



RUFORUM 21ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

Principals and Deans Committee Meeting



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:

Tsodilo A, Gaborone; Botswana

Date: 1st December 2025

Time: 08.30-12.30 CAT

Contact: Prof Majaliwa Mwanjalolo (m.majaliwa@ruforum.org)

Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a prominent network dedicated to transforming higher education, science, technology, and innovation across Africa. With over 175 universities in 40 countries, RUFORUM fosters collaboration, research excellence, and the development of graduate-level human capital to tackle Africa's agricultural, environmental, and socio-economic challenges. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) serves as RUFORUM's highest policy and decision-making forum, gathering vice-chancellors, deans, researchers, development partners, and government representatives to discuss strategic issues impacting the future of African universities. The 2025 AGM is particularly timely, coinciding with significant changes in Africa's higher education landscape due to technological advancements, climate change, and the need for skills aligned with sustainable development goals.

Key focuses of the meeting include addressing governance and operational statutory issues to ensure transparency, accountability, and long-term sustainability among RUFORUM member institutions. Discussions will aim to harmonize institutional policies, enhance member engagement, and improve financial sustainability mechanisms.

Additionally, the Deans and Principals meeting will explore opportunities that will enhance the network contribution to the 100000 PhD targeted for next decade on the African continent. This will identify best practices in training and research, supervision and mentorship while proposing strategies to enhance postgraduate training and completion rates. Deans and Principals will also be updated on the implementation of RUFORUM's Joint Academic Programmes, including the Joint MSc in Green Economy and Climate Finance, MSc in Engineering for Development, and MSc in Data Science. These interdisciplinary programmes reflect RUFORUM's commitment to addressing critical development priorities through cross-institutional collaboration.

A major highlight of the 2025 AGM will be the launch of the RUFORUM Digital Academy, aimed at expanding access to higher education via blended and online learning. This initiative will enhance digital literacy, promote open educational resources, and improve the quality of education across member institutions, fostering a more inclusive and resilient higher education ecosystem.

Overall, the 2025 AGM provides a strategic platform for member universities and partners to evaluate achievements, assess ongoing initiatives, and collaboratively shape the future. By focusing on governance, enhancing postgraduate training, promoting joint academic programs, and embracing digital innovation, RUFORUM reaffirms its commitment to developing the next generation of African scholars and professionals to drive the continent's transformation.

Objectives

The overall objective of the Deans and Principals meeting is to contribute to smooth operationalization of Africa's higher agricultural education transformation agenda. The specific objectives are:

1. To address governance and operational statutory issues related to RUFORUM and its member institutions, with a focus on ensuring transparency, accountability, and long-term institutional sustainability.
2. To formulate a strategic approach for contributing to the goal of training 100,000 PhD graduates targeted over the next decade on the continent.
3. To create a functional strategy for regional programs, including new joint academic offerings such as the Joint MSc in Green Economy and Climate Finance, MSc in Engineering for Development, and MSc in Data Science, while identifying opportunities for further expanding these collaborative initiatives.
4. To launch the RUFORUM Digital Academy, an innovative platform designed to enhance access to high-quality higher education through the use of digital technologies, open educational resources, and blended learning methodologies.

Approach

The Meeting of Deans and Principals will adopt a participatory and results-oriented approach to facilitate active engagement, peer learning, and collective decision-making among academic leaders of RUFORUM member universities. The session will provide a platform for reflection on progress, sharing of best practices, and strategic planning to enhance academic leadership, research management, and institutional sustainability within the RUFORUM network.

Expected Outcomes

By the end of the AGM, the following key outcomes are anticipated:

- Enhanced governance and operational efficiency of RUFORUM and its member universities through resolutions on statutory and policy matters.
- Strategy for contributing to the training of the 100,000 PhD target on the African continent.
- Increased awareness and uptake of new joint academic programs addressing Africa's green economy, engineering innovation, and data-driven development.
- Official launch of the RUFORUM Digital Academy, accompanied by a strategic plan for integrating digital learning tools and open education resources into university curricula.
- Strengthened partnerships and collaboration among universities, governments, and development partners in advancing higher education and research for development in Africa.

Participants

The participants are Deans and Principals from Member Universities

Organizers

Principals and Deans committee, RUFORUM Secretariat, with support from the Government of Botswana and RUFORUM member universities in Botswana.

Tuesday 29th November, 2025

Venue: Tsodilo A, Gaborone

Registration: <https://ruforum-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/Y8xJTEipQ2ym5F-ViA>

Session Chair : Mathias Fonteh

Rapporteurs : Yamungu

Time	Session
08.30-08:35	Welcome Remarks from the Chair (Prof. Fonteh)
08:35-09:15	Strategy for enhanced contribution of Network on the training of PhD on the continent (Strength of the Network; Best Academic and Research training practices Discussion), Prof. Mathias Fonteh, and Majaliwa JGM
09:15-09:35	Resource Mobilisation and rationalization in Member Universities (Exploring strategies for funding and partnership opportunities; Case studies of successful resource mobilisation initiatives) Dr. Akanimo Odon
09:35-10:35	Revamping regional programmes in the Network (Profiling the RUFORUM Universities; MSc in Green Economy and Climate Finance; MSc in Engineering D; MSc Data Science; scaling up mechanisms for the new programmes; Opportunities for collaboration and student enrollment) Prof. Majaliwa JGM, Dr. Edema; Dr. Opyo Joseph; Prof. Anthony Egeru
10:35-10:50	Tea Break
10:50-11:10	Launch of Digital Academy of RUFORUM Dr. Unity Chipunza
11.10-12.15	Statutory and Governance Issues (Discussion on governance and operational matters of member institutions; Updates on statutory compliance and institutional obligations, new chair for the Deans and Principal committee; elect the member of the committee) Prof. Mathias Fonteh
12.15-12.20	Remarks from Prof Agnes M'wangombe, Chairperson of the RUFORUM TC
12.15-12.30	Closing remarks (Dr. Florence Nakayiwa, Deputy Executive Secretary RUFORUM)

