



RUFORUM 21ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

CONCEPT NOTE FORUM V

NURTURING TALENT



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:

Tsolido Suite, Gaborone

Date: 3RD December 2025

Time: 08.30-12.30 SAT

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Background

Africa has the world's youngest population and by with over 60% under the age of 25. By 2030, Sub-Saharan Africa is projected to account for over a quarter of the global population under 25, contributing more to the increase in the global workforce than all other regions combined. Consequently, it is essential for the continent to adopt strategies that would facilitate the realisation of a demographic dividend. Nurturing Africa's young talent is thus the corner stone producing a future-ready workforce for unlocking and underpinning Africa's economic and in agri-food systems transformation.

With agriculture increasingly impacted by climate change, digitalization, and globalization, traditional educational models are often misaligned with emerging labor demands, technological trends, and innovation needs in the sector (FAO, 2021). This forum focuses on how to equip Africa's youth and early-career professionals with requisite skills contemporary to today's and the emerging world of work demands. In doing so, we must pay attention to increasing the number of women in science and its leadership; enhancing work and business transitions for young people; implementing transformative education systems that skill for the 21st century work force. Bridging the gaps between research, extension, and industry is critical. Stronger partnerships between universities, agribusinesses, and rural development institutions promote technology adoption and ensure that training programs align to evolving world-of-work. Moreover, developing inclusive skilling strategies that intentionally target women and rural youth can address persistent inequalities in access to productive resources, finance, and decision-making platforms (IFAD, 2021). Ultimately, investing in a skilled, adaptable, and empowered agricultural workforce will not only increase productivity and incomes but also create dignified employment, reduce rural poverty, and drive Africa's broader economic transformation. This session of the conference aims to explore these issues focusing on:

1. **Science solutions and growth and development:** Translating science and technology into jobs, business and wealth for especially for young people.
2. **Leadership for transformative education:**
 - Transforming higher education the cut-out-work and experiences for a female dean
 - University TVET engagements: The Opportunities and leverage points
3. **Leadership for science:**
 - From doctoral education to national science leadership- message to young scientists
 - Post-doctoral programmes.
4. **Emerging scientists, practitioners and educators:**
 - Post-graduation integration into University:
 - Post-doctoral experience.

OBJECTIVES

This forum will serve as a platform to discuss the critical topic of nurturing Africa's talent a key element for delivering a demographic dividend for the continent. This session will specifically engage young Africans and leaders to share their experiences and best practices in the nurture of the next generation examine. Panelists will examine imperatives for implementing transformative education, enhancing work transitions, science leadership , integration of University-TVET education among others. This session will also facilitate thorough discussions on policy implications, societal impacts, and ethical considerations, while also examining strategies for producing the next generation of African, Education and practitioner leaders.

APPROACH

The Forum will have a key note paper that will subsequently be discussed by selected research leaders. A facilitated panel discussion will be help to

engage the wider audience and draw lessons from them, generating the forum message.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Enhance knowledge sharing in transformative education and innovation, that enhance development of creative solutions agribusiness, and work transitions.
- Strengthen connections among researchers, policymakers, industry leaders, and practitioners to foster collaborative initiatives and interdisciplinary research efforts.
- Inspire university leaders on programming for nurture of science talent and leadership for the continent's development needs.
- Explore opportunities for more inclusive education that rebalances the human resource pyramid by strengthening university TVET education.
- Inform creation of policies that effectively translate research findings into actionable practices that benefit society and promote environmental sustainability.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants will include researchers, scientists, academics, development partners, policy makers and Government Officials, industry representatives, Non-Profit Organizations, professionals, and graduate students.

ORGANIZERS

The event is organized by RUFORUM, with support from the Government of Botswana and RUFORUM member universities in Botswana.

WEDNESDAY 3rd December, 2025

Venue: Tsolido Suite, Gaborone

Link: https://ruforum-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/LTzF4_uOQQumyvb9PQBoLw

Session Chair: Prof Florence Uphie Chinje

Rapporteurs: Dr. Abigael Otinga, Dr. Rosemary Bulyaba, Professor Jan Swanepoel

| Time | Welcome Remarks from the Chair | |
|-------------|--|---|
| 09.50-10:10 | Key note paper: Educating Africa for the 21st Century needs with the focus on Agenda 2063. | Dr. Mahaman Bachir Saley Department of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation (ESTI), African Union Commission, Ethiopia |
| | Lead Discussants | |
| 10:10-10:20 | Science solutions for development: Translating science and technology into jobs, business and wealth for especially for young people: | Ms. Zena Saliru, Juma Farms, Uganda |
| 10:20-10:30 | Leadership for transformative education: 1. Transforming higher education | Prof. Flora Chadare, National University of Agriculture, Benin. |
| | 2. University-TVET engagements | Ms. Pamela Nasimiyu, Baraka Agriculture College, Kenya |
| 10:30-10:40 | Leadership for science: | |
| | 1. From doctoral education to national science leadership | Dr. Sadik Kassim, National Agricultural Research Organisation, Uganda |
| | 2. Post-doctoral programmes and research chairs designs in African Universities | Prof Paul Oberholster, University of Free State, South Africa |
| 10.40-10:50 | Emerging scientists, practitioners and educators: | |
| 10.40-11:00 | 1. Post-graduation integration into University: | Dr Masa Ramorathudi, Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Botswana |
| | 2. Technology and business integration | Craig Akiri, The College of Wooster, USA |
| 11:00-11:20 | Plenary discussions | |