



02ND RUFORUM
Triennial Conference
12-16 August 2024

Namibia



CONFERENCE REPORT 2024





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Message from the Board Chair



“

Let us keep the momentum we have gained through this conference for the advancement of individual, institutional and regional development.”

Professor. Theresia Nkuo-Akenji

The 2024 RUFORUM Triennial Conference, under the main theme Operationalising Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems for Innovation, Industrialisation and Economic Development in Africa: A Call for Action” is of marked significance because it coincided with the RUFORUM 20th anniversary and the Annual General Meeting. This conference was designed to fulfill a mission to all Africa’s agricultural higher and tertiary education, research, innovations development, policy and industry stakeholders but most especially to the university subsector in Africa. The dialogue during the conference brings us closer to a common appreciation and understanding of the persistent and emerging issues that we need to address if we are to anchor not only Africa’s agri-food

systems development but the role that universities can play to advance the development trajectory of the continent. We however, have to move beyond dialogue to operationalize the action points generated from the dialogue.

We have identified areas of convergence between policy and practice. Areas of focus that will expand investments in agriculture and higher education. The declaration from the policy dialogues for Building Africa’s Human Capital to Underpin Its 21st Century Development Needs underscore the need to,

1. Build consensus on how to support the completion of education by displaced students, while unlocking opportunity for others to join

higher education institutions in their respective current host countries or communities;

2. Leverage regional ecosystem frameworks with institutions such as RUFORUM - to holistically address the human capital and research needs on the continent;
3. Revisit the STYIP ten-year target of 100,000 PhDs and raise it to a target that is commensurate with the current continental demographic needs while also accelerating Africa’s development.

We have noted that investment in human capital development is a target that we cannot afford to relegate. We have to continue urging governments in Africa to explore all avenues that will drive investment in human capital to meet the continent’s

dynamic development needs. We acknowledge that universities in Africa are essential partners in developing solutions that will underpin the continent's economic transformation.

The commitment to promote and expand linkages and partnerships with all actors including governments, higher education leaders, development partners, research and innovation agencies as well as the private sector and the business

community to spur investments, innovation and transformation of the higher education cannot be over emphasized. Conferences such as this triennial provide the appropriate platform for collective and constructive scrutiny. The chances of success are higher when we engage amongst and with all stakeholders to identify and map pathways for addressing strategic issues affecting higher education and development in Africa. We therefore commit to work together with national, regional and

international partners from the public and private sector and civil society to improve the quality of higher education, research and innovation to building capability and facilitating equitable access to knowledge and skills.

Let us keep the momentum we have gained through this conference for the advancement of individual, institutional and regional development.



Message from the Executive Secretary

“

Let us keep the momentum we have gained through this conference for the advancement of individual, institutional and regional development.”

Professor. Patrick Okori



Despite the generally optimistic economic outlook, growth is not consistent throughout the African continent, for example there are notable differences across economies that are dependent on natural resources versus those that are not, and urban and rural populations, among other factors. The youth bulge has also been a key factor shaping the development trajectory. The continent only creates only 3 out of the 10–12 million jobs that are needed each year and the uptake of advances in digitisation and technology continue to lag behind other geographical areas. In light of the diverse range of opportunities and obstacles the African continent faces, higher education must be included and integrated into policy,

practice, and discussions in order to leapfrog technological advancement and job creation to lift millions out of poverty. The Triennial conference was organized with the conviction that The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) stands at the forefront of development in Africa, nurturing the next generation of agricultural leaders, and driving innovation in the agricultural sector.

We acknowledge that as the challenges facing African agriculture become increasingly complex, there is an urgent need for an inclusive research and transformative education agenda. The RUFORUM Triennial Conference underscored the commitment by universities

in Africa to foster partnerships that leverage diverse expertise and resources to tackle complex agricultural challenges more comprehensively; enhance its capacity to influence policy; and, build the necessary capacity to implement a common research agenda that aligns to Africa's most pressing development challenges.

Agricultural education and research are central to RUFORUM's mission of promoting sustainable agricultural development in Africa. We have continued to adopt transformative education and research approaches to equip students and researchers with the skills, knowledge, and mindset required to drive positive change in African agriculture. This

changed outlook provides the appropriate attributes required to address evolving challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, and rapid technological advancements effectively.

I wish to thank colleagues from the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, African Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services, Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA); West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development

(CORAF) and the CGIAR, that have demonstrated willingness to expand the collective engagement portfolio for the advancement of agri-food systems. Your participation and steps that we have taken under the AIRRES provide the relevant framework for working partnerships to meet Africa's development needs. It will be through such partnerships that we shall leverage regional and cross disciplinary competence to strengthen Africa's competitiveness. Universities in the network are eager to link with you for agri-food systems development.

I wish to thank the Government of Namibia and the RUFORUM Member Universities in Namibia for hosting this very successful conference and for exhibiting the African spirit to welcome us to your home. Let me further congratulate the RUFORUM member universities and the RUFORUM governance Bodies for a successful 20th Anniversary and Triennial Conference.

Introduction



University Policy Interface- Namibia Minister of Higher Education, Training & Innovation, Namibia, other government officials and Vice Chancellors from Namibia

The African Union declared 2024 as the year to focus on Educate and Skill Africa for the 21st Century". The theme is anchored in Agenda 2063, the continental vision for an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the international arena. This is against and despite the challenges that have beleaguered the continent. Specifically, significant losses and damages due to increasing extreme weather events that are affecting agriculture, a key sector that underpins the livelihood of the vast majority of Africans. Inadequate technological catch up, with limited prospects for harnessing the advances in Information and Communication Technology, that are essential for the fourth industrial revolution are increasing; and inadequate investments in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEMs) which are perquisites for the fourth industrial revolution.

