



RUFORUM 21ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

**High Level Dialogue on Strategic Actions
Required to Equip Africa's Youth with Essential
Skills for the Workforce**



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:

Okavango 2, Gaborone International Conference Center, Gaborone; Botswana

Date: 3rd December 2025

Time: 14:00-17:00 SAT

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

Background

Africa is the world's youngest continent and by 2050, will account for roughly one-quarter of the world's workforce. This implies that current education systems must be transformed to produce and nurture the relevant talent. Today's world of work requires beyond technical skills, a work force whose agency, knowledge, skills, and competence meet twenty-first century needs. The African Union Commission (AUC) is cognisant of these issues that are crucial for unlocking the continent's demographic dividend. Accordingly, the AUC is implementing the "2017 Roadmap on Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in Youth." The roadmap is underpinned by four key pillars i.e., (a) Employment and entrepreneurship-focusing on measures that unlock access to finance, jobs and business opportunity; (b) Education and skills development- focusing on equitable access to quality education that equips learners with contemporary skills and competencies for today's and the emerging world of work; (c) Health and well-being-focusing on access to healthcare and prevention of harmful practices that endanger young people's lives and wellbeing and; (d) Rights, governance, and youth empowerment-focusing on enablement of young people by enhancing their agency and voice to fully participate in democratic governance and choices that affect them and society. Implementing these measures calls for innovation and partnerships to create tangible solutions.

Vocational education, and strategic training of Africa's young people, could significantly contribute to delivering a demographic dividend for the continent. Accordingly, technical and vocation education as delivered through Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), as well as special programmes within the higher education sector are important. Although numerous policies and strategies are in place, the TVET and skills development sub-education sector encounter numerous complex challenges that impact the quality of vocational education.

The recent AUC TVET Strategy 2025–2034, acknowledges the challenges involved in equipping young people with skills to drive economic development. It underscores the need for lifelong learning for all people due to rapidly changing skills demanded by the labour market that are mostly driven by technological advancements, climate shifts, demographic changes and migration. The Strategy also emphasises the need for inclusion of vulnerable and excluded demographics. It further identifies major drivers of underperformance such as the delink from industry, out-moded curricula and teaching infrastructure among others. Drawing on examples from other regions of the world, where the integration and strategic engagement of the higher and tertiary education, the TVET sector, and industry have served as blueprints for industrialisation, job creation, and wealth generation, are actions that Africa could learn from.

Purpose

This high level dialogue aims to build consensus on key actions that universities and their partners could take to improve the quality of TVET and vocational education, as well as life-long learning science-anchored entrepreneurship to train and nurture Africa's young talent and work force.

Specific Objectives

1. Explore policy and instructional options to implement life long learning at universities in partnership with industry to reskill post graduation youth for the emerging world of work.
2. Examine strategic connections and collaborations between universities and science and technology-based TVET institutions to update curricula, access new scientific advancements for development, and establish scalable models for innovation.

Approach

The meeting will be held using a mix of plenary presentations and discussions. Statements will be made by African governments, key institutions from Africa, philanthropy, and development banks, and an action plan discussed and ratified.

Participants

Participants will be drawn from the higher education ecosystems, development partners, governments and their agencies, subregional economic communities, philanthropy and development partners youth-led organisations supporting young displaced people among others.

Expected outputs

1. A road map, early action areas, and prioritised next action areas for the higher-tertiary education and industry engagement framework ratified.
2. Requisite institutions/partnerships engaged to inform, enrich, support and implement the higher-tertiary education and industry engagement framework.

Time	Activity	Responsible
Session 1: Official Opening Ceremony: Call for Action for strengthening technical and vocational education to skill Africa's young people for the world-of-work. Session chair: Professor Richard Tabulawa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Botswana		
14:00- 14:10	Welcome remarks	Prof. Jemal Yousuf Hassen, President, Haramaya University, Ethiopia
14:10- 14:20	Statement: Skilling for national development: The Republic of South Africa.	Mr. Buti Manamela, Minister of Higher Education and Training, South Africa
14:20- 14:30	Statement: The African Union Commission: Youth Charter and other continental policy initiatives	Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona, Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI), African Union Commission, Ethiopia
14:30-14:40	Statement: Skilling the next generation of young people- Uganda Government	Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni, First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports, Uganda.
14:40-14:50	Statement: Unlocking Africa's demographic dividend: Skilling and engaging young people in agriculture, entrepreneurship and work	Dr Segenet Kelemu, Executive Director, PANA Programs, Mastercard Foundation.
14:50-15:00	Statement: Skilling young Kenyans and Africans for the present and future	Mr Julius Migos Ogamba, Cabinet Secretary for Education, Kenya
15:00-15:10	Statement: Investing in young people: perspectives from the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa	Lubna Dafalla, Programme Expert, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa
15:10-15:20	Statement: Investing in young people: The African Development Bank's initiatives	Dr. Hendrina Chalwe Doroba, Division Manager, Division Manager-Education and Skills Development, Africa Development Bank
15:20: 15:35	Official Address	Hon. Prince Maele, Minister of Higher Education, Botswana
Session 2: Convergence and way-forward planning for implementation of the higher-tertiary education and industry engagement framework Session Chair: Professor Oguejiofo T. Ujam, Vice Chancellor, University of Nigeria-Nsukka, Nigeria		
15:35-15:50	Lead Paper 1: Improving the quality of vocational education and lifelong learning to train and nurture Africa's young talent and work force: Imperatives for success	Presenter: Professor Kisilu M. Kitainge, Chief Executive Officer of TVET CDACC, Kenya
15:50-16:40	Action planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of proposed implementation to identify quick wins for immediate action • Strategic partnerships, and a task force for moving forward the action plan nominated and engaged 	Moderator: RUFORUM
16:40-17:00	Resolutions	RUFORUM