



RUFORUM 21ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2025

CONCEPT NOTE

VICE CHANCELLORS' FORUM



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

Date: 2nd December, 2025

Time: 14:00-1630 Central African Time (CAT)

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

Background

RUFORUM annually hosts its governance meetings that involve a diversity of stakeholders to explore pathways for harnessing opportunities and addressing emerging institutional, regional and global challenges. One such organ is the Vice Chancellors Forum which provides an opportunity for institutional leaders to reflect on strategic issues, share lessons and appreciate development challenges that impact on the higher education landscape as much as the potential for higher education as the engine of economic growth and transformation.

The 21st RUFORUM AGM will be hosted by the Botswana Government and RUFORUM Member Universities led by Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources. The conference theme is, “Positioning Africa’s Universities and the Higher Education Sector to effectively impact development processes on the continent.” The Vice Chancellors Forum will be held under the aegis that universities in Africa are under immense pressure to deliver high-quality, relevant, and inclusive education despite declining funding, fast-changing technologies, and the demand for universities to contribute more visibly to sustainable development. Vice Chancellors, as chief executives, therefore must lead their institutions to adopt and or adapt transformative approaches that balance academic excellence, integrity, innovation, and societal relevance.

The 2025 Vice chancellors Forum builds on the previous meeting and aims to develop action plans for mobilize African Universities around three critical issues of (a) improving resource rationalization for teaching, science, technology and innovation; (b) transformative education to equip young people for the world of work; (c) positioning African University to use and build capacity for the continent the fourth industrial revolutions’ data science and artificial intelligence driven era. The will provide a platform Vice Chancellors and invited senior key stakeholders to explore opportunities for securing shared large resources, underpinned by unique research and innovation niches, and build strategic partnerships with industry, government, and other universities. It will further underscore the need for putting “Collective Knowledge into Action” for addressing their University mission challenges effectively and efficiently.

Purpose

This half-day session will provide a platform for Vice Chancellors to reflect collectively on strategic leadership issues, share emerging practices, and develop joint priorities for institutional and continental transformation aligned with national and continental development needs.

Specific objectives

1. Leveraging established centers of leadership to create specialized thematic micro-alliances for Africa.
2. Building capacity for science-industry transitions and development impact via new programmes.
3. Building capacity for digital transitions and leverage in African universities.

Expected outputs

The following outputs are expected to be produced from the Vice Chancellors' Forum

1. Road map for the creation of strategic thematic micro-alliances for research and higher education

for effective response to Africa's development needs at sub-regional to regional offices.

2. Guidance on the framework for piloting and to scaling out of new academic programmes.
3. Opportunities for collaboration among Vice Chancellors in the network and with partners explored.

Participants

1. Vice Chancellors, Rectors and others leaders from RUFORUM member universities
2. Representatives from higher education councils.
3. Representatives of the African Union Commission.
4. Representatives from other university networks, ARUA, AAU, Agrinatura, APLU.
5. Development Partners -Mastercard Foundation.

Venue: Chevron

Registration Link: <https://ruforum-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/U-IBHgduSAWBYmvRzsP6QA>

Session Chair: Board Chair

Rapporteurs: Dr. Florence Nakayiwa, Mr. David Ekepu and Representative from LOC

Time	Activity	Responsibility
Session 1: Opening and setting the scene		
14:00 – 14:20	Arrival and registration	Secretariat
14:20 – 14:30	Welcome remarks	Prof. Ketlhatlogile Mosepele, Vice Chancellor Botswana University of Agriculture and Natural Resources.
14:30 – 14:40	Opening remarks:	Prof. Theresia Nkuo-Akenji, RUFORUM Board Chair and Vice-Chancellor University of Bamenda, Cameroon
14:40-15:00	Lead Paper: Leveraging existing leadership centres to develop specialised thematic micro-alliances in Africa. The case study of the blue-economy micro-alliance.	Prof. Denis Worlanyo Aheto, University of Cape Coast, Ghana
Moderated discussions: Building consensus and creating of a roadmap alliance development Moderator: Professor Otlogetswe Totolo, Vice Chancellor, Botswana International University of Science and Technology, Botswana		
15:00-15:30	Panelists	
	The Sam Nujoma Marine and Coastal Resources Research Centre.	Prof. Kenneth K. Matengu, Vice Chancellor of the University of Namibia.
	Congo Basin Water Resources Research Center	Prof. Jean-Marie Kayembe Ntumba Rector, Université de Kinshasha, Democratic Republic of Congo.
	Delivering for the continent: Aspirations of the PANA program.	Dr Segenet Kelemu, Executive Director, PANA Programs Mastercard Foundation.
Session 2: Building capacity for science-industry transitions and development		
15:30-15:50	Lead Paper: Building capacity for science-industry transitions and development impact via new programmes.	Prof Hester C. Klopper, Vice Chancellor, University of the Free State, Republic of South Africa.
15:50-16:10	Experiences from The JKUAT hub on innovation & entrepreneurship with community.	Prof. Victoria Wambui Ngumi, Vice Chancellor, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya.
	The Engineering Doctorate and Masters Imperatives for creating such graduate programmes.	Prof Ernst van den Ende, Managing Director Wageningen University & Research, The Netherlands.
Session 3: Building capacity for digital transitions		

16:10-16:40	Health Break	
16:40-17:10	Lead Paper: Building capacity for digital transitions and leverage in African universitiesities	Prof. Mkali Idruss Samson Sajidu, Vice-Chancellor of University of Malawi, Malawi.
16:40-17:10	Building capacity for AI and Data Science in Africa.	Professor Njenga Munene, Zetech University
16:40-17:10	Building capacity for data science and AI in Africa. Action points for the network	Dr Stephen Opio, Patira Data Science, USA/RUFORUM
16:40-17:10	The Orange Digital Center Hub and Silicon Mountain experience at Buea	Prof. Ngomo Horace Manga, Vice Chancellor of the University of Buea, Cameroon.