The RUFORUM 2nd Triennial Conference, 2024, theme *"Operationalizing Higher Agricultural Education and Research Ecosystems*

for Innovation, Industrialisation and Economic Development in Africa: A Call for Action" is a response to the urgent needs for the African

governments, development partners, private sector and citizenry to take action, to invest in higher education to underpin the continent's urgent

development needs in an inclusive and sustainable way. Thus, the main thrusts for the conference were to:

1. Enable education and agricultural ecosystem actors to showcase and present their key findings, lesson share and inform each other on key actions required to make science work in Africa's development. This objective was implemented through a scientific programme that brought together diverse stakeholders involved in Africa's research development, policy and development.
2. Engage lead actors in policy and practice, to identify action areas for further investments in agriculture and higher education. Policy dialogues were

held involving governments, higher education leaders, development partners, research and innovation as well as private sector agencies.

3. Promote international linkages and partnerships for excellence in Higher Education. This objective supported the strengthening of strategic partnerships, collaboration and mutual learning to spur investments, innovation and transformation of the higher education sector systems in Africa.
4. Provide a platform for discussions, and lesson learning among diverse actors on the subject of creating employment for Africa's young population.

Discussions on topical issues such as the future of work, business development and incubation, and linkages among others were held.

5. Deliberate on the macro and micro needs to adapt smart operations in terms of changing connectivity, education, business practices, sustainable agricultural and value chain transitions and advancement.

Further noting that, the continent must make major strides to deliver on the promises espoused by Agenda 2063 and the capacity for balanced growth and minimize wide gender disparities and inequity, discrepancies between urban and rural populations, natural resource-endowed versus non-

extractive industry-dependent economies, and low and higher altitude ecologies, among others. The need to explore opportunities and challenges that the African continent faces to move millions out of poverty by creating resilient and productive economies requires engagement and integration of higher education in the discussions,

policy and practice could not be over emphasized.

African Universities, through the RUFORUM Network are essential partners in developing solutions that will underpin the continent's economic transformation. The 2nd RUFORUM Triennial Conference primary focus therefore was to

assess and explore linkages and tap on synergies and draw lessons from across different sectors of Africa's economy together with policy, industry and development partners to drive university programming and engagement.

Pre-Conference Training Events

The five-day Triennial conference officially opened by H.E. Honorable Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi, Minister for Higher Education, Training and Innovation, Namibia, brought together policymakers including Ministers and Technical Experts, Higher Education Leaders in Africa, development partners, private sector leaders, researchers, innovators, students, and farmer organizations, among others. Approximately 892 delegates from across the world participated in the event.



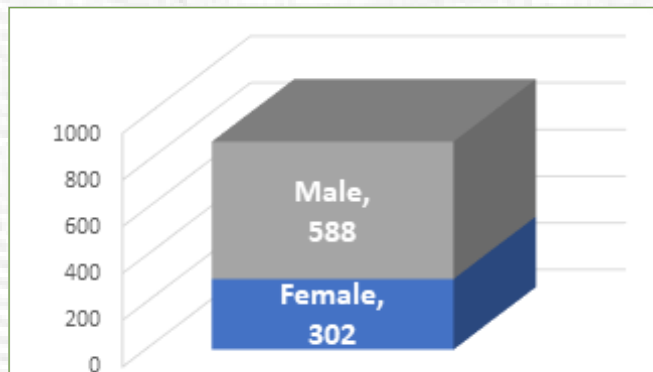
Participants in Summary

Participants to the second RUFORUM Triennial conference were from more than 47 countries across Africa and the rest of the world. Represented at the conference were more than 150 RUFORUM Member universities, other universities in Africa, Europe, Asia and America. The convening attracted, national, regional and global research institutions including the CGIAR, the Forum to Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) and the sub-regional institutions Centre for

Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA) and West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development (CORAF). Participants from the regional policy bodies, the African Union Commission, the European Commission, Ministers and senior government ministry officials as well as Higher Education Regulators from across the Africa attended the conference. Development partners,

such as the African Development Bank, the Mastercard Foundation and AWARD. The private sector, farmers and farmer organizations. Sixty Vice Chancellors, Eighty seven Principals/ deans from member universities, other university staff, students and RUFORUM Alumni attended the conference. Thirty four percent (34%) of the participants were female.-

Participants by country



OFFICIAL OPENING

MONDAY 12 - FRIDAY 16 AUG 2024

**Remarks by Host Minister, Hon. Dr. Itah Kandjii-Murangi,
Minister of Higher Education, Training & Innovation, Namibia**



- Reiterated that the conference theme highlights the need for Africa to achieve food sovereignty through the transformation of agricultural sector through wealth creation and improvement of the quality life and material conditions of the African people.
- Emphasized the role of agriculture in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly 1 (no poverty) and 2 (zero hunger).
- Highlighted that the African Heads of states and government during AU 2003 Maputo and 2014 Malabo conventions declared commitment to the allocation of at least 10% of national

budget resources to agriculture.

