably with their financial support. The Beninese government has also decided to change the paradigm with training more oriented towards professions in TVETs (Technical and Vocational Education and Training). The training of new types of teachers has been launched for these TVETs. UNA has been chosen to develop and provide this training in collaboration with the Faculty of Agronomy, University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN)

for the first cohort. Competence based training oriented towards market needs require infrastructure and facilities that governments very frequently don't sufficiently finance. This situation forces UNA, like other universities in African countries, to seek external resources.

RUFORUM is a relevant instrument to support our activities through: 1) networking with peers, 2) seeking funding from Technical and Financial Partners and 3) capacity building of current actors and training of new generations to lead institutions and meet new needs; 4) convince policymakers on the necessity to train young people and especially for the transformation of agriculture in Africa. UNA will remain on board and take forward the transformation of education at agricultural higher education institutions as an effective development tool for Africa.

UNA commend RUFORUM for its 20 years journey with African Universities.

Nugaal University (NU), Somalia  
Prof. Abdirizak Mohamed Aden  
President



As the President of Nugaal University, and on behalf of Nugaal University's community, we believe strongly in the value of African Higher Agricultural Education and respect RUFORUM's vital contributions to capacity building, networking, and policy advocacy.

Nugaal University

has been awarded a grant by RUFORUM under the "Strengthening Higher Education in Somalia through Developing Graduate Programmes at

Nugaal University" (SHED) initiative. This funding has improved graduate Programmes and promoted higher education excellence in our university. Also we have had the honor of sharing with our university broad community about the opportunities available through RUFORUM's Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) Programme.

On the occasion of the celebration of RUFORUM's 20th anniversary we would like to take this opportunity to offer our sincere congratulations to the whole RUFORUM community for their outstanding efforts and accomplishments over the past 20 years, and we hope to continue promoting innovation, knowledge sharing, and sustainable development in higher education in Africa.

Congratulations RUFORUM!



As rector of a RUFORUM member university, I would like to see an Africa that invests more in higher agricultural education and provides to farmers the necessary factors of production, enabling their entrepreneurial skills to be used. As a continent, Africa should put in place policies, mechanisms of control [to fight corruption] and funding that will make it possible to embark on expertise exchange, people-to-people empowerment, meaningful government [top-down] intervention, etc. Agricultural exchange Programme between universities should also be on research projects involving sister organisations [bottom-up] with the support of government bodies.

A focus on food security in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is something that needs attention and emphasis going forward. It will be wise to make use of technology to enhance agricultural efficiency and productivity.

RUFORUM should, therefore, continue to play a major role in promoting agricultural education, research and development. One of the cornerstones in this regard, I believe, ought to be the provision of bursaries and training opportunities, on and off the job, to all involved, in addition to supporting both students and laureates.

Université Espoir du Congo (UEC), Democratic Republic of Congo  
Prof. Dr. Elisée Byelongo Isheloke  
Rector

As a RUFORUM member university, the University Espoir du Congo (UEC) is prepared to play its role in the Eastern DRC, in Fizi-Baraka to be precise, and cater for the needs of the local communities by using the 45 ha of land at its disposal for agricultural entrepreneurship, research and other income-generating activities. I hope that in this regard, we will be able to partner with sister organisations/universities to thrive. We shall together help put the money [or should I say the bread?] where the people's mouth is.

UEC praises RUFORUM for the two decades achievements across Africa.

I thank you!



Université de Kinshasa (UNIKIN), Democratic Republic of Congo  
Prof. Jean-Marie Kayembe  
Rector



The Democratic Republic of Congo has enormous agricultural potential, enabling it to rank among the agricultural powers with a view to meeting the objectives of food security in the African continent. This potential is characterised by almost 80 million

hectares of arable and irrigable land, a dense hydrographic network necessary for the development of irrigated agriculture throughout the country, and climatic diversity that offers the opportunity to diversify agricultural production.

The agricultural sector is an important treadle in the current agricultural Programme of the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo, which is reflected through the concept of the revenge of the soil on the subsoil. In this respect, the University of Kinshasa positions itself as a leading research and training institution to support the endeavors of the Congolese government, its partners and other stakeholders to meet the challenges of the agricultural sector by:

- Establishing educational curricula and research Programmes that lead to technological innovation, the development of agro-industry agribusiness, and the development of intelligent and resilient agriculture to climate change;
- Increasing the number of students and researchers in the field of agriculture and the

environment; and

- Creation of conducive conditions for the employability of youth and entrepreneurship in agriculture.

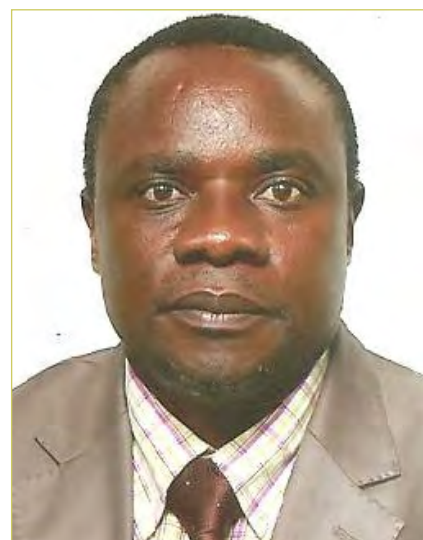
The University of Kinshasa commends RUFORUM for 20 years achievement in Africa



The Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of the Catholic University of Graben is one of those that were created at the birth of the university in 1989. It has contributed to the training of many executives, Agricultural Engineers, whose services to society and reputation are no longer in doubt. The Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of the Catholic University of Graben carries out its mission through three main axes, namely teaching, research and services to the community. Thanks to its staff composed of three Full Professors, two Professors, three associate professors, nineteen Heads of Works and thirteen Assistants; the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences of the Catholic University of Graben provides quality education to students in four sectors, including plant production, animal production, agro-industrial technology and the management of renewable natural resources.

In plant production, students are prepared to become agricultural engineers capable of designing, implementing and supervising agricultural production Programmes [food or industrial], crop protection against diseases and pests, seed production, genetic improvement of plants, soil fertility management and landscaping. Students enrolled in animal production are future managers in the design, implementation and supervision of animal genetic improvement Programmes, animal feed, livestock system development and integrated management of livestock health. The agro-industrial technologies sector prepares managers responsible for the design, implementation and supervision of agrifood product processing Programmes, value chain management, conservation of agricultural products, installation and management of agrifood product processing units and quality control of agrifood products. Studies

in renewable natural resource management prepare future managers of biodiversity, protected areas, experts in forest management, logging, management of wild fauna and flora, in the valorization of non-timber forest products, in landscape ecology, in ecosystem restoration.



