

RUFORUM MONTHLY

The Monthly Brief of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture

AFRICAN MINISTERS COMMIT TO STRENGTHEN HIGHER EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA

The Government of Uganda and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), with support of national, regional and international partners from 15-19, November, 2010 hosted a meeting of African Ministers, Members of Parliament, senior officials responsible for education, agriculture, science and technology, finance and planning, private sector, civil society, and farmer representatives, to discuss revamping higher education, so that African universities and other education institutions can contribute more effectively to the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agricultural Development Programme (CAADP) processes. The conference aimed to consolidate recent developments by strengthening high level partnerships and policy support for re-engineering African higher education in agriculture and science.



Some of the Ministers, Vice Chancellors and African representatives at the Official opening Ceremony of the Ministerial Conference on Higher Education in Agriculture in Africa (CHEA).

The expected outputs were:

1. High level political and development-partner commitment for increasing investments in higher education, science and innovations in Africa mobilized;
2. Discourse amongst persons with the authority and influence focused on the urgent need to address the state of professional and tertiary agricultural education in Africa initiated and consolidated;
3. The capacity implications of the 6% CAADP growth target highlighted and actions to achieve this growth established;
4. Priority actions needed by governments, universities and other actors, for learning institutions to produce graduates who are fit for purpose in 21st century in Africa, agreed upon;
5. Various NEPAD continental funding targets towards science and capacity development consolidated, and appropriate guidance to national finance authorities given;
6. International networking to spur and sustain re-engineering of Higher Education Institutions in Africa facilitated; and
7. African universities mobilized to be more pro-active in engaging in Africa's development and in particular to make their due contribution to research and innovation.

For more information about the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), Contact: The **Newsletter Editor**, RUFORUM Secretariat, Plot 151 Garden Hill, Makerere University Main Campus, P.O. Box 7062, Kampala, Uganda. Fax: +256 414 534153; Tel: +256 414 535939; E-mail: Secretariat@ruforum.org; or visit RUFORUM Website at www.ruforum.org.

- **RUFORUM Monthly** provides information on activities of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture.
- This **Monthly Brief** is available on the last week of every month ■

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Re-tooling Training Workshop for Research Methods, 7-11 February, 2011 Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi, Kenya.

The E-learning Content Writing Retreat was held from 7-16 January, 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, involving Bunda College of Agriculture, Egerton University, Haramaya University, Mekelle University, and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

More information on RUFORUM activities can be accessed on the RUFORUM BLOG at <http://ruforum.wordpress.com> and the RUFORUM Website at www.ruforum.org



COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED BY MINISTERS MEETING IN KAMPALA, UGANDA

We, the Ministers assembled at the Ministerial Conference on Higher Education in Agriculture in Africa which was held at the Munyonyo Commonwealth Hotel, Kampala in the Republic of Uganda from 15th to 19th November 2010:

Aware that:

- African Heads of State and Government have a Vision for African Agriculture that has a target of 6% per annum increase in agricultural production, which is the minimum for getting ahead of the growth in population and making a sustainable impact in reducing hunger and poverty and achieving several of the Millennium Development Goals.
- Africa's Heads of State and Government have mandated the African Union Commission and through it the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NEPAD-PCA) to implement the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) as a concerted and comprehensive strategy for achieving their Vision for African Agriculture.
- The Association of African Universities and many studies and reports have highlighted the difficulties that our universities are facing in producing the quality of graduates, postgraduates and research that is essential for the success of CAADP.

Recognising that there have been, and continue to be, many credible and important initiatives aimed at changing African universities to be more relevant to the 21st century African agricultural industry and grateful for the support provided by governments, charitable foundations, regional and multi-lateral development agencies and Africa's development partners.

Acknowledging that the African universities recognise the need to reform themselves and have initiated significant changes to be more responsive to Africa's development needs as set out in the proceedings of this conference. This must involve proactive engagement with the private sector with a view to diversifying funding for higher education.

Recognising that the institutions of higher education understand that they must be accountable for the resources provided to them.

Cognisant that despite this progress, due to the necessarily rapid increase in intake of students, the universities have fallen further back in terms of the human and

infrastructural capacity required to deliver high quality education and learning experiences in agriculture and their ability to conduct high-impact agricultural research.

Cognisant that there has been limited funding to support post-graduate training in African universities, which has grossly hampered development of the required capacity to build Africa's own capacity for capacity development.

Aware that the crippling disconnect between the absolute necessity to assure the success of CAADP and the critical shortage of human capacity required to achieve that success must be resolved as a matter of national, regional and even global urgency.

Reaffirm our commitment to the Maputo Declaration committing at least 10% of our national budgets to agriculture and ensuring that agricultural education and research should be adequately resourced in this allocation.

Congratulate the organisers of the Conference on Higher Education in Agriculture (CHEA) for organising a conference to address important and urgent topics that are vital to the development of Africa's agricultural industry. We also appreciate the time that the different stakeholders from the public and private sector, farmer organisations, civil society and the universities and their networks have devoted to participate in the conference.