- Noted that the Namibia National Development Plan (NDP5) highlights increased Agricultural production for cereals, horticulture and livestock, development agro-processing industries by utilizing local produce and regional value chains, increase smallholder or communal farmers productivity, enhance animal health and production, enhance preparedness for effective response, recovery and reconstructions and promote the planning of drought resistance varieties as the desired strategic imperatives and outcomes.
- Recommended that in order to prepare its youth for the workforce of the future, Africa needs to educate and skill the youth. This was in light of the fact that, with almost 70% of the population under 30, Africa has the youngest population in the world. Encouraged participants, including Ministers; Development partners; Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, as well as public and private players, to learn from one another and share their experiences.

“

We must educate and skill the young people to unlock opportunities and prepare them for the future work.”





His Excellency Philip Hewitt, New Zealand High Commissioner to South Africa

Noted that New Zealand collaborates with South African researchers and explores how innovation can contribute to effective climate change research. This is key in generating climate change solutions, including distance solutions

Highlighted that New Zealand supports the Climate-Specific Net Assistance (CSNA) initiative and collaborating with CGIAR to advance science and national

policies for sustainable climate resilience.

Noted that need for increased investment in higher education and research to improve agricultural practices and contribute to overall development. Achieving this requires a strong commitment to collaboration and leveraging local knowledge.

Noted that their collaboration focuses on food programs and

supporting women in agriculture as well as ensuring access to vital benefits and promoting sustainable practices.

Recommended the need to strengthen collaborations among research institutions, governance bodies, and private sector partners.

Emphasized that the New Zealand

Government supports equipment, training, and staff to enhance research capabilities.

“We need to strengthen collaborations among research institutions, governance bodies, and private sector partners.”

Dr. Van Kent

**Executive Director Ministry of Higher Education,
Technology and Innovation, Namibia**



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- Welcomed the delegates and acknowledged the platform for allowing institutions to discuss challenges such as like as climate change and the use of technology.
- Advised that universities needed to encourage students to enroll in Agricultural related courses to address the issue of food security in Africa. These would allow Africa to achieve the SDG 2 target: zero hunger and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want.
- Acknowledged the unique opportunities accorded by RUFORUM to share experiences across Africa and to generate ideas for improving the agricultural system in Africa.

Professor Patrick Okori
Executive Secretary of RUFORUM



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- Urged the Africans to change the negative narratives associated with the African Continent.
- Noted that Agriculture is critical for reducing poverty requiring that Africa develops capacity to innovate for optimum productivity in Agriculture.
- Motivated Africans to walk with confidence that Africa is capable of solve its own challenges.
- Recommended the need for collective efforts to drive Africa’s agricultural and economic development

Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Muyingo
State Minister for Higher Education, Uganda

- Highlighted the significance of the conference in:
 - Providing an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and collective action across various stakeholders due to inadequate resources to handle problems individually.
 - Providing Young people with opportunity to articulate a skills set that can drive the African development agenda
 - Exploring opportunities to work together to combat climate change in order to secure the present and future of the continent
 - Placing emphasis on the need for the right type of skills that can drive the African development agenda and showcase the discoveries, innovation that can secure the present and future prospect.
- Congratulated countries such as Namibia, South
- Highlighted the significance of the conference in:
 - Providing an opportunity to strengthen partnerships and collective action across various stakeholders due to inadequate resources to handle problems individually.
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- o Exploring opportunities to work together to combat climate change in order to secure the present and future of the continent
- o Placing emphasis on the need for the right type of skills that can drive the African development agenda and showcase the discoveries, innovation that can secure the present and future prospect.
- Congratulated countries such as Namibia, South Africa Tunisia and Botswana for achieving higher enrollment rates.
- Emphasized the importance of the right skills in driving the African development agenda and showcasing innovations that can secure the present and future prospects.
- Noted the need to commit to the vision and mission of the African continent and create common market for Africa.

“Young people have an opportunity to articulate skills set that can drive the African development agenda”

Professor Afeikhena Jerome African Union Representative



- The African Union named 2024 as the Year of Education – a reminder to all member states to keep pursuing the goals of the Continental Education Strategy for Africa and Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to ensure inclusive, equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all.
- Noted the Triennial Conference as a pivotal moment in the advancement of agricultural research and development in Africa, fostering collaboration, innovation, and knowledge-sharing to prepare the continent towards a more sustainable and prosperous future.
- Highlighted various challenges facing African Higher education institutions such as low salaries, migration of talents, hunger in Africa, lack of research funding and inadequately equipped laboratories, IT equipment, and limited autonomy. These issues discourage qualified academics and students from enrolling and at African universities.

Celebrating 20 years of

- Policy and Advocacy
- Networking and Coordination through Institutional Linkages, Regional and International Collaborations and Networking events
- Resource Mobilization: Members develop project proposals and programmes that operationalise its strategic objectives



Symposium I: Educating Africa: Implementing Transformative Higher Agricultural Education to Meet Africa's Human Capital Needs



The African Union in February 2024 launched the second ten-year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063 titled, *"The Decade of Acceleration (2024-2033)"*. The Implementation Plan is a bold endeavour by Africa to shape and fulfil its destiny. The Plan recognizes several critical development challenges that the continent must earnestly address during this decade such as: (a) Social and economic inequalities; (b) Failure

to harness the demographic dividend; c) Climate risks and natural disasters as well as d) Economic externalities caused by among others global market forces that affect the economic growth trajectory of the continent. Africa's capacity to develop its human capital to implement its own development agenda is crucial to stem the impacts of

these threats by providing the relevant human resources and development solutions. Disruptive technology such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), coupled with improvement in broadband coverage across Africa and the need to harness digital innovations to shrink value chains segments is becoming more widely recognized worldwide.

