

**ZERO DRAFT FOR DISCUSSION**

***Transforming African Universities to support Farming Communities and wealth creation***

The Sixth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference,  
22-26 October, 2018

**Venue (proposed): Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC),  
Nairobi Kenya**

**Contact:** Prof. Adipala Ekwamu, Executive Secretary, RUFORUM  
Email: [e.adipala@ruforum.org](mailto:e.adipala@ruforum.org)

**Summary**

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), a pan African organisation of 66 universities in 26 African countries is an impact oriented network of universities that seeks to strengthen the capacities of universities to foster innovations responsive to demands of smallholder farmers through the training of high quality researchers, the output of impact oriented research and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, national agricultural research institutions and governments. RUFORUM has demonstrated over the last 14 years significant contribution to Africa's development agenda espoused in the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024), Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A) and subsequently contributing to the achievement of Agenda2063 through respective country development objectives and priorities. RUFORUM network believes in a transformation agenda of Africa's Higher Education institutions and as such, the Sixth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference will focus on the theme "***Transforming African Universities to support Farming Communities and wealth creation***". The Conference will be held in Nairobi, Kenya 22-26 October, 2018. The conference is expected to bring together about 800 participants from across Africa and the world to discuss how to accelerate universities and farming communities to better sustain the budding enterprise development in Africa. The Conference will bring key actors together including; universities (including leadership, staff and students), CSOs, development partners, Governments and Foundation bodies, African Union Commission, and the business and farming community. This Sixth Africa Higher Education Week

and RUFORUM Biennial Conference will be co-organised by RUFORUM and its member universities in Kenya: University of Nairobi, Egerton University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenyatta University, University of Eldoret, Moi University, and Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, plus other Kenyan institutions, including Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organisation and the Commission for Higher Education.

## **Background**

Over the last decade, Africa has become an important investment destination, with a budding youthful population providing a labour base, natural resources endowment, diminishing political conflicts and civil strife as many countries especially those in sub-Saharan Africa enter into post-conflict reconstruction, a high returns market<sup>1</sup>. For example between 2012 and 2014, an increase from 12% to 39% in terms of business considerations was realized<sup>2</sup>, real incomes per person increased by 30% over the last 10 years, and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) increased from US\$15 billion in 2002 to \$37 billion in 2006 and \$46 billion in 2012<sup>3</sup>. These trends and patterns are changing the narrative of about Africa from a hopeless to hopeful continent<sup>4</sup> justifying the 'Africa rising' narrative. The under exploited agricultural sector that is a mainstay in many African economies especially in sub-Saharan Africa remains a major focus of attention to drive economic growth including other priority areas such as entrepreneurship<sup>5</sup>. Though growth in Africa is impressive, it is differentiated with non-resource intensive countries growing faster than resource intensive countries with North Africa having higher growth patterns and FDI than sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). In SSA, much of the growth is driven by agriculture yet the farmers remain low resourced, and often using rudimentary tools and technologies. More and more foreign investors in Africa see agriculture as an investment opportunity and can provide considerable number of jobs to African youth<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Africa continues to attract foreign investment: <http://www.pwc.co.za/en/press-room/africa-investor-destination.html>

<sup>2</sup> Africa continues to attract foreign investment: <http://www.pwc.co.za/en/press-room/africa-investor-destination.html>

<sup>3</sup> A hopeful continent: <http://www.economist.com/news/special-report/21572377-african-lives-have-already-greatly-improved-over-past-decade-says-oliver-august>

<sup>4</sup> Positioning Africa as an Investment Destination: <http://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2016/06/20/positioning-africa-as-an-investment-destination/>

<sup>5</sup> EY's attractiveness survey Africa 2015 Making choices.

<sup>6</sup> Denting youth unemployment through agriculture: <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/magazine/special-edition-agriculture-2014/denting-youth-unemployment-through-agriculture>

Like elsewhere in the world, African universities have a fundamental role to play in Africa's development agenda but they themselves ought to transform to better support the process. Traditionally, African universities have performed three functions: teaching, research and outreach. However, focus has remained on teaching and to a lesser extent research. As such, the impact of universities outside their 'walls' and indeed to the societies they were created to serve remains in question. University 'outreach' has remained undefined and unsupported, resulting in unclear outcomes and limited use of university knowledge for community transformation in its broadest sense including farming communities. Further, the transfer of the knowledge produced by the universities to the end-users has often involved intermediate agents, typically the professionals working in enterprises or government bodies and through high technology enterprises symbiotically related to the university<sup>7</sup>. Universities thus have opportunity to transform themselves for relevance to farming communities and societies they serve, and to national governments by supporting innovativeness, entrepreneurship, and resource development for national and regional development.