Commit, in view of the above observations, to:

1. a renewed and vigorous emphasis by African governments on restoring the quality of higher education in agriculture. This is necessary to properly prepare the increased intakes of diplomas, undergraduates and postgraduates for their responsibilities to achieve CAADP targets. This will require special focus on higher degree training to produce the required capacity for delivering high quality teaching and learning experiences at African universities and colleges.
2. increased investment in higher education in agriculture in Africa and to be included as an integral agricultural development investment in CAADP Country Compacts and Medium Term Agricultural Productivity Programmes. This should be guided by structured foresighting.

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THE RESOLUTIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE MEETING BY THE MINISTERS

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3. take urgent actions to develop an Africa-wide action and investment plan for implementing the African Union Commission and NEPAD-PCA strategies for strengthening capacity development in agriculture that are designed to support CAADP.
4. ensure that Ministries responsible for higher education, education institutions and other relevant actors create conducive and friendly environments for women and girls education and career advancement at all levels.
5. advocate for increased support and engagement of the African higher education networks in policy making and programme implementation for agricultural training and research by the African Union Commission, Regional Economic Communities, NEPAD-Planning Coordinating Agency (NEPAD-PCA) and the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).
6. support local and international partnerships which address critical capacity needs for sustainable agricultural development. This includes partnerships amongst universities and engagement with communities, private sector and the African Diaspora's.

This Section reflect details of the resolutions from the Conference which the Ministers meeting in Kampala endorsed:

1. Resolutions on reinforcing the relevance of African universities

- 1.1 government Ministries responsible for Education, with support of universities, to undertake national human resource and capacity needs audits to underpin the design, financing and implementation of national human capacity development.
- 1.2 government ministries and universities to develop functional partnerships through which direct support to policy and capacity needs can be addressed
- 1.3 African universities should undertake reforms to respond to future demands
- 1.4 governments support universities and their networks to strengthen regional and national quality assurance systems, and resource rationalisation in training and research for development

2. Resolutions on enabling universities to become learning institutions

- 2.1 governments enable and facilitate universities to

become learning institutions that produce problem solvers and entrepreneurs

- 2.2 universities support enquiry-based and student-centered teaching and learning approaches to ensure that graduates are adequately prepared, in the context of the teaching-research nexus
- 2.3 both governments and universities create and support the necessary incentives and capacity development mechanisms for optimal partnership linkages

3. Resolutions on harnessing the opportunities and developments in ICT

- 3.1 governments facilitate universities to be connected to national information and power infrastructures to optimize utilization of ICT.
- 3.2 universities engage with the private sector to harness ICTs in teaching, learning and research

4. Resolutions on anticipating the future scenario mapping for policy and investment in agricultural higher education

- 4.1 African institutions of higher education will establish foresights and think nodes aligned with Pan-African University that was launched in July 2010 and other African centers of excellence in science, research and teaching. Amongst their outputs will be analyses of African issues that will cross-fertilize with the studies of the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) Virtual Foresight Academy, which is intended to improve prioritization of research for development. These initiatives will take advantage of the GFAR's Forward Thinking Initiative, which is a neutral and independent platform for developers of different foresight tools and initiatives.
- 4.2 establishing nodes for foresighting in African universities and other centres of excellence in agricultural research and teaching which will contribute to improving the relevance and contexts of the institute's own agendas and the African foresighting agenda in general

5. Resolutions on promoting women education and leadership in higher education in agriculture

- 5.1 Ministries of Education and institutions of higher education should create and/or strengthen institutional frameworks for gender mainstreaming

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THE RESOLUTIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE MEETING BY THE MINISTERS

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at national and institutional levels through development and review of gender policies that are accompanied by effective strategies, monitoring and accountability systems and adequate resources.

- 5.2 Ministries of Education, institutions of higher education and other relevant actors to create a conducive and friendly environment for women and girls education and career advancement at all levels (i.e. adequate infrastructure, curriculum, facilities, teachers, support of practical needs of women/girls, biological and social roles etc.).

- 5.3 Ministry of Education and institutions of higher education to establish mechanisms for continuous awareness creation for girls, families, communities and teachers to motivate them toward choosing science in school and agricultural careers.

6. Resolutions on placing agricultural higher education in the policy agenda

- 6.1 Provide the enabling policy and legal framework to enable universities contribute to policy making and implementation processes, and this should be matched by universities being prepared to align themselves with CAADP capacity requirements.
- 6.2 Government policy ensures adequate financial support for universities for effective teaching, learning, research and community service to maintain standards while accepting increased enrolments.
- 6.3 Governments and development partners to intensify efforts to address the especially weak human and institutional capacity in central and West Africa.
- 6.4 Strengthen coordination among ministries dealing with tertiary agricultural education through a National System of Innovation.

7. Resolutions on strengthening partnerships in agricultural tertiary education

- 7.1 partnerships involving higher education institutions should:
- be African-driven, according to articulated African policies and programs addressing critical capacity needs for sustainable agricultural development;
 - be supported by long-term commitments that allow sufficient time for human capacity building

and institutional transformation;

- facilitate improved linkages between agricultural education, research, extension, and the private sector to increase the flow of knowledge from research to practical application and vice versa for more effective development outcomes.
- engage with African agricultural tertiary education networks.

- 7.2 African governments to provide incentives for harnessing the African Diaspora's human skills, institutional resources and professional