There is high demand on Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of Africa and their partners, to rethink how they train and skill the human capital. While the potential exists, new economic realities demand transformative processes in how Africa's HEIs conduct their business.

Educating Africa for the 21st century, lessons learned over the years, implications for Africa's Higher Education sector

There is need to invest in human capital since higher education is critical in transitioning to employment. We must do things urgently and differently to operationalize higher education:

- o Evidence of co-creation is critical
- o Transdisciplinary approach is a great opportunity
- o Partnerships and transformative collaborations are essentials; we need to collaborate more
- o Decolonizing our education system to integrate indigenous knowledge into our education system

- o Science is contributing to a conducive policy environment
- o implementation of policies is key for scaling, accompanied by robust M& E systems.

Emerging Issues

- o Work force is steadily growing thus requires corresponding strategies to leverage the force to grow economies.
- o The changing landscape in agriculture has Implications for Reform in the higher agriculture education sector.
- o Digitization is not adequate in areas that can enhance the market
- o Agriculture drives community change and transformation. Transformative higher agricultural education cornerstone of this transformation. Education is about adaptive skills, creative thinking, innovative thinking, leaders who are passionate about transformative change.

The African Development Bank and the African Union are developing the Africa STEM Fund that will support various countries. More countries need to commit to the fund to have a truly regional impact.

Agriculture must transition to the retail sector and embed technology to tap into the existing opportunities. Thirty percent (30%) of jobs are likely to be lost to Artificial Intelligence we should therefore focus on retooling and the mindset for people to adapt to the changed environment.

- o Collective ability is required to build professionals to realise the potential for agriculture in Africa.
- o Advancing climate-smart education in Africa can help communities become more resilient and flourish in the face of climate change. Indeed, capacity building in climate information services (CIS) and climate-smart agriculture (CSA) can provide research and evidence-based solutions to ensure food security and build resilience of farming systems in the face of climate change in the region.

Implications For Policy

- o Transition to the services

sector is a strategy that needs to be strongly supported.

- o R4D needs to consider multiple economic growth pathways.
- o AI has to be considered when training to have relevant products that will fit the technology requirements.
- o Strong partnerships are required to equip the next generation with mindset to effect change and develop sustainable agriculture. There is need to foster strong partnership with institutions such as RUFORUM that ensure access to resources for training

Implications For research

- o Productivity enabled digital transition research for productivity, profitability and job opportunities.
- o Research in policy and investments.
- o Research in low carbon economies transitions through climate smart agriculture.
- o Action research to transform economies – through bringing together universities and communities.

Symposium II: Sustainably Growing the Economy and Feeding Africa



Symposium II focused on the agricultural systems transformation in Africa that explored multiple touch points including the seed systems, agricultural practices, and market and trade among others that will influence capacity for the continent to increase food production with the potential to feed itself.

Despite their importance in rural development on the continent, implementation of sustainable agriculture practices faces several challenges including limited awareness,

limited access to finance, inadequate infrastructure, policy gaps, and lack of market linkages. This has made it difficult for smallholder farmers to invest in agriculture, develop and adopt better farming practices, shift the power balance in the supply chain, and reduce post-harvest losses. In addition, most countries on the African continent do not have a good blend of public and private investments, and healthy competition among stakeholders to create and sustain a robust seed system.

Emerging Issues

- i. Because they produce more than 70% of the food we consume, smallholder farmers demand special attention. However, it

is time to challenge the focus on small holder farmers and reflect on the value of large-scale farmers that up take a lot of technology – the basket approach

- ii. The African Union promotes agroprocessing and climate-smart agriculture, despite Africa having the lowest carbon emissions it is important to explore how to deal with carbon footprints likely to come out of the increasing production
- iii. The agro processing programmes being promoted – how do we develop transboundary value chains to benefit from global initiatives that require regional approaches.

- iv. Data availability to inform interventions – there is need to have a one stop data point for seed, extension, farmers, factors of production among others

- v. University industry linkages need to be activated further – much of the research done stops in universities without necessarily informing development

Implications for Policy

- Increase advocacy through Vice Chancellors forum for government to support initiatives
- Increase investments in agriculture – no country to date has met the 10% target.

Currently its mainly private sector led

- There is need to invest in preparedness rather than respond whilst assessing the risks/ Invest in food service to jerk up investment
- Connecting research centres to policy and investments – an increased demand for university/ industry linkages.
- There is a need in IP registration to recognize the source of the genes – much of breeding

research have patented indigenous crop varieties without recognizing the source

Implications for Research

- Invest in research on neglected crops
- Establish regionals and institutional research consortiums to set the research agenda and define the research questions. Establish centers of research leadership – where you can have good mentors and

coaches for the next generation of scientists this could start at the regional level

- Research on best combinations of agro forestry systems to this end seed should be accompanied with agronomy to have more production
- The impact of research has to be measured
- Build capacity in data science and impact measurement

Symposium III: Unlocking Inclusive and Broad-Based Economic Opportunity



Symposium III discussion focused on how to unlock inclusive economic growth in Africa noting that the “future-of-work” opportunities for Africa will be affected by global trends as well as

local contexts. Africa’s working-age population is estimated to be growing at 3% per annum and will generate approximately 450 million young people ready to work by 2035. The

Africa Agenda 2063 Second Decade Strategy (2024-2034) aim to, “reduce poverty to 20%; inequality by 15%; and the proportion of the population who suffer from hunger to at most 5%”

requires bold policies, investments and reforms. Africa must create jobs and increase the proportion of formal waged employees, Micro, and Small and Medium Enterprises have a role to play to serve the growing urban consumer populations in Africa and beyond.