Université Catholique du Graben (U.C.G.)  
Democratic Republic of Congo – DRC  
Prof. Angélus Mafikiri Tsongo Ngw'esse  
Rector

All these training courses are organized from the bachelor's cycle to the doctorate, including the master's cycle. The Faculty of Agronomic Sciences is engaged in continuous research through its multiple research centers: CERAVER, CEFORDA, "Collection Genetique Des Bananiers", CEAG, Ferme Agropastorale de Kalambi. Research work on potatoes, soybeans, beans, corn, sweet potatoes and coffee and banana trees is underway. In animal production, many studies on fish farming, breeding of monogastric animals [pigs, poultry, rodents] and ruminants [sheep, goats, cattle] as well as agrosylvopastoral integration; feed the daily life of our research centers. The transformation of bananas into various manufactured products [biscuits, bread flour and wine] is at the center of several studies in agroindustrial technology. Other studies in the management of renewable natural resources

focus on the inventory of woody biodiversity in the forest patches of mountainous Kivu as well as the domestication of forest tree species.

Among the services to the community, the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences is recognized for the supply of quality banana shoots, adapted potato seeds and high-performance fingerlings in rural areas.

Our university joined the RUFORUM membership in 2021. We congratulate the network on its 20-year journey supporting Africa with training, research, and community engagement; resource mobilization, networking and policy advocacy to strengthen higher agricultural education institutions in the continent.

University of Livingstonia (UNILIA), Malawi  
The Very Rev Assoc. Prof. Timothy K. Nyasulu  
Vice Chancellor



Institutions under RUFORUM are fulfilling the great commission.

Faith-based institutions agree that agriculture is biblical. Man's involvement in agricultural work starts appearing in the first chapters of the Holy Bible (Genesis 2:5-4:16). When God called Adam and Eve, he gave them

responsibility to take care of the creation and all that was in it. Apart from land management, this task included the keeping of animals [livestock], birds [poultry], fishes [aquaculture], even plants [agronomy]. It is correct to state that agriculture originates from God and it starts with God who planted the Garden of Eden. God is the Master Farmer.

God calls man to be involved in this farming. In other words, man's involvement in agriculture is noble. It is actually God's calling. It is part of God's mission (Missio Dei). To contextualize with RUFORUM, RUFORUM is performing a stewardship task at its best. It is involved in a biblical enterprise that cannot be undermined. No doubt, RUFORUM acknowledges that all the creation and all that is in it belongs to God. Humanity in academia as part

of creation is in cognizance that it is a God given responsibility over the creation. The world and those who dwell therein belong to the creator. Psalm 24 summarizes it all, that the earth is the Lord's and those who dwell therein.

Yes, humanity has been entrusted to do agriculture. Undermining the presence of God in farming is suicidal. It is wrong and sinful. The failure of agriculture is a result of the failure of man to take care of the natural resources. As an agricultural organization, RUFORUM will make itself effective by being conscious of this. It is evident that every member of RUFORUM is aware that for things to work well the intervention of God in all disciplines science, research or innovation, is crucial. Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain. In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat..." (Psalm 127:1-2). RUFORUM will be successful in its endeavours by God's presence and grace. Readers within RUFORUM and beyond are invited to think about what I call "agricultural missiology", i.e., taking agriculture as the mission of God. We need to accept that it is a noble task. It is meant to glorify God. In whatever form of institutions, faculties and entrepreneurial are engaged to improve and enhance agricultural activities, God should not be left out, but invited to take lead.

In conclusion, RUFORUM initiated a good thing. We continue giving it our support. The calling of universities in Africa to work together to promote innovativeness can be likened to the calling of disciples by Jesus to



go and make disciples of all nations [in Africa]. The acceptance by universities to work together under one umbrella is like accepting to put all the required forces in Africa together. No university will work in isolation to achieve the agenda put by RUFORUM. Individual universities have emptied themselves. They have abandoned the self-centeredness that might have existed before. They have become one family. As a parent organization, RUFORUM has a task not only of gathering all universities together annually, but also it is endeavouring to empower them with scholarships and other required resources to support research activities. Very soon if we

walk the talk Africa will be transformed into a self-reliant and self-sufficient continent. University of Livingstonia introduced agriculture Programme to be one of the leading universities sustainable agriculture and food security in Malawi, but also as one of the potential beneficiaries of RUFORUM'S agenda. The University is eager to improve its operations and services in research expertise and its engagement with Malawian communities.

Congratulations RUFORUM for your 20 years journey servicing African Agricultural Universities.

Malawi University of Business and Applied Sciences (MUBAS), Malawi

Prof. Nancy Chitera  
Vice Chancellor



RUFORUM has created a platform where African Universities can come together and not only showcasing what they are capable of producing, but also demonstrating practically the kind of impact African Universities are making in different countries translating into economic development of

African countries. Through RUFORUM, Universities have managed to collaborate, network and build capacity in their institutions that have a great impact on the development of agricultural technologies hence contributing to Africa's independency in terms of agrifood systems. This observation has come in considering RUFORUM's goals; projects that these African Universities are doing; type of collaborations and networking activities within the region. Examples of the RUFORUM goals include training of a critical

mass of Masters and PhD graduates, who are responsive to stakeholder needs and national/regional development goals; Developing collaborative research and training facilities that achieve economies of scope and scale; Improving the adaptive capacities of universities to produce high quality and innovative training, research and outreach activities that can contribute to policy and development practice; Increasing the use of technology to support effective, decentralised learning and the sharing of knowledge; Mainstreaming new approaches within university teaching and research that emphasises quality, innovation, and impact across the agricultural sector's full value chain; and, Creating a dynamic regional platform for policy advocacy, coordination, and resource mobilisation for improved training, research and outreach by universities.

Looking at these particular goals, I encourage African Universities to utilise this opportunity in order to maximise the impact that we can make in the development of nations and Africa as a whole.

I commend RUFORUM for spearheading African Agricultural Higher Education with member universities. Happy anniversary!