## **Introduction**

The African Union Commission (AUC) Agenda2063 has set a firm direction to catalyse education and skills revolution and actively promote science, technology, research and innovation, to build knowledge, human resources, capabilities and skills for the African century<sup>8</sup>. These efforts focus on ensuring that Africa is able to absorb its budding youthful population by expanding centres of innovation and influencing the knowledge economy within Africa by Africans. By 2035, 350 million young Africans will enter the labour force<sup>9</sup>; higher education institutions especially universities and technical vocational and training institutions have a role in shaping the technical skills and careers of these youths. However, African universities are still riddled with bureaucratic delays, ring fenced mandates that propagate the 'Ivory Tower' mentality in their teaching and research processes as well as community engagement. In the current situation, African universities need to open their gates as innovation centres, increase partnership and community engagement as unique training models and approaches that increase vibrancy and effectiveness of training as well as impact of training at community level. It is time for universities in Africa to demonstrate their capacity as innovation

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<sup>7</sup>Sutz, J. (1997). The new role of the university in the productive sector. Universities and the global knowledge economy, 11-20.

<sup>8</sup>Agenda2063: chrome-extension://oemmnxcbldboiebfnladdacbdmfmadm/http://archive.au.int/assets/images/agenda2063.pdf

<sup>9</sup><http://www.scidev.net/sub-saharan-africa/agriculture/opinion/making-agriculture-attractive-to-the-youth-in-africa.html>

centres that can enhance educational value chain and can work together with and within the community appreciating the needs in reality whilst addressing both local and global knowledge demands. The transformation agenda is further critical to service the commitments to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs present a commitment to eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty and recognise that this as one of the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development. The SDGs further provide a commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions – economic, social and environmental – in a balanced and integrated manner<sup>10</sup>; universities should therefore be at the forefront of supporting these processes in various dimensions.

### **The 2018 African Higher Education Week & RUFORUM Biennial Conference**

The African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference has grown in size and thematic focus to become a continental convening with immense contribution and impact to higher education, partnership development and agenda setting for Africa. RUFORUM organises this conference to:

1. Collaboratively work with stakeholders to review African agricultural university performance and obtain feedback including from policy makers and private sector leaders;
2. Provide a platform for sharing of best practices and reforms within the higher education sector, from across the globe, but also within RUFORUM member universities;
3. Build professional ‘communities of practice’ that engage postgraduates students, universities staff, and stakeholders to improve value chains and higher education contribution to farm incomes; and
4. Provide a platform for students to share their research work and also identify mentors and other opportunities for their transitions out of school, into employment or entrepreneurship.

The Biennial Conference is RUFORUM’s most comprehensive meeting for the diversity of stakeholders in agriculture. It is especially dedicated to graduate students and their supervisors, grantees in RUFORUM member universities and alumni. It is a platform for peer review, quality control, mentorship, networking and shared learning.

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<sup>10</sup><https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

The 2018 Biennial conference is unique with a focus on university-farmer community transformation. It will provide opportunity for farmers to show case their innovations as part of enhancing the university-farmer community partnership and engagement for meaningful innovation. The **proposed** overall theme of the 2018 Conference is “***Transforming African Universities to support Farming Communities and wealth creation***”. The Conference will therefore provide opportunity for farmers to show-case the frontiers of their innovation and entrepreneurship and offer universities to demonstrate their repositioning to responding to national and regional development needs including those of farmers and other allied sectors. It further brings the private sector to explore how it can contribute to social entrepreneurship and actively participate in accelerating university and farming communities’ transformation to sustaining the enterprise development in Africa. The Conference will engage development partners and governments to articulate innovative funding mechanisms that propel university transformation for impact. Further, the youth and young researchers will be exposed to senior professionals, researchers and mentors that will further accelerate innovative research careers, strengthen innovation for community impact, and strengthen research communication, publication and networking. Through the Young African Entrepreneurs Series, the youth and young researchers will have the opportunity to be exposed to the practical entrepreneurship skills capacity enhancement and mentorship.