The symposium recognised that to unlock inclusive and broad-based economic opportunity for Africa, new knowledge on models, pathways, and drivers of Africa's economic growth, successes, and lessons for scaling these across the continent should be identified and widely disseminated.

Emerging Issues

In Africa, none of the growth comes

from total factor productivity which primarily comprises of human capital and has been at 3% per year, far below the global levels and the growing per capita much slower than every region in the world. Growth in Ag sector in Africa is limited to land expansion and not necessarily human capital which is a decisive factor.

The fundamental constraints to human capital in African Agriculture include: Urban-rural gaps in education; Scale and coverage of programmes; The rapid rise in students at tertiary levels is compromising the effectiveness in creating human capital; At the level of TVETS, teachers and curricula are not current and the instruction is

not practical; Extension and advisory services are characteristically isolated with research and university programmes, existence of institutional stumbling blocks Quality of programmes -

Implications for Policy

There is need for a Human capital initiative for African Agriculture, capitalizing on AU's 2024 theme- 'educate and skill Africa for the 21st century'. This must be anchored in the AU's agenda 2063 and mainstreamed into the 2nd Ten year Implementation plan. This initiative needs to be focused on dramatic long-term scale-up of investment in deepening human capital in agriculture.

There must be coordination across sectors (agriculture and education); institutions (agricultural research and agricultural universities) and also across regions and the continent.

AARIEI with partners in the education sector should consolidate the recommendations above to develop

the narrative for a Human Capital Initiative for African Agriculture.

Implications for Research

- Nature and type of research should be addressed to real problem areas that have potential to generate good and

services that benefit the context of African communities

- Regional priority setting and collaboration should be expanded. Underfunded institutional programmes would make sense to re-prioritise regionally rather than nationally.

Symposium IV: Economic Trends, Best Practices, Policy-Practice and Futures



Symposium IV focused on economic trends, best practices, policy-practice interface, and futures for the continent's economic growth. The symposium explored models,

pathways, and drivers for accelerating Africa's economic growth. Participants shared, successes and lessons for scaling these across the continent. Africa's Continental Free Trade

Area offers opportunities for easing access to regional markets and strengthening production chains, and helping domestic industries become more prepared for global trade².

Unfortunately, Africa still faces supply chain hurdles such as poor logistics, low levels of technology, fragmented markets, limited capital sources, and weak institutions and regulations³.

Economic development has remained in a few hands across the continent; Africa's agricultural potential stands at only 1/4, the growth in productivity has not followed the same trends as population growth – population growth stands at 2.8 % yet cereal growth is only at 1%. To combat this, countries have to invest in human capital empowerment through education; this will provide the much-needed human resource and skills levels required

to innovate and build various value chains across the continent. Africa's agricultural sector will need to leverage the potential productivity of staple crops much faster than population.

Emerging Issues

There is need to articulate and underscore the link between human capital and productivity – one should inform the other.

The need to explore and articulate the roles of agriculture in contemporary economics trends,

What are the roles of science and technical innovations and best practices for growth the sector noting

that the high population growth experienced on the continent requires high agricultural intensification strategies for high crop yield for Africa to feed herself.

There is need to diversify the source of growth especially in rural areas to stimulate growth in non-agricultural ventures in rural areas.

Agriculture as a sector is interconnected with other sectors such as transport, energy, water, thus we should use transdisciplinary approaches to address agriculture development.

² <https://unctad.org/publication/economic-development-africa-report-2023>

³ Balma, Lacina *et al.* (2022) : Long-run impacts of the conflict in Ukraine on food security in Africa, Kiel Policy Brief, No. Ukraine Special 1, Kiel Institute for the World Economy (IfW Kiel), Kiel

Focus on own growth that need investment through the domestic resource mobilization and allocation of resources to enable agriculture feed us and generate wealth. Agriculture has the potential to create high value job to reduce youth unemployment.

Implications for Policy

- o Increasing population is shrinking land areas available for production
- o There is need to pay attention to the legal implications of land

ownership, accessibility and use

- o Constant dialogue with stakeholders on how HE can contribute to changes in the industry.
- o Increase priority and investment for diverse sources of rural growth, harness the power of the private sector, including unleashing innovation and improving agri-food system functionality

Implications for research

- a. Define agenda that can advance human dignity especially among young people
- b. Narrowing research and development gaps among agricultural sectors and other related partners
- c. Planning on some practical implementation on post-harvest technologies, and value add chains.

International Advisory Panel

- The current international landscape highlights the importance of building capacity for the high-level skills, research and uptake in the agrifood systems.
- RUFORUM as a network of universities must play an important if these goals are to be met.
- RUFORUM therefore needs to reinforce the role that the membership can play in producing relevant graduates. Innovators that can use digital technologies to create the economies of scale that are needed for Africa's small-scale farmers and agripreneurs to aggregate and share knowledge, products and services.