City University of Mogadishu (CU), Somalia

Prof. Dr. Abdullahi Barise  
President



The main priorities of Africa's higher agriculture education should include the following. First, to bridge the gap between the classroom and the field, experiential learning activities such as internships and field work should be emphasized. Second, to promote entrepreneurship

and innovation in agriculture, students should be equipped with entrepreneurship and higher order thinking skills. Third, to make sure that the graduates satisfy the needs of the workplace, strong partnerships should be developed between the higher agriculture education institutions on one hand, and the industry and governments on the other hand. Fourth, higher agriculture institutions should be equipped with state of the science facilities to foster effective instructional

outcomes. Finally, utmost efforts should be given in enhancing access of the marginalized populations such as women, the extremely poor, and rural populations to higher agricultural education.

Since its inception, RUFORUM has successfully engaged in various capacity-building, networking, and policy advocacy activities. Examples of fruitful capacity-building Programmes in the continent included courses, scholarships, and training workshops. The facilitation of networking between different higher agriculture institutions is noteworthy. In addition, RUFORUM has advocated for policies that promote agricultural research and innovation.

Gaps that need to be addressed in RUFORUM's endeavors include the need for more sustainable funding to ensure Programme sustainability and expansion of its activities to more countries in the continent. Also, there is need to achieve more alignment between research outcomes and policy actions. More effective engagement with more policy makers in more countries is required.

Happy 20th Anniversary, RUFORUM!

University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), South Africa

Prof. Nana Poku  
Vice Chancellor



At the University of KwaZulu-Natal we are dedicated to advancing Africa's higher agricultural education landscape. Our commitment is underscored by pioneering research within the College of Agriculture, Engineering and Science, through Centres such as the African Centre for Crop Improvement [ACCI] and the Centre for Transformative Agricultural and Food Systems (CTAFS). These centres exemplify our mission to bolster African capacity in agriculture through education, research, and policy advocacy.

Since its inception, the ACCI has played a pivotal role in training a new generation of African plant breeders. From 2002 to 2024 the Centre has graduated 155 plant breeders, with a notable 40% being women. These graduates have been instrumental in

developing over 200 new crop varieties crucial for food security across Africa. This transformative impact extends to 20 countries, where our alumni now lead national agricultural research Programmes.

Furthermore, our CTAFS initiative has spearheaded research on the



water-energy-food nexus since 2012, positioning us as a continental leader in integrated management systems. Through collaborations with regional and global partners, CTAFS has trained over 500 early career researchers in Africa, equipping them with the skills to address complex challenges under climate change.

In partnership with organizations like the West Africa Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI) and Makerere University Regional Centre for Crop Improvement (MaRCCI), we continue to expand our footprint in agricultural education and research across the continent.

The Chair in Land Use Planning and Management complements these efforts by leveraging remote sensing and GIS modelling to enhance sustainable resource management amidst global change. This initiative not only fosters innovation in precision agriculture but also supports diverse stakeholders in

addressing critical issues such as land use change and crop health.

As we look to the future, UKZN remains committed to nurturing a diverse cohort of scholars, with a focus on empowering African youth and women in agricultural sciences. Through our collaborative efforts with RUFORUM and other strategic partners, we strive to cultivate a vibrant ecosystem of knowledge exchange and policy influence that resonates beyond our borders.

Together, we envision a future where Africa's agricultural education not only meets global standards but sets new benchmarks for sustainable development and inclusive growth.

The University of KwaZulu-Natal congratulates RUFORUM for 20 years achievement in Africa.

Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), Uganda

Prof. Ismail Simbwa Gyagenda  
Vice Chancellor



The Islamic University in Uganda IUIU was established by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1988 to address the shortage of qualified human resources in English speaking African countries. The vision of the Islamic University in Uganda is "To be a leading center of Educational

Excellence for Societal Development." The mission of the Islamic University in Uganda is to "To Serve as an academic institution, based on Islamic values that create knowledge and trains learners to fulfill society's needs." The University Vision and Mission are supported by five core values: 1) Faith, 2) Integrity, 3) Excellence, 4) Diversity and 5) Creativity.

The University has eight faculties namely; The Faculty of Islamic Studies and Arabic Language, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Faculty of Management Studies, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Science, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Health Sciences and the most recently established one; the Faculty of Agribusiness and Natural Resource Sciences (FANRES).

The Islamic University in Uganda has recently established the Faculty of Agribusiness and Natural Resource Sciences (FANRES) as a fully-fledged institution based on concrete scientific, technological and innovative backgrounds of entrepreneurship and agribusiness. The concept note on FANRES was approved by the IUIU University Council. The faculty aims principally at training of students in the fields of agriculture at the various levels and undertaking research oriented towards biological sustainable development, environment conservation and biodiversity enrichment as well as enhancing awareness of the community for agricultural production and rational sustainable use of natural

resources. The current venture is substantiated by the rich experience of IUIU in dealing with community service and resilience in collaboration with national, regional and international relevant stakeholders. Establishment of FANRES is an opportunity for agriculture in the Africa Continent [60% of the world arable lands]. In Uganda it contributes about 23.7% of the GDP and 31% of export earnings and provides employment to 70% of the population and food to the population by 100%. Moreover, training of students in fields of agriculture at various degree levels in IUIU will enable combating poverty and hunger, and undertaking research oriented towards mitigating climate change and enhancing sustainable economic development. Additionally, the uniqueness of the modern agriculture study at IUIU is based on highlighting agricultural practices from viewpoint of the Islam and originating knowledge from holy Quran, value addition, climate smart farming, agricultural innovations and technology transfer, entrepreneurship and agribusiness, sustainable natural resource and environmental management, restoring and maintaining biodiversity, community outreach and engagement, and Halal production standards, testing and certification.

The faculty constitutes of nine [9] proposed departments namely, crop sciences, animal sciences, food sciences and nutrition, extension & community development, plant protection, agricultural economics & agribusiness, soil & environmental sciences, forestry & range sciences and agricultural mechanization. The department of food sciences and nutrition is operating and other study Programmes will be phased in successively, nevertheless two specializations; crop sciences and animal sciences are planned to start in the academic year 2024/2025.

The vision of FANRES is to be a leading center of excellence in provision of innovative technology for agri-business, sustainable management of natural resources and community development.

The mission of FANRES is to prepare practitioners, scientists and leaders in agriculture and entrepreneurship with ethical values to contribute to sustainable development and society welfare.

A Bachelor of Science in Innovative Agricultural Systems [B.Sc. IAS] is a forward-thinking Programme at FANRES. It prepares graduates to contribute to

sustainable, efficient, and technologically advanced agriculture while addressing global challenges related to food production and environmental sustainability. The B.Sc. IAS Programme aims at producing graduates that can demonstrate knowledge, skills and competencies required in the integrating theory and practice along different value chains of agricultural products, and produce graduates that will be able to progress academically.