This 2018 Biennial Conference is guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To identify appropriate models and approaches to facilitate university and farming community transformation agenda
2. Provide farmers opportunity to show case their innovations and influence research and innovation agenda in universities
3. Link graduate research and training to entrepreneurship and business development as mechanism to increase university entrepreneurial transition momentum
4. Provide graduate students and young innovators a platform to show case their research, cutting-edge innovations and enterprises and entrepreneurial acumen
5. Provide policy and development actors, philanthropists and high net worth persons, governments and civil society a platform to network on innovations for transforming higher agricultural education and related sciences in Africa

In light of the overall conference theme and the above objectives, the following themes will guide the conference event and guide the discussions and engagements:

1. Unpacking university transformation: From what to where and when?
2. Effective support mechanisms that enable business-university collaboration
3. University-farming communities engagement and transformation space
4. Innovations for making agriculture attractive and driving growth in Africa
5. Making a difference in Africa through capacity building in research, outreach and community engagement

Considering the above broad clusters, the conference will have a series of parallel sessions that will provide specialised platforms and audience for addressing broad to specific issues that help in the achievement of the conference main theme and objectives. These **sub-themes** that will constitute parallel sessions include, among others:

1. Strengthening the transformative potential and role of the universities
2. Universities and smallholder farmers driving agricultural production
3. Driving business-led innovations through partnerships with academia and communities
4. Innovations and entrepreneurship among Young African Youths: Models, dilemmas and frontiers
5. Agricultural risks in the production and commodity value chains
6. Strengthening innovations for inclusive and attractive agriculture
7. Engaging universities in entrepreneurship and enterprise development
8. Women in business: closing the gender gaps through Financial Inclusion
9. Beyond the Horizons: Engaging the Philanthropists, Development Partners and decision makers in redesigning impact oriented universities
10. Making more money from less: Crop-livestock integration and intensification systems and models
11. Bringing Africa together through human capacity development and Higher education mobility

### **Conference organisation**

The Biennial conference is a co-hosted event since its inception. Accordingly, a working group coordinated by RUFORUM Secretariat Organising Committee (ROC) and the host universities Local Organising committee (LOC) will be put in place. The University of Nairobi will lead the umbrella of Kenyan universities and other actors that will play host to the Biennial Conference in Nairobi

Kenya. The 2018 Biennial conference coordination contact details are as follows:

1. Dr. Moses Osiru, ([m.osiru@ruforum.org](mailto:m.osiru@ruforum.org)), RUFORUM Secretariat
2. Dr Antony Egeru, ([a.egeru@ruforum.org](mailto:a.egeru@ruforum.org)), RUFORUM Secretariat
3. Dr Solange Uwituze ([s.uwituze@ruforum.org](mailto:s.uwituze@ruforum.org)), RUFORUM Secretariat

### **About the organizing institutions**

**RUFORUM** ([www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org)) is an association of 66 Universities in 26 African countries which envisions ‘a vibrant agricultural sector linked to African universities which produce high performing graduates and high quality research responsive to the demands of Africa’s farmers for innovations and able to generate sustainable livelihoods and national economic development’. RUFORUM also has collaborating partners in West Africa beyond its member Universities in Benin, Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. RUFORUM is the African Union Implementing Agency for Priority Area One under the STISA2024. This mandate is provided through an operational MoU signed in 2014, Maputo in Mozambique. Through the 13 years of its operation, RUFORUM has trained over 356 PhDs and 1433 MSc graduates and reached over one million farmers and generated over 300 technologies, innovations and management practices. RUFORUM has also supported the development of several regional Masters and PhD programmes hosted at member universities to strengthen innovative training and research capacity in Africa.

**The University of Nairobi** (<http://www.uonbi.ac.ke/about>) is the premier university in Kenya. The university responds to the higher education learning needs in Kenya and the Africa region and has demonstrated a reputable acumen in training and scholarship. The university is one of the top 10 universities in Africa with diversified academic programmes and specializations in sciences, applied sciences, technology, humanities, social sciences and the arts. The University of Nairobi is an innovation leader in higher education delivery with extramural programmes and centres. The university has 35 Faculties, Schools, Institutes and Centres; 584 Programmes, 84,000 Students, 2,052 Strong academic staff  
164 Professors, 264 Associate Professors, 5,525 Administrative and Technical Staff and  
184,000 alumni.

**Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology** (JKUAT; <http://www.jkuat.ac.ke/home-3/>) was started as Middle Level College (Jomo Kenyatta College of Agriculture and Technology (JKCAT)) by the Government of Kenya with the generous assistance from the Japanese Government. It was inaugurated as a university in 1994 with a vision to be a university of global excellence in training, research and innovation for development. The university has set a mission of offering accessible quality training, research and innovation in order to produce leaders in the fields of Agriculture, Engineering, Technology, Enterprise Development, Built Environment, Health Sciences, Social Sciences and other Applied Sciences to suit the needs of a dynamic world. JKUAT is host to the Pan African University (PAU); a university that represents a continental initiative of African Heads of State through the African Union Commission to revitalize higher education and research in Africa. JKUAT supports the Government of Kenya through implementation of the Vision2030 with flagship projects such as the Nairobi Industrial and Technology Park and the Engineering and Technology Centre of Excellence.

**Egerton University** (<http://www.egerton.ac.ke/>) transformed from Farm School founded in 1939 by Lord Maurice Egerton of Tatton, a British settler in Kenya in the 1920s. In 1950, the School was upgraded to an Agricultural College. The Government of Kenya and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded major expansion of the institution from 1979. In 1986, Egerton Agricultural College was gazetted as a constituent college of the University of Nairobi. Egerton University became a full-fledged University through an Act of Parliament in 1987. The University was chartered in 2013 under the Universities Act of 2012. The University currently has ten faculties offering a wide range of programmes at diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels. The University has over 25000 students comprising of both local and international students. The university also established and manages the Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and Development whose mandate include evidence based policy research, analysis and outreach. The institute is a center of excellence in agricultural policy based research addressing micro and macro-economic policy issues

**Kenyatta University** (<http://www.ku.ac.ke/>) is an impact oriented university guided by its philosophy of sensitivity and responsiveness to societal needs and the right of every person to knowledge. The university aspires to be a dynamic, an inclusive and a competitive centre of excellence in teaching, learning, research and service to humanity. It pledges to provide quality education and training, promote scholarship, service, innovation and creativity and inculcate

moral values for sustainable individual and societal development as a realisation to its mission. The university has 12 campuses in and around Kenya. It hosts the Young African Leadership Institute (YALI) Centre and Africa Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership (ACTIL). Kenyatta University stands out as one of the leading universities in Kenya as the most transformational in terms of leadership and infrastructural development as well as the delivery of quality education and training aligned with the private sector needs.

**University of Eldoret** (<http://www.uoeld.ac.ke/karibu/>) was founded in 1946 by the white settlers as a Large Scale Farmers Training Centre. In 1984, it was converted to a teachers' training college and renamed Moi Teachers' Training College to offer Diploma Science Teachers Training. Due to the double intake crisis, the College was taken over by Moi University as a Campus in 1990, renaming it Chepkoilel Campus. From 1990, the University made it a campus of Natural, Basic and Applied Science programmes. In August 2010 the President, through Legal Notice No. 125 of 13 August 2010 upgraded the campus into a University College with the name Chepkoilel University College, a Constituent College of Moi University. Upon the award of Charter by the President on March 2013, the University College was renamed University of Eldoret.

**Moi University** (<https://www.mu.ac.ke/>) is envisioned as the University of choice in nurturing innovation and talent in science, technology and development. The university's mission is to preserve, create, and disseminate knowledge, conserve and develop scientific, technological and cultural heritage through quality teaching and research; to create conducive work and learning environment; and to work with stakeholders for the betterment of society. The university was started in 1985 and has then witnessed phenomenal growth from its initial one faculty in 1984, to a total of 15 Schools, nine Directorates and two Institutes presently. The total student population currently is over 52, 000, distributed across Diploma, Undergraduate, Masters, Postgraduate Diploma and Doctorate of Philosophy programmes in diverse fields. The university has four campuses, namely: Main Campus, Town Campus, Eldoret West Campus and OderaAkang'o Campus and two constituent colleges, namely Garissa and Rongo that also offer unique undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

**Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology** (<http://www.mmust.ac.ke/>) was founded through Harambee spirit

in 1972, as Western College of Arts and Applied Sciences (WECO) under the stewardship of the former fiery MP, Masinde Muliro. As chairman of the project executive committee, Muliro worked with Prof. Reuben J. Olembo (then Head, Department of Botany University of Nairobi) as secretary. The establishment of the College was in response to the needs of the people of Western province to have a College which would provide a training ground for technical manpower requirements for the province and the nation. The College was also expected to inculcate a sense of self-help and self-reliance among its students and facilitate active participation of youth in national development. The university has evolved from one college to include several centres of excellence including the Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (CDMHA), Open Learning and Continuing Education (SOLACE), Science and Technology Park and Industrial Linkages with a vibrant postgraduate training.