Technical Committee

- Empower Deans to become RUFORUM Focal persons at Universities to follow up with the VCs all issues concerning the network including the filling out the university profile template
- Follow up on the AUC request to establish think tanks based on thematic working groups

Principals and Deans

- The Deans and Principals shape the RUFORUM agenda
- Need to review and implement the Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Framework
- Revitalise National Forums as a vehicle for universities to strengthen country based agri-food systems
- Development and adoption of RUFORUM- AICCRA modules
- Commencement of the Carnegie Corporation of New York diaspora opportunities.

BEC to Board

- Establish measures for ensuring compliance to membership including subscription payment, active participation and benefit from RUFORUM and these are spelt out in the revised governance manual
- Approves the new organizational structure and the phased approach to the recruitment process
- Coordination with other higher education networks on the Continent: RUFORUM engages other like-minded organisations/ Networks operating in Africa to ensure complementarity and cost leverage in training, research, outreach and development

Audit Committee

- Board gives mandate to the Board Executive Committee to receive and approve the audited accounts for FY 2023/24 when they have been finalized by the external auditor.
 - Approved the Internal Audit plan for FY 2024/25
- Approved PKF as External Auditors for FY 2024/25-2026/27

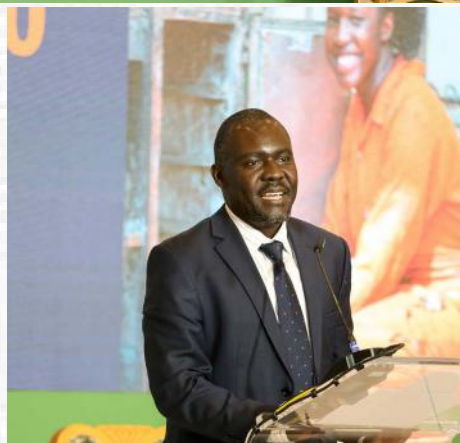
Finance and Admin Committee

AGM Approved

- The revised constitution arrangements
- Financial Report 2023/2024 and Budget for 2024/2025
- Annual Report 2024/2024 and Work Plan 2024/2025
- Admitted 5 new Members, bringing the RUFORUM Membership to 175

Vice Chancellor's Forum: Round Table Discussion on Strengthening Resourcing for African University Mission Fulfilment

- There must be an alignment between the expectations from the university and the national, regional, and global development agenda.
- Package University Missions to harness resources for large scale investment in order to improve the delivery of respective University missions
- RUFORUM has to facilitate mentorship between established and emerging universities in the different aspects of research, private sector engagements and investment.
- RUFORUM can foster public- private university partnerships for resource mobilization, in light of the dynamic around funding for private universities.
- Universities are business, where clientele and stakeholders are looking for evidence and dividends



TAGDev 2.0

Transforming African Agricultural Universities to meaningfully
contribute to Africa's Growth and Development



Climate Smart Agriculture/ Climate Information Systems E-learning module development to be adopted by RUFORUM Member Universities



Brokering Partnerships across the University Network in Africa

The University of Namibia signed Memoranda of understanding with- Makerere University, Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, University of South Africa and Chinhoyi University of Technology in Zimbabwe.





Partnership Meeting: RUFORUM, the CGIAR, FARA, AFAAS and SROs the Pledge to work together to support Agriculture Research in Africa



Policy Dialogue on Refugee Education Framework for inclusion and access to higher and tertiary education in Africa



Participants at the curriculum development for MSc Green Economy and Climate Finance, Partnership between Makerere University, Stellenbosch University and University of Nairobi

Trainings

The Scientific Data Management training held at the University of Namibia from August 5th to 10th, 2024, was designed to provide postgraduate students with the necessary skills to manage, analyze, and report data using the R programming language.

Masters student 4%



To what extent has the training improved your data management skills



Two science mentorship sessions were designed to provide Graduate Teaching Assistants and Post-Doctoral fellows with personalized guidance, support, and resources that facilitate their academic, professional, and personal development in their discipline. Ninety six percent of the participants indicated that the mentorship session had enabled them to think critically and independently

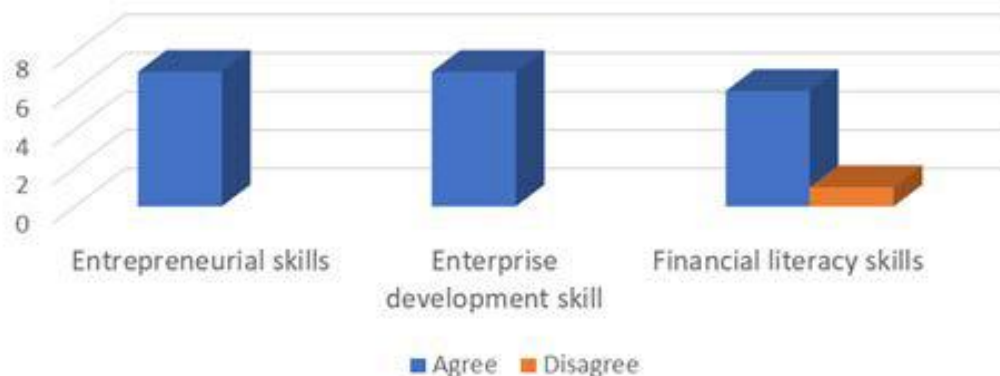
The Communication Officers training main objective was to strengthen the development communication capacity of universities Communication Officers. COs have the potential to catalyse social change in development interventions led by universities through effective communication.