The B.Sc. IAS is a four-year undergraduate Programme designed to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to revolutionize the agricultural sector. This Programme integrates various disciplines, including agriculture, biology, technology, economics, and environmental science, to develop a holistic understanding of agriculture's complex challenges and opportunities.

The Programme is open to Ugandans and Non-Ugandans who fulfil the admission requirements; Holders of Advanced Level of Education Certificate with two principal passes with one of them being biology, agriculture or food nutrition, diploma holders in agricultural sciences or its equivalent from recognized institutions; diploma in science technology, diploma in animal sciences, diploma in education - biology, diploma in education – agriculture double main, Higher Education Certificate [HEC-Biological Sciences] and mature age entry.

IUIU has developed an institutional communication with the RUFORUM aiming at publicity, promotion and marketing of FANRES as an attractive faculty taking advantages of opportunities and facilities of the RUFORUM. IUIU is expecting RUFORUM to find opportunities for building capacity of newly emerging FANRES to be able to contribute to agricultural development and consequently enhancing the food systems in Africa for Africans. The university is dedicated to carrying out the government's plan to boost economic growth through science and technology. The University will take advantage of several opportunities to make this aspiration a reality, including innovative agriculture teaching. This faculty's halal laboratory will introduce Uganda to the multimillion-dollar global halal market.

Happy 20th anniversary RUFORUM!





Université de Bunia (UNIBU), Democratic Republic of Congo  
Jean-Faustin Simba Akokola  
Rector

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), located on both sides of the Equator, has different agroecosystems that allow for the establishment of both tropical and temperate crops. These include forest, savannah, lowland and highland agricultural areas. This geographical position allows the DRC to practice agriculture throughout the year, depending on whether it is in the northern and/or southern hemisphere, as well as in the high altitude regions, particularly in the east of the country where there are also lakes (Albert in Ituri, Edouard in North Kivu, Kivu in North and South Kivu, Tanganyika and Moero in Katanga). The province of Ituri, located in the northeast of the country, also has the same agroecological characteristics and contributes enormously to the socio-economic development of the DRC through its agricultural potential, as well as its natural resources. In addition, Ituri has a very diverse climate, namely the typical equatorial climate in Mambasa territory, the tropical climate which is modified by altitude in certain parts of Irumu, Djugu, Mahagi and Aru territories.

This climatic diversity offers Ituri the possibility of practicing a diversity of crops both food crops [corn, beans, cassava, sweet potatoes, bananas, potatoes, etc.] and perennial crops: Arabica and Robusta coffee, oil palm, cotton, quinquina, etc. Its population is mainly distinguished by agricultural work, livestock breeding and fishing, the main source of commercial activities in the province. However, despite these potentialities, the population still finds itself in misery and poverty, following armed conflicts (looting, insecurity, etc.), soil degradation, etc. Hence, it is imperative to renew and revive this agriculture, once promising, through sustainable agriculture. Sustainable agriculture is the application of the principles of sustainable development in agriculture. It is therefore a question of ensuring the production of food, wood and fibers while respecting the ecological, economic and social limits that ensure the sustainability of this production over time. It does not harm the integrity of people and living beings. Sustainable agriculture limits the use of pesticides that can harm the health of farmers and consumers, it aims to protect biodiversity.

What can be done to practice sustainable agriculture in these different agroecosystems in Ituri?

The University of Bunia, through its faculty of agricultural sciences, which with the capacity building of its researchers, can, through RUFORUM, benefit from capacity building in the field of sustainable agriculture, finally:

- Encourage multidisciplinary research to guarantee the productivity of these agroecosystems
- Valorize or produce plant biomass which is an important element in maintaining soil fertility, because it is an important source of soil organic matter. It should be noted that tropical soils are generally poor in organic matter and that it mineralizes quickly following strong microbial activity favored by high temperatures and humidity.



Hence for sustainable agriculture, which allows sustainable farming and protects the environment, work must focus on:

- Good management of plant materials found in situ or in the fields;
- The production of these materials through the practice of agroforestry, cover plants, etc.;
- The supply and spreading of organic matter in the fields [compost, organic waste];
- The valorization of crop residues;
- The practice of appropriate agricultural and soil conservation techniques [shrub or grassy hedges, sowing or planting according to contour lines, etc.];
- The fight against diseases, harmful insects and crop pests.

To enable researchers in higher education and

universities to succeed in this agricultural vision; the involvement of political-administrative authorities, the technical services of agriculture, fisheries and livestock of the province and other agricultural research institutions is greatly expected.

The University of Bunia congratulates RUFORUM on its 20th anniversary.

The University of the Gambia (UTG), Republic of the Gambia

Prof Herbert Robinson  
Vice Chancellor



West Africa and the Sahel are endowed with fertile land, fresh water, and diverse climates. Several factors contribute to the significance of agricultural sector as the largest source of livelihoods, employment and a key economic driver in the sub-region. With over

400 million inhabitants in West Africa and the Sahel, agriculture is a primary source of employment as it directly employs 60% to 70% of the population in region. It is estimated that the agrifood sector in West Africa alone generates 36% of regional GDP.

The Gambia as part of the subregion relies heavily on agriculture as a major foreign exchange earner with more than sixty percent [60%] of its population involved in subsistence farming. The crops sub-sector generates about 40% of foreign exchange, employs 70% of the labour force, provides 75% of total household income and accounts for about 30% of GDP. In the 2023 budget speech by the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, agriculture is accorded top priority in The Gambia. Conscious of the strategic importance of the sector, The University of The Gambia [UTG] is repositioning itself to build on the considerable opportunities for Programme expansion in teaching and research to strengthen capacity in agriculture.

Capacity building through partnerships with

universities in the sub-region is critical in supporting Africa's agricultural sector. The "Quality-First Agenda" which is a central pillar of the university's strategy seeks to transform The University of The Gambia to a modern research-led university to support the Government's National Development Plan to stimulate agricultural growth and to build climate resilience to overcome the serious challenges posed to the farming ecosystem.

As producer of knowledge, The University of The Gambia (UTG) as part of Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) will support the Gambia's transformation agenda to achieve the strategic goals of the Recovery-Focused National Development Plan (NDP), the six priority areas of The Gambia National Agriculture Investment Plan (GNAIP) II which makes up the main investment framework for agricultural development in The Gambia. These areas include: (a) Production and value chain promotion on food crops and vegetables sub-sector, (b) Food and nutrition security, resilience, social protection and (c) Promote good governance of the whole agriculture and natural resources sector.

