



RUFORUM 21ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

**Africa-North America high level dialogue on
higher agricultural education, science and
technology**



THEME

Positioning Africa's Universities and the Higher Education Sector to effectively impact development processes on the continent

Hosts:

The Government of Botswana and
RUFORUM member Universities in Botswana led by Botswana University of
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Venue:

Field, Gaborone, Botswana

Date: 2nd December, 2025

Time: 11:00-12:30 Central African Time (CAT)

Contact: Professor Patrick Okori (p.okori@ruforum.org)

Background

Investing in human capital is critical for facilitating the transition to knowledge-based economy. Indeed, local, continental, global agencies, as well as meetings such as the World Economic Forum, emphasise the need of preparing Africa's youth for an increasingly competitive labour market. According to the United Nations Populations Fund, 60 % of Africa's population is below 25 years, and is projected to reach 1.4 billion by 2063. The African Development Bank estimates that 12 million young Africans are ready for work annually, but the continent only creates one third of the required jobs. Africa lags behind in science and innovation, and the African Union (AU) through its Second 10-Year Implementation Plan of Agenda 2063, (STYIP) aims to train 100,000 PhD level scientist over a decade and increase scientific output for development. The refreshed AU CAADP strategy, focuses on building resilient agri-food systems, contingent on strong institutions and human capital.

Africa and North America engage in both student and staff mobility for education, research and development, a practice that has gone on for over half a century. Indeed, many agricultural faculties and academic programs in African universities have been designed, drawing lessons from North American models including public land grant universities in the US and other universities in Canada. Recently, the Government of Canada launched The Canada-Africa Strategy: a partnership for shared prosperity and security. The new foreign policy strengthens Canada's engagement with Africa, toward greater economic cooperation, strengthened peace and security partnerships, enhanced engagement of African diaspora communities in Canada, and international assistance for economic development and youth employment. The United States through its public land grant universities, Government and Philanthropies are actively involved in Africa's agricultural research, education and policy spaces. Overall the strong science led development approach of North America could be leveraged for Africa's development course.

The STYIP has identified eight (8) enablers for its achievement over the next decade, with four of them i.e., coordination, capacity development, partnerships and harnessing technologies being key to mobilizing science and human capital for Africa's development. These aspirations collectively shift the emphasis to coordinated inter- regional cooperation such as the Africa-North America relations that could benefit from ongoing initiatives.

Purpose

The proposed dialogue aims to leverage capacities of African universities, academia, policy institutions, and North American universities, research and policy institutions to establish a shared vision of cooperation in human capital development as well as science, technology and innovation for the mutual benefit of both parties. The dialogue will be held during The RUFORUM Annual General Meeting (AGM).

RUFORUM's AGM serves as the Network's yearly assembly, bringing together member universities, policymakers, and development partners to engage in dialogues, and joint action-planning in support of the continents' developmental agenda.

Objectives

1. Review, dialogue, and make recommendations for strengthening Africa-North America partnerships in higher education, science, technology, and innovation.
2. Review, dialogue, and make recommendations for resourcing the implementation of actions that underpin green, digital, and inclusive Africa- North America partnership in higher education, science, technology, and innovation.
3. Hold high-level policy discussions that will set policy, research and innovation agendas and leverage existing frameworks for African and North America Universities and allied institutions to support informed policy development and execution.

Approach

The meeting will be held using a mix of plenary presentations and discussions. Statements will be made by key institutions from Africa and North America

i.e., the African Union Commission, Southern African Development Community, African Governments, development banks and European-led initiatives. See annex 1 of the on the draft programme.

Expected outputs

1. Opportunities for strengthening co-creation of science and knowledge products to inform policy at country and continental levels identified and the leaders to champion development into concrete actions identified and endorsed.
2. An action plan and road map for engaging all stakeholders towards marshalling resources and investments for contemporary development focused higher agricultural education, science, technology and innovation within the framework of Africa- North America collaborations developed.

Participants

The AGM will convene leaders from academia and science, policymakers from African governments, representatives from the African Union Commission, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), United Nations Agencies, higher education institutions, development partners, private sector leaders, researchers, innovators, students, and farmer organisations from Africa, the Global South, and the Global North. An estimated 600 participants are expected to attend the AGM.

Venue: Boardroom

Registration link: <https://ruforum-org.zoom.us/j/81358729139?pwd=SZ2T5bwtKB00hOutdAEVD-65pUuE0yh.1>

Session Chair: Prof Okori Patrick

Rapporteurs: Dr. Sokona

Time	Activity	Responsible
Session 1: Official Opening Ceremony: Call for Action to Strengthen cooperation on Human and Science Capacity Development for Africa Session Chair: Mr. Mmoloki Edward Raletobana, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Corporate Services, Ministry of Higher Education, Botswana		
30 minutes	Welcome remarks	Prof. Bruno Djossa, RUFORUM Deputy Board Chair and Rector, Universite' Nationale d'Agriculture, Benin
	Statement: Africa- North America partnerships- The SADC perspectives	Hon. Dr Douglas Sykalima, Minister of Education, Zambia
	Statement: Africa-North America partnerships for agriculture, higher education science and technology	H.E. Kora Tushune, State Minister, Ministry of Education, Ethiopia
Session 2: Convergence and way-forward planning for strengthening higher agricultural education Session Chair: Prof. Kenneth Kamwi Matengu, Vice Chancellor, University of Namibia		
60 minutes	Lead Paper 1: Imperatives for strengthening Africa- North America higher education and research agendas: Lessons learnt and new opportunities.	Presenter: Dr. Douglas L Steele, Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities
	Panel Discussions: Making the partnership work for African and North American Universities and institutions Four panellists: Including University Leaders, Research Leaders, from Africa and North America 1. Prof. Deresh Ramjugernath, Vice Chancellor, Stellenbosch University, South Africa 2. Prof. Paul Mapfumo, Vice Chancellor, University of Zimbabwe 3. Dr. Segenet Kelemu, Executive Director, PANA Programs Mastercard Foundation. 4. Prof. Mahamat Saleh Daoussa Hagggar, Vice Chancellor, Université de N'Djamena, Tchad	Moderator for the Panel: Prof. Aldo Stroebe, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation & Internationalisation, University of Mpumalanga, South Africa

Session 3: Policies and action planning strengthening Research and Science capacity through Africa-North America strategic partnerships

Session Chair: Prof. Emmanuel Kaunda, Vice Chancellor, LUANAR, Malawi

60 minutes	Lead Paper 2: The Africa- North America science technology and innovation agendas for the mutual benefit- competitive, inclusive and sustainable agricultural development.	Presenter: Professor Chandra Madramootoo, McGill University
	<p>Five Panellists: Including University Leaders, Research Leaders, from Africa, and North America</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Professor John O. Gyapong, Secretary General, African Research Universities Alliance, Ghana 2. Dr. David Chikoye, IITA Regional Director for Southern Africa, Zambia 3. Dr. Rebbie Harawa, The Regional Director for West Africa at the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) 4. Prof. Manuel Guilherme Junior, Rector, Eduardo Mondlane University, Mozambique 5. Prof. Abraham Matoc Dhal Atiek, Vice Chancellor, John Garang Memorial University of Science and Technology, South Sudan 	Panel Moderator: Prof. Aldo Stroebel, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation & Internationalisation, University of Mpumalanga, South Africa
20 minutes	High level panel resolutions	