The agro-entrepreneurship and business training program overall objective was:

1. To Equip students with entrepreneurial, business ideation and financial literacy skills so that they can embrace entrepreneurship as an alternative career path.
2. Cultivate a culture of entrepreneurship among young students/alumni
3. Enable the students/alumni to better convert their academic knowledge into viable enterprises, careers and become change agents in society.
4. Support the entrepreneurs with pitching skills to support in fundraising for their business ideas and businesses.



Following the training, I am confident I have attained the following skills



Feedback to the entrepreneurship competency training: skills gained

RUFORUM AWARD CEREMONY

Awards were presented to deserving leaders, practitioners, scientists, and farmers to encourage continued excellence in the agricultural sector. The awardees were urged to serve as ambassadors in their respective fields. Recognition was given to universities, partners, and individuals who have made significant contributions to the advancement of education and research in Africa, commemorative certificates to founding and member universities of RUFORUM, as well as to development partners. The conference honored the efforts of universities and individuals who have supported education during times of conflict, particularly for staff and students from Sudan.

Recognized the contributions of young farmers and scientists to agriculture and research.

Commemorative Certificates to Founder Universities of RUFORUM

1. University of Nairobi
2. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology
3. University of Malawi (Now known as Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources)

Recognition for Solidarity with Sudan Member Universities during the ongoing conflicts

1. Islamic University in Uganda
2. University of Juba
3. Dr. John Garang Memorial University of Science & Technology
4. Upper Nile University

Young Scientists

1. Abertina MN Shatri Female Senior Lecturer, University of Namibia
2. Lavinia Haikukutu Female Laboratory Technologist, University of Namibia
3. Shepherd M. Nyambe, Male Scholar, University of Namibia





FARMERS/ DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS

Natalia Ndinelao lipumbu

Inspiration and contribution to crop farming as a seed grower for pearl millet and sorghum, communal farmer and mixed farming management in the northern region of Namibia

Dorothy Cloete

Dedication to diversifying agricultural production in fodder, horticulture, hydroponic, poultry, pig and livestock farming through the Government of Namibia land/ farm resettlement program

Johannes Damaseb

Managing mixed farming (Livestock and crop) on a large scale and fodder production in Namibia

High Level Policy Dialogue

Declaration for Building Africa's Human Capital to Underpin Its 21st Century Development Needs

Three policy dialogues, were hosted.

1. Africa - Europe high level policy dialogue on higher agricultural education;
2. Refugee education framework for inclusion and access to higher and tertiary education in Africa;
3. Building Africa's human capital to underpin its 21st century development needs.



Minister of Higher Education DRC and technical team



Moderator Aldo Strobel



Rev. Can. Professor Olivia
Nassaka Banja VC Ndejje
University, Uganda

Conference strongly recommended to the African Union Commission



Leverage regional ecosystem frameworks with institutions such as RUFORUM - to holistically address the human capital and research needs on the continent.



Revisit the STYIP ten-year target of 100,000 PhDs and raise it to a target that is commensurate with the current continental demographic needs while also accelerating Africa's development. To reach this target, it is important to encourage African governments and funding partners to invest in human capital to meet the continent's dynamic development needs



Support the standardization of the education system in Africa to ensure alignment and guarantee refugees access to an education that will offer them the same opportunities for employability and mobility as nationals and or host communities and in response to the siege of University Campuses on-going conflict in Sudan, draft a statement to the African Union Commission emphasizing the protection of institutions of learning (universities, schools) as sacrosanct to, destruction and violence during emergencies

CLOSING SESSION

Ms. Lovisa Immanuel, General Manager for Innovation and Technology Development at the National Commission on Research, Science, and Technology (NCRST) Namibia, Representing the Executive Officer, Professor Alicia Peters,

- Appreciated the conference focus on critical areas essential for agricultural transformation in Africa, with contributions from experts across academia, government, industry, and the private sector.
- Emphasized the importance of a well-functioning National Innovation System (NIS). Such

systems are crucial for driving knowledge, technology, and creative outputs required for agricultural transformation

- Noted the commitment of NCRST to lead the National Innovation System in Namibia whilst open to new collaborations and partnerships, particularly those aimed at reducing food insecurity in Africa through agricultural research and innovation.

Prof. Dr Kenneth K. Matengu, Vice Chancellor, University of Namibia on behalf of Host Universities,

He challenged the prevailing narratives and perceptions of Africa, noting

that despite its immense resources and landmass, Africa remains underdeveloped and underrepresented in global knowledge production. This, the speaker suggested, is a result of inadequate investment in higher education and research, which results in low productivity and innovation.

He emphasized the urgent need to rethink and redefine education in Africa, particularly higher education. The African Union declared 2024 as the Year of Education, emphasising the importance of reflecting on what education truly means:

- Education should be more than just formal learning confined to

classrooms and textbooks, with additional focus on developing skills, competencies, and productivity that go beyond mere qualifications.

- Education must serve a purpose, not just in job creation but in fulfilling human needs and driving continental self-reliance and prosperity.

Prof Matengu concluded by calling for collective action to guarantee that Africa harnesses its potential, notably through a stronger, more effective educational ecosystem.



Representative of visiting Ministers, Prof. Zimpita Valentino Tipitana, Deputy Director for Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Malawi emphasised the importance of collective effort and collaboration, as well as a commitment to end hunger and malnutrition through increased agricultural productivity and inclusive education that equips Africans with 21st -century skills. He also emphasised the need of Water security, the management of wildlife and livestock to prevent disease transmission, universities' critical role of in fostering agricultural growth through research, technology, and innovation, and the importance of appropriate policies and partnerships for accelerating agricultural and human capital development.