Building capacity in the agricultural sector through strategic partnerships with RUFORUM will also accelerate the achievement of the goals set out in the African Union Agenda 2063 (Goal 1: on standards of living and quality of life and Goal 5: on modernizing agriculture) and UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, particularly SDG 1 (no poverty), SDG 2 (zero hunger), SDG 12 [responsible consumption and production] and SDG 13 (climate action).

The University of The Gambia therefore aims to deepen our collaboration with partner universities in Africa through Regional Universities Forum for Capacity

Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) as a catalyst to develop new Programmes in teaching, research, policy dialogue and advocacy focusing on critical areas of agriculture that will modernize the sector, increase food security, enhance quality and nutrition,

promote value additions and industrialisation for the creation of enterprises and employment.

Congratulations RUFORUM.



Tharaka University (THU), Kenya

Prof. Peter K. Muriungi  
Vice Chancellor

Africa's higher agricultural education sector has immense potential to drive sustainable development, food security, and economic growth across the continent. As global challenges such as climate change, population growth, and resource scarcity intensify, the need for robust agricultural education systems that can produce skilled professionals and innovative solutions has never been more critical. In this context, the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture [RUFORUM] plays a transformative role. RUFORUM's comprehensive approach encompasses capacity building, networking, and policy advocacy, ensuring that African universities and their graduates are well-equipped to meet contemporary agricultural challenges.

RUFORUM focuses on strengthening the capabilities of African universities to deliver high-quality agricultural education and research. This involves enhancing curricula, promoting practical training and facilitating access to advanced research facilities. By supporting postgraduate Programmes and providing scholarships, RUFORUM ensures that a new generation of agricultural scientists and professionals are ready to drive innovation and development in the sector.

In addition, RUFORUM fosters collaboration among African universities, research institutions, and international partners. Through its network of member institutions, RUFORUM facilitates knowledge exchange, joint research initiatives and academic partnerships. This collaborative approach not only enhances the quality of agricultural

education and research but also promotes the sharing of best practices and successful models across the continent.

Recognizing the importance of an enabling policy environment, RUFORUM engages in policy advocacy to influence national and regional agricultural education and research policies. By

working closely with governments, policymakers and development partners, RUFORUM advocates for increased investment in agricultural education, supportive regulatory frameworks, and policies that promote innovation and sustainability in agriculture. Overall, the perspectives for Africa's higher agricultural education are promising with RUFORUM leading the change in capacity building, networking and policy advocacy. These efforts are essential for cultivating a resilient agricultural sector that can address the complex challenges facing the continent and secure a prosperous future for its people.

Tharaka University commends RUFORUM for 20 years journey with African universities.



Zamzam University of Science and Technology (ZUST), Somalia

Prof Mohamud M. Hassan (Harbi)  
Rector



Zamzam University of Science and Technology (ZUST) emerged from its roots as an agricultural school in 2012, transforming into a full-fledged university in 2014. Founded to address the national food production shortage, ZUST

remains dedicated to this mission. We joined the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) to leverage their expertise in building capacity, fostering networks, and advocating for impactful policies. This will empower ZUST to develop solutions for Somalia's specific food security challenges and empower the next generation of agricultural leaders.

Together with RUFORUM, as they celebrate their 20th anniversary, we will be a driving force in Africa's agricultural renaissance."

Happy Anniversary, RUFORUM!



University of Embu (UoEm), Kenya

Prof. Daniel M. Njiru  
Vice Chancellor



Agriculture is the mainstay of many African countries economies; up to 98% of rural households in Africa engage in agricultural activities, including livestock production to sustain their livelihoods. Agriculture employs and supports 60% -70% of Africa's workforce, supports livelihoods of 90% of African population and accounts for about 1/4 of the country's GDP [OECD/FAO 2016: World bank 2016]. Africa's Economic transformation and growth is dependent on how we manage the agricultural sector. Agricultural transformation therefore, has the potential of overcoming many of Africa's economic challenges by fostering food security, improving nutrition and related health issues. Agriculture also contributes to community growth, promotes inclusion and poverty reduction.

Higher agricultural education institutions need to step up their role in promoting Africa's economic transformation. This is because the quality of higher agricultural education offered at our institution of higher learning will ultimately influence the effectiveness of farmers through imparting of current

knowledge and technological know-how to improve agricultural practice. Skill sets of graduates must meet the demands of the rapidly evolving agro-food production systems, hence enhancing the productivity of workers in the farming, agribusiness as well as the food processing sector.

Our Universities need to come together and review the higher agricultural education curricula to focus mainly on giving the students skills that will prepare them to create entrepreneurship opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness. Universities also have



a major role to incubate new ideas and innovations that will propel growth in agricultural technology to transform agricultural production and value-addition to the next level.

RUFORUM Vision 2030, the African Universities' Agenda for Agricultural Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (AHESTI) is a well thought out vision that truly, recognizes the challenges facing higher agricultural education and transformation in Africa and outlines RUFORUM's critical role as a leader in the envisaged transformation initiatives for harnessing potential of 'vibrant, transformative universities to catalyse sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa'. I congratulate RUFORUM for this Vision.

RUFORUM has played a critical role in fostering an atmosphere where agricultural learning can prosper, leading to improved food security and sustainable development across the continent. This has been achieved through improvement of curricula, nurturing agricultural research, enhancing learner's

practical skills and preparing students to tackle real-world agronomic challenges. RUFORUM's role in enhancing policy advocacy ensures that agricultural education aligns with national, regional and global goals, thus promoting sustainable practices and resilience to climate variability. Capacity building through training Programmes, grants, scholarships and fellowships to postgraduate students has contributed greatly to human resource development for the agricultural sector. RUFORUM's regional and global networking among stakeholders through international conferences, workshops and seminars has strengthened institutional linkages and an avenue for sharing the available resources and inventions. Additionally, RUFORUM engagement with policymakers to advocate for supportive agricultural policies and increased investment in training, research and extension has had an impact in advancing Africa's agricultural education and development.

The University of Embu congratulates RUFORUM on its 20th anniversary.



Universidade Aberta ISCED (UnISCED)  
Mozambique  
Prof. Martins dos Santos Vilanculos Laita  
Rector

Agriculture is the cornerstone of the African continent's development. Scientific research, innovation, and the modernization of agrifood systems can lead to significant benefits by boosting productivity, diversifying crop types, and adapting to climate change, all of which contribute to the sustainable growth of this sector. The inclusion of digital tools, partnerships with the private sector and national policies will also drive this change.

