



21st RUFORUM ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

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

CONCEPT NOTE

AFRICA-EUROPE HIGH LEVEL DIALOGUE ON HIGHER AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Date: 1st December, 2025 **Time:** 15:00-16:30 CAT

Venue: Okavango Suite, Gaborone International Conference Centre, Gaborone, Botswana

Register to join virtually: <https://bit.ly/3Kn8QrV>

Contacts: Prof. 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.

The central role of higher education in development is also underscored by the European Union's agenda for higher education. As such, some of the European Union's focus investments including Erasmus+, Horizon Europe, and other mechanisms, enable the higher education sector to adapt to new development demands and realities. Of concern is the need for green transitions and digital economy transitions compliant skilling and development solution. Europe and Africa share a lot in common including their socio-economic development trajectories. Recent global threats, opportunities, and emerging futures call for concerted engagements to chart a shared vision of success. 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-Europe relations that could benefit from ongoing initiatives.



PURPOSE OF THE DIALOGUE

The proposed dialogue aims to leverage capacities of African universities, academia, policy institutions, and European 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 (AGM¹).

OBJECTIVES

1. Review, dialogue, and make recommendations for strengthening Africa-Europe 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- Europe 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 European Universities and allied institutions to support informed policy development and execution.

APPROACH

The meeting will be held under the **Strategic Partnerships for Growth: Building Bridges for the Future** theme. It will have three sessions that will include an official opening, and two technical sessions that will focus on; (a) Policy frameworks for strengthening Africa- Europe Research and Science capacity; (b) Dialogues on experiences and lessons learnt from implementing Africa-Europe partnerships as well as global collaboration for building human and science capacity for Africa. A mix of plenary presentations including presentation of keynote papers and panel discussions will be held. Statements will be made by the African Union Commission, Development Partners, and Governments. Representatives of apex higher education, and agricultural research bodies and development banks may make statements on accelerating investments in agricultural higher education and agricultural development.

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- Europe collaborations developed.

PARTICIPANTS

¹ The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a network of 175 universities found in 40 countries of the continent that trains and conducts research and development activities in agriculture and allied sectors of the economy (details visit www.ruforum.org).



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.

PROGRAMME

Rapporteurs: RUFORUM and Agrinatura

Time	Activity	Responsible
Session 1: Official Opening Ceremony: Call for action to strengthen cooperation on human and science capacity development for africa Session Chair: Professor Richard Tabulawa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Botswana		
35 minutes	Welcome remarks	Professor Theresia Nkuo-Akenji, Board Chair RUFORUM and Vice Chancellor, University of Bamenda, Cameroon
	Statement: Africa-Europe partnerships for agriculture, higher education science and technology	Mr. Timothy Sejjoba, Commissioner, University Education and Training, Minister of Education and Sports, Uganda
	Statement: Africa- Europe partnerships: Lessons from DR Congo and Central Africa	Adolphe Ndarabu Igulu, Advisor to the Minister of Higher Education, Ministry of Higher Education, University, Scientific Research and Innovation, DR Congo
Session 2: Convergence and way-forward planning for strengthening higher agricultural education Session Chair: Professor Otlogetswe Totolo, Vice Chancellor, Botswana International University of Science and Technology		
45 minutes	Lead Paper 1: Imperatives for strengthening Africa-Europe higher education and research agendas: Lessons learnt and new opportunities.	Presenter: Professor Ioannis Dimitriou, President, Agrinatura
	Panel discussions: Making the partnership work for African and European Universities and institutions Panellists: Including University Leaders, Research Leaders, from Africa and Europe 1. Professor Isaac Kibwage, Vice Chancellor, Egerton University, Kenya	Moderator Professor Otlogetswe Totolo, Vice Chancellor, Botswana International University of Science and Technology, Botswana



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Professor Diegane Diouf, Rector, Université Sine Saloum El Hadj Ibrahima NIASS, Senegal 3. Professor Eli Katunguka, Vice Chancellor, Kyambogo University, Uganda 4. Professor Mundia Muya, Vice Chancellor, University of Zambia 	
<p>Session 3: Policies and action planning strengthening Research and Science capacity through Africa-Europe strategic partnerships</p> <p>Session Chair: Professor Barnabas Nawangwe, Vice Chancellor, Makerere University</p>		
45 minutes	<p>Lead Paper 2: The Africa-Europe science technology and innovation agendas for the mutual benefit- competitive, inclusive and sustainable agricultural development.</p> <p>Panellists: Including University Leaders, Research Leaders, from Africa, and Europe</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Morris Akiri, CABI Senior Regional Director for Africa, Kenya 2. Dr. Jennie van der Mheen, Manager International Cooperation Africa, Wageningen University & Research, Netherlands 3. Professor Julius Atlhopheng, CEO, National Agricultural Research and Development Institute, Botswana 4. Professor Owunari Abraham Georgewill, Vice Chancellor, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria 5. Professor Raphael Tihelwa Chibunda, Vice Chancellor, Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania 	<p>Presenter: Dr. Leonard Mizzi, Head of Unit, DG INTPA, European Commission (joining virtually)</p> <p>Moderator: Professor Barnabas Nawangwe, Vice Chancellor, Makerere University</p>
20 minutes	High level resolutions	RUFORUM