He concluded by emphasizing the importance of continuous meetings to deepen ties and advance shared goals beyond the 2025 RUFORUM Annual General Meeting scheduled for Botswana.

The 2024 Triennial in Summary: Dr. Eroid Naomab, Vice Chancellor, Namibia University of Science and Technology

The 2024 Triennial Conference brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, including representatives from government ministries, universities, research agencies, development partners, and private sector actors from across Africa and beyond. The political leadership of Namibia and other African countries provided strong support, emphasizing the continent's commitment to advancing higher education and research.

The Namibia Higher Education Day

provided an in-depth discussion of the role of higher education institutions in the continent's development was.

Key discussions during the conference focused on the need for a transformative approach to education in Africa, particularly in agricultural sectors. The policy dialogues covered important topics such as Africa-Europe partnerships, refugee education, and building Africa's human capital to meet 21st-century development needs.

The 2024 Triennial Conference reinforced the importance of collaboration and innovation in addressing the continent's challenges and highlighted the need for ongoing efforts to ensure that no student

in Africa suffers from academic malnutrition.

Several key recommendations emerged from the discussions.

- Advocate for strategic interventions to bolster the capacity of universities to generate the requisite knowledge, skills and innovations to catalyze graduate training and research
- Proposed to establish a technical working group to guide strategic investments in developing human capital for Africa.
- Promote equal Africa-Europe partnerships for human capital development through research programs, staff exchanges, and other initiatives.

- Promote south-south cooperation with frameworks for resource sharing, mentorship, sabbaticals, academic exchange, regional and joint programs that can be fostered under the RUFORUM network
- Enhancing practical training and capacity building through private sector and industry linkages.

On the Refugee situation

- Establish frameworks to support displaced students, providing them with opportunities to access higher education and integrate into host communities and develop capacity among higher education institutions to accommodate refugees, including providing language support and mobilizing resources for scholarships

- Standardizing education systems across Africa was recommended to ensure alignment and guarantee equal opportunities for refugees. The sharing and recognition of credentials were also promoted, alongside the establishment of robust online learning systems to support refugee education.



Vote of thanks:

The Chairperson on behalf of the RUFORUM Board, member universities, staff, and students expressed deep gratitude to the government of the Republic of Namibia, led by His Excellency Dr. Nangolo Mbumba. She commended the leadership, financial, and political support, which made the hosting of the conference possible. Special acknowledgment was given to the Prime Minister, Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, and the Minister of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation, Dr. Itah Kandji-Murangi, and all the Ministries in Namibia that contributed to the success of the conference.

Appreciation to:

1. The local organizing committee, led by the Vice Chancellors of the University of Namibia, the International University of Management, the Namibia University of Science and Technology, and the CEO of the National Commission on Research, Science, and Technology, Namibia, was commended for their dedication and hard work.
2. All development partners,
3. All participants who attended various RUFORUM activities, including training sessions, webinars, policy dialogues, scientific sessions, poster presentations, exhibitions, and governance meetings. The

speaker acknowledged the RUFORUM board, its various committees, and the secretariat for ensuring the success of the 2024 Triennial Conference and the annual general meeting, as well as for their ongoing efforts in

supporting the positive impact of RUFORUM universities on Africa's economic development through human capacity development.

4. Special appreciation was given to the RUFORUM Executive Secretary, Professor Patrick

OKori, while being in office for less than 15 months, demonstrated great commitment and zeal in maintaining RUFORUM's status as a prominent voice for higher education in Africa.



Closing Address by Dr Alfred Van Kent, Executive Director, Ministry of Higher Education, Technology and Innovation, Namibia

Dr. Van Kent emphasized the significance of the week's discussions, which focused on sharing lessons, forging partnerships, and finding solutions to the continent's development challenges. He emphasized the importance of Namibian institutions and government agencies in successfully hosting the conference and thanked everyone involved, especially the local organizing committee and Namibian universities, for their commitment and hard work.

He emphasized the significance of the Namibia Higher Education

Day, which brought together various stakeholders to discuss critical issues such as feeding and growing Namibia, educating Namibians for the 21st century, and unlocking inclusive development. He emphasized the importance of organizing such events on a regular basis to influence public policy and guide national development strategies.

Dr. Van Kent also discussed Africa's broader challenges, notably high unemployment rates and the need to improve education systems to create job opportunities, foster innovation,

and support entrepreneurship. He emphasized the necessity of inclusion and access to education for displaced persons as well as the need to guarantee Africa's youth's futures by leveraging new technologies and sharing successful strategies across nations.

He called for greater collaboration among African countries, particularly in sharing resources, facilities, and knowledge to address common challenges. He emphasized Africa's human capital the potential, as well as the importance of fully engaging

and utilizing the continent's resources and institutions to unlock economic opportunities, particularly for the youth.

Dr. Van Kent concluded by encouraging the continuation of the networks and partnerships developed during the conference and expressing confidence that Africa can achieve its aspirations via collaborative effort and active information exchange. He then formally declared the 2nd RUFORUM Triennial Conference closed and wished all participants safe travels back to their respective countries.

02ND RUFORUM
Triennial Conference
12-16 August 2024

Namibia



Thank you for participating in the
RUFORUM Triennial Conference