In this context, higher education in agriculture plays a crucial role in the process of transforming this sector into an economically developed and prosperous Africa. To this end, universities must prepare themselves to adapt to new realities and fully meet the skills and knowledge requirements by designing curricula that focus on the main challenges of agriculture in the African context, with a particular emphasis on the productive sector, transformation, and local

development. Data analysis, smart agriculture in the face of climate change, entrepreneurship, and value chain management are all essential skills.

Therefore, with a view to continuing to contribute to its noble task of capacity building in agriculture in Africa, RUFORUM will be able to focus its efforts on training communities through higher education institutions in matters of applied scientific research, management and



leadership in agribusiness, rural infrastructure, agribusiness financing policies, agricultural technologies, processing and local consumption, areas that could boost and change the direction of agriculture in Africa.

Therefore, it is time for Africa to lead this extraordinary effort to achieve development goals and eradicate hunger. Our university is committed to the idea that Agriculture is fundamental for the development

of Africa and as such will continue to invest in the teaching and research on Agriculture in the best possible ways, resorting to the best technologies available for the effect. Being a member of RUFORUM gives us an edge towards our commitment.

We congratulate RUFORUM for the two decade journey.

Kampala International University (KIU), Uganda  
Prof. Ngoma Muhammed  
Vice Chancellor



The contribution of higher agricultural education in Africa to the sustainability of activities in agriculture networking, and policy reform is below aspiration. The institutions responsible for that should do more to assist the local communities, farmers, and governments

through alternative policies, curricula, learning, research, training, and extension services. Better documentation and evaluations of tertiary agricultural education, research, and extension are urgently needed to properly monitor and assess the development of agriculture in light of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Strengthening the agricultural faculties and their related institutions can encourage critical thinking, teaching, and multi-disciplinary research on sustainable agriculture concepts, practices, and SDGs, which will help students, government decision-makers, and farmers make practical choices based on reliable evidence. RUFORUM member universities should also develop strong networks to set their policy priorities and plan to better support their faculties of agriculture and related institutions. They are also advised to encourage their national governments to initiate leadership with academia, the private sector, international partners and donors, and other key

stakeholders on the following perspectives:

1. Conduct national and regional multi-stakeholder consultations with evidence-based policy dialogues about the roles of RUFORUM higher education institutions in achieving the SDGs through sustainable agriculture and agrifood systems studies, research, capacity building, and academic services.
2. Develop, in collaboration with national governments, academia, and regional partners a comprehensive regional strategy for RUFORUM member universities to empower and sustain the RUFORUM's capacity-building activities in agriculture networking, and policy advocacy in Africa for the period 2025–2030
3. Invest more in teaching, learning, and university-based agricultural research and extension services to improve the quality of tertiary education with knowledge and skills to improve the educational environment for the empowerment of agricultural networking, and attaining effective higher education advocacy to drive systemic and policy changes that'll benefit the stakeholders of the agricultural sector in Africa
4. Collaborate regionally to define essential knowledge, literacy, and competencies for common or harmonized African agricultural curricula to inform viable alternatives and assist widespread, measurable transformations towards influential activities in agriculture networking, and crucial roles regarding policy reforms in Africa.

Congratulations RUFORUM!



Mountains of The Moon University (MMU), Uganda  
 Prof Pius Coxwell Achanga  
 Vice Chancellor

To strengthen the agrifood sector relevance as a significant driver of economic growth for Africa, a fundamental reform in how key actors, especially farmers are supported with knowledge and skills is needed. Universities in Africa can play a key role of scientific innovation and outreach (technology transfer) in agriculture, however, the noted lack of systematic vertical and horizontal partnerships among local, regional and international universities, as well as the poor level of communication and collaboration with the private sector, including farming communities, pose key barriers to the development of a productive, relevant and sustainable agrifood industry. Moreover, there is also existent weak support, for the agriculture sector, from key knowledge services such as extension, entrepreneurial training, research and development (R&D), innovations, and reliable weather information. This, is despite the pursuit of the prioritization at the national and continental levels, to modernize agriculture for increased production, productivity and value addition, in most African states.

Conversely, African universities largely lack resources to conduct work-based teaching and learning, strengthened by effective outreach activities. In essence, this limits meaningful transfer to knowledge and good practices to farmers, which weakens the university-farmer linkages. Hence, a recurring problem of having graduates unprepared to face the growing demands of the labour market, that is increasingly solution-oriented and results driven. The role of the Regional Universities for Capacity Building in Agriculture [RUFORUM], can therefore be recognized, as a stimulus in aiding beneficial training and capacity building of mutual collaboration, between universities and key agriculture stakeholders in Africa. At MMU, a key mandate of the Institution, is the training of agricultural scientists in various thematic sub-disciplines, for socio-economic transformation. MMU is thus keen on work-based teaching and learning mechanism, with the aim to provide students and staff, a thought-provoking academic environment. Indeed, this is done through the Institutional Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (FAES), whose mission is to “provide research-based

training, education and outreach services, anchored on sustainable Agrifood systems, to transform livelihoods of communities”. The FAES, continues to promote the Niche of MMU in Agriculture and Environment, as being to sustainably transform Agrifood systems, innovative knowledge generation and dissemination for agricultural production, agro-processing, food value addition, food marketing and consumption, while promoting environmental conservation initiatives.



In 2023, MMU officially joined RUFORUM, to foster the sustainable achievement of its aspirations for agriculture training and complete the needed and relevant cycle of collaboration, by actively engaging with other Universities in Africa to improve the relevance of the agriculture sector. It is expected that this membership will offer MMU the opportunity to benefit from a number of initiatives, including; obtaining resources allocated for transformative growth of its member universities; support the development of quality human resources and capacity required to intensify and increase Africa’s agricultural productivity; and, foster networking linkages to enable the dissemination of the realized products, processes and knowledge generated, across the agrifood system, to catalyse transformation. This approach bridges the gap between the higher education and agricultural value chain actors, which MMU finds very important, because, in the view of MMU, RUFORUM provides a great platform for networking and policy advocacy, through linkages among the member universities and with relevant development partners, including policy makers at all levels of government.

Universities such as MMU, which are engaged in agricultural training, are important part of an agricultural educational system, research and outreach, with the capability to influence the pace of their national economic development, hence contributing directly towards transformation of the agrifoodsystem, by supplying highly effective human resources needed for socio-economic development. MMU recognizes this role and has therefore prioritized Agriculture, Environment and Tourism as its Niche, in terms of higher education and research. Although most workers in African agrifood systems are not university graduates, nevertheless, universities still play a great role in providing the needed training and skills to enhance the agricultural sector.

