



RUFORUM 21ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

Strengthening Subregional Coordination and Operations Via RUFORUM Regional Nodes



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:

Gaborone International conference Center, Gaborone, Botswana

Date: 2nd December 2025

Time: 08:00-10:30 Central African Time (CAT)

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

Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a continental capacity building institution for agriculture and allied sectors. RUFORUM's operations are underpinned by continental sub -regional, national policies and development blueprints. RUFORUM in 2024 started its third decade of existence and service to the network and continent. Currently the network has over 170 member universities found in all five African Union geographical sub-regions. Currently, there are 20 member universities in Central Africa, 65 in Eastern Africa, 6 in Northern Africa, 53 in Southern Africa, and 31 in Western Africa. In order to effectively manage operations and serve its members in sub-regions, The RUFORUM Board approved, the creation of sub-regional nodes (hubs) as part of the organisations' operation and management structure. Each node will service member countries acting as a liaison with the Secretariat. At country level, member universities will form Country Forums with Central Africa having 6 forums, 8 in Eastern Africa, 4 in Northern Africa, 12 in Southern Africa, and 10 in Western Africa. Two governments, Benin and Malawi has signed hosting agreements for the regional Hubs, whilst the Secretariate in the interim will coordinate eastern African activities and together with the West Africa hub, coordinate the northern Africa and Central African activities. Over the past year the hubs have started implementing some collective actions at subregional level to support university and their partner missions. During this 21st Annual General Meeting, the West and South African Nodes will be formally launched. This is the basis of the proposed meeting that also underscores creation of RUFORUM Country Chapters – The National Forum.

Conveners

This meeting is co-convened by RUFORUM, the Governments of Benin and Malawi through their Ministries of Education, relevant agencies and hub host universities. The West African hub is hosted by the University of Abome-Calavi, in Benin, whilst the Southern African hub is hosted by, the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Purpose

The aims of this event is to provide a platform for dialogues on the operationalization of RUFORUM's regional hubs and their official launch.

Objectives

1. Hold stakeholder dialogues on operationalization of the regional nodes by drawing lessons from similar and previous operations of RUFORUM and other agencies to inform operations of the hub and country forums.
2. Officially launch the regional nodes.

Approach

The meeting will take place as a facilitated workshop with options for in-person and online participation. Panel discussions by key stakeholders will inform the group discussions and strategy ratification. The formal launch of the hub will be conducted by the governments of Benin, Malawi, and Uganda, which hosts the Secretariat.

Participants

Approximately, one hundred participants are expected to attend the meeting. Participants will be drawn from RUFORUM member universities in all the five geographic regions of Africa, RUFORUMs' management and governance organs, and AUC and its agencies, African Agricultural Research, Innovation and Education Institutions partners, Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System from the global north and south as well as development partners.

Expected outputs

1. RUFORUM regional nodes introduced to the stakeholders and their insights obtained to operationalization tools and draft documents on hub operationalization;
2. The operationalization modalities of the newly established regional hub in Benin, West Africa, including roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders discussed and agreed upon;
3. The Regional hubs are officially launched.

TUESDAY 2nd December, 2025**Venue:** Tsodilo, Gaborone**Registration link:** <https://bit.ly/4oqAqmT>**Session Chair:** Professor Bruno A. Djossa**Rapporteurs:** Dr Sokona Dagnoko, Waswa Moses, Emmanuel Okalany and Selma Ndapewa Nghituwamhata**Session 1 Opening session and official launch of RUFORUM' Regional Hubs**

Time	Activity	Responsible person
08:00-08:20	Arrival and registration	RUFORUM
08:20-08:25	Welcome Remarks from the Chair	Professor Bruno A. Djossa
08:25-08:30	Remarks by West Africa Hub representative	Professor Charlemagne Babatoundé Igué, Rector Abome- Calavi, Benin
08:30-08:35	Remarks by Southern Africa Hub representative	Professor Emmanuel Kaunda, Vice Chancellor LUANAR, Malawi
08:35-08:40	Remarks by Secretariate RUFORUM	Professor Patrick Okori
08:40-08:50	Remarks from the Government of Benin	Her Excellency Éléonore Yayi Ladekan, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research
08:50-09:00	Remarks from the Government of Malawi	Dr Levis Keliyasi Eneya, Secretary for Higher Education, Malawi
09:00-09:10	Remarks form the Government of Uganda	Hon Janet Kataaha Museveni, First Land and Minister of Education and Sports, Uganda
Solidarity Statements by Partners		
09:10-09:15	CGIAR Africa	Dr David Chikoye, Regional Director IITA Africa representing CGIAR Director for Africa.
09:15-09:20	AGRINATURA	Professor Ioannis Dimitriou President AGRINATURA and Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.
09:20-09:25	African Forum for Agricultural. Advisory Services (AFAAS)	Dr. Lilian Lihasi, Executive Director AFAAS, Uganda.
09:25-09:30	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA)	Dr Aggrey Agumya, Executive Director and Head of Mission of FARA
09:30-09:35	Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa (CCARDESA)	Dr. Bridget Kakuma-Kasongamulilo, Acting Executive Director, CCARDESA
09:35-09:40	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Africa	Professor Abebe Haile-Gabriel FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Africa, Ghana
09:40-09:50	Joint formal launch of the Hubs by all three Government leaders assisted by RUFORUM Board Chair and Vice Chancellors of the Hub Hosting Universities	RUFORUM Secretariat

Session Two: Operationalization of the Regional Hubs		
09:50-10:05	Operationalizing RUFORUM's Regional Hubs- the imperatives and opportunities	Professor Patrick Okori, Executive Secretary, (RUFORUM)
10:05-10:30	Break-out group work to refine tools, schedules and roles	
	Group 1: Revitalizing National FORUM/ Chapters- what are the opportunities and challenges we need to handle.	Professor Mick Mwala- University of Zambia and Dr. Sarah E. Tione, Southern Africa Hub
	Group 2: Framework for leveraging existing and or new opportunities with AARIEs- African Agricultural Research, Innovation & Education Institutions.	Professor Florence Fonteh / Professor Achille Ephrem Assogbadjo Wester Africa Hub
10:30-10:40	Plenary discussions and closing	Dr. Mary Shawa, Chair Finance and Administration Committee, RUFORUM Board.