MMU expects to benefit from RUFORUM's training capacity building initiatives such as the Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) in which teaching staff are supported under a tripartite arrangement in which a member university sends its staff to another member

university for training, with the RUFORUM Secretariat as a coordinating agent. This kind of collaboration helps among others, improve the quality of higher education and increase the pool of PhD-level trained academic staff in African universities and contribute more directly to agricultural development in Africa whilst strengthening inter- university collaboration in the field of higher education in agriculture.

MMU also expects to benefit from RUFORUM, research capacity building initiatives such the Graduate Research Grants (GRG), Community Action Research Programme (CARP), and RUFORUM Entrepreneurship Challenge Programme (RECAP) designed to support agricultural action research at member universities. MMU is ready to steer towards being a research-lead university, with the capacity to produce innovative ideas that contribute to Africa's agricultural development.

MMU commends RUFORUM for its 20 years journey with African Universities.

Upper Nile University (UNU), South Sudan  
Prof. Mamour Choul Turuk  
Vice Chancellor



The Republic of South Sudan is well endowed with vast land area of 648,051 km<sup>2</sup>. Over 90 % of its population is residing in rural areas. Fortunately, over 95 % of the land in South Sudan is suitable for agriculture although only less than 2% was under cultivation during the war. In addition to its potential for

producing cash crops such as cotton, tea, sugar cane, coffee, about 50 million hectares are of prime agriculture land, allowing cultivation of a variety of

crops, vegetables, pulses, fruits as well as various tropical crops. Moreover, Agriculture is still under the traditional subsistence livelihood style where traditional techniques of production and dependent on natural rainfall were practiced, thus result into low production and productivity. In this system families satisfy their consumption needs with no surplus for sale and if any, it is sold for cash after the producer meets his consumption needs.

The challenge is how to transform traditional subsistence agriculture mindsets firmly anchored to fading ancestral beliefs and practices remains a factor to be diffuse. In South Sudan, agriculture is considered as rural activity and do not warrant a school, therefore, this became a stumbling block to transformative higher agricultural education as students resent enrollments in agricultural schools. This clearly indicates the acute shortage of qualified professionals to enhance or implement



transformative higher agricultural education at higher education level and could not influence the traditional farmers in conflict regions effectively, thus rendering the valuable natural resources untapped for improvement of food provision and vividly explains reasons the country depends on imported food to feed its citizen. It is therefore imperative transforming agriculture education in conflict regions in Africa like South Sudan as a necessary requirement for ensuring food security, poverty reduction strategies with an ultimate aim of achieving prosperity and economic development in Africa.

The Regional Universities Forum for capacity Building in Agriculture [RUFORUM], is a network of 175 Universities in 40 African nations spanning the continent, with a vision to create vibrant transformative universities to catalyze sustainable inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa, catalyzing the achievement of the 17 sustainable development goals, and the African Union Agenda 2063. Key gaps in the African Agriculture Sector is the limited application of Science, Technology and Innovation to support agricultural transformation in the Africa Continent. Among the challenges that the sector faces are low staff capacity particularly at doctoral level which is wide across African Universities, inadequate Postgraduate Programmes, weak linkages between the universities and stakeholders and lack of curriculum relevant to demand or not adopting curriculum according to needs. Because of these, most of the states in Africa such as South Sudan, become dependent on imported food products due to weak development of agricultural technology.

Despite the efforts made by public and private agencies over the years, African universities are not able to train a critical number of PhD graduates to strengthen their staff capacities nor staff the national research systems due to limited funding, thus frustrating the need of member universities to help assisting the rural poor beyond food security intervention especially in small and fragile states such as South Sudan.

In its endeavors towards achieving the Africa we want agenda 2063, in which implementation of priority area one [eradicating hunger and achieving food and nutrition security], RUFORUM rigorously enhanced its activities of capacity building in higher agricultural education, increase networking and policy advocacy in Africa.

### Capacity Building

RUFORUM supports institutional strengthening of member universities through human capacity development by focusing on, new approaches with universities teaching/research that have impacts across the agricultural sector's value chain by changing in modes of academic delivery, production of high quality and innovative training, research and outreach services and training of critical mass of MSc and PhD responsive to stakeholders' needs. However, Upper Nile University as RUFORUM member university is eagerly looking forward for collaborative research to increase the scientific popularity, visibility and recognition of the institution as a hub for agricultural knowledge in South Sudan, training cohort of PhDs and MSc in plant/Animal breeding and genetics for agricultural transformation, enhance staff exchange and escalating demands for rationalization of scientific, innovative research knowledge to enable the university to contribute to national agricultural development agenda.

### Networking and Policy Advocacy in Africa

RUFORUM links member universities with one another and help them network to solve common problems related to higher education, research, science, technology and innovation in agriculture and related disciplines. It also links member universities with communities, private sector and promote net working outside the African continent. RUFORUM advocates policies of Africa Union Commission's Agenda 2063, Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA-2024) and comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Plan [CAADP] and putting United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into consideration. It also engages with policy makers around agriculture and higher education at national and continental level. RUFORUM advocates that all faculties of agriculture in all Africa Universities as institutions have to undergo transformation if they are to meet the dynamic needs of the farming communities for sustainable development goal. These are objectives within the framework of South Sudan National Strategic plans to be achieved through multi-sectoral institutions including universities. As such the Universities in South Sudan through faculties of agriculture shall rigorously pursue these links and policies with high confidence that they will impart positively on agricultural education transformation and alleviation of food insecurity.

Established Colleges/Faculties of Agriculture in

### South Sudan Universities

African universities are being looked to for leadership and are called to change their mandates from the traditional focus on teaching to include research, innovation, extension and commercialization of research outputs.

There is a marked growth of higher education in South Sudan. The five public universities in South Sudan, have created colleges of agriculture to enable the country to effectively transform agricultural education if they are to meet the dynamic needs of the farming communities for sustainable development goal in favor of the well-being of the rural population and sustainable development of the Republic of South Sudan. Introduction of Digital Agriculture Project into curricula, is a new trend to realize agricultural transformation and to boost agribusiness in the country.

The Faculty of Agriculture in Upper Nile University is located in Renk campus north of Malakal Campus. Renk is the food basket of South Sudan as important agricultural schemes producing sorghum, groundnuts, sesames and others are cultivated. The faculty networks with line Ministry of Agriculture, FAO to render extension services and training to farmers. It also partnerships with UNMISS [Bangladesh Contingency] in planting some fruits and tries in the town. The University networks with policy makers in attempt to navigate farmers out of

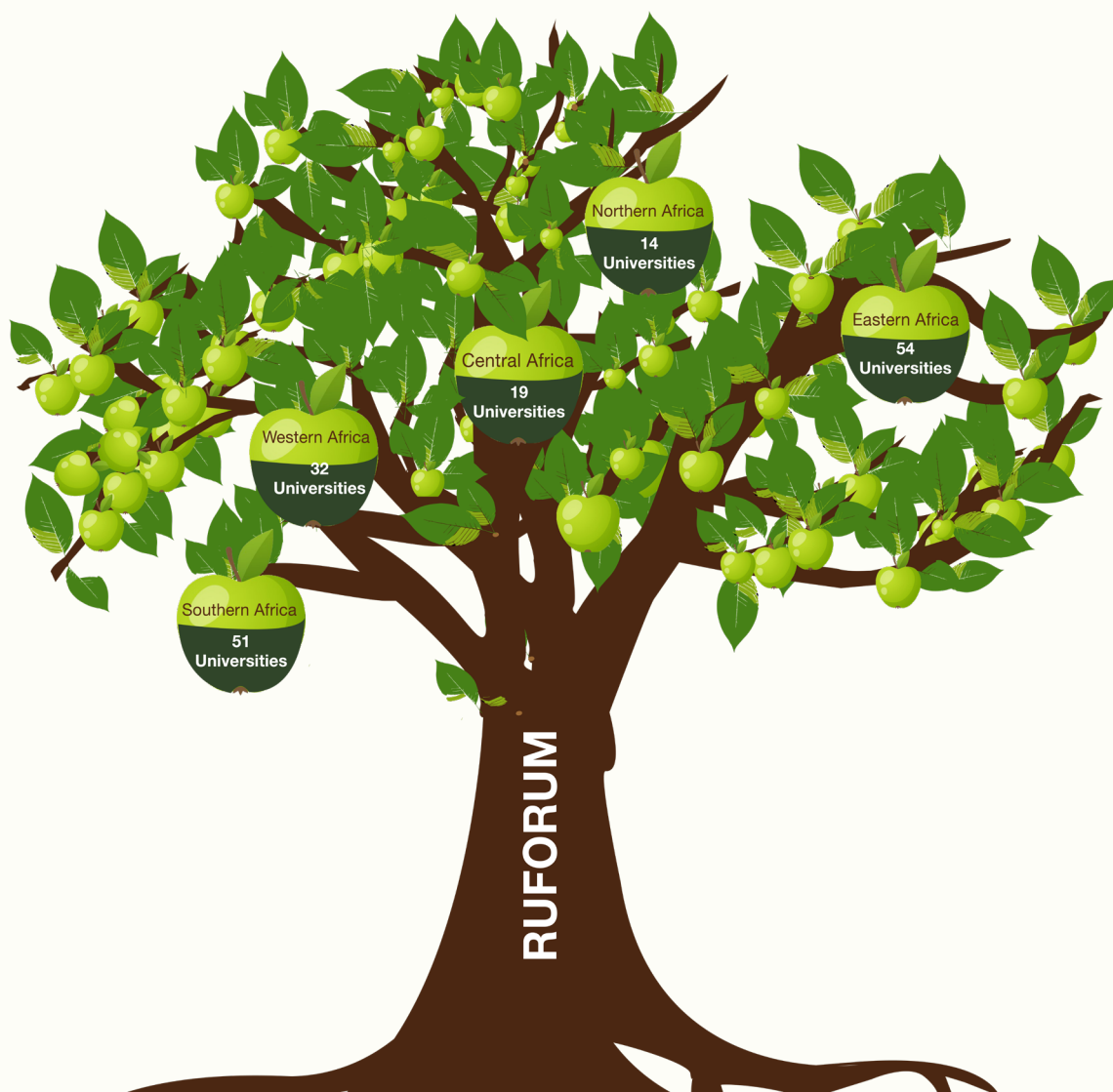
traditional/subsistence agriculture to research based, innovative and technological one such as digital agriculture. Internally, the University also networked with University of Juba in some important training Programmes such as seed production and banking. Under RUFORUM capacity building activities, the university networked with Makerere university school of agriculture in training of two PhD students.

The key gaps identified in South Sudan were the very reasons that made higher agricultural education in South Sudan lags behind its peers in the continent. This situation, therefore bag affirmative intervention from RUFORUM. From the many capacities building training tailored under RUFORUM, Upper Nile University as a member university, is yet to benefit from them. Therefore, it is envisaged that RUFORUM expands universities membership to include more from countries in conflicts and post-conflicts, help in training of critical mass of MScs and PhDs responsive to stakeholders needs by revival of GTA Programme. It has to get involved in brokering establishing linkages between universities and faculties of agriculture in the continent, encourage staff exchange and staff researchers' mobility between universities.

Happy 20th anniversary, RUFORUM!



## Building capacity to grow and transform Africa's agriculture for development together with our partners



|               |          |        |        |         |         |        |        |            |
|---------------|----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|--------|------------|
| AA            | AAU      | AAIN   | ACIAR  | ADA     | AFAAS   | AfDB   | AGRA   | Agrinatura |
| Akademiya2063 |          | AOAD   | APAARI | APLU    | APPEAR  | ARC    | ARF    |            |
| ASARECA       | AUC      | AWARD  | BADEA  | BMGF    | BRSSCAL | CABI   |        |            |
| CCNY          | CCARDESA | CGIAR  | CIRAD  | CIMMYT  | CoL     | COMESA |        |            |
| CORAF         | CSIR     | DAAD   | DFID   | EARTH   | ESSA    | EU     | EUg    | FANRPAN    |
| FAO           | FARA     | Ford F | GCHERA | GODAN   | GoUG    | GSP    | ICBA   |            |
| ICRISAT       | IDRC     | IFPRI  | IITA   | IOFS    | IsDB    | IUCEA  | LF     | LMSU       |
|               | MCF      | MPI-NZ | NARO   | NORPART | NRF-SA  | NUFFIC |        |            |
|               | OCP      | PASGR  | R.F    | SLU     | Sida    | UKR&I  | UNESCO |            |
|               |          | USAID  | WACREN | WASCAL  | WB      | WUR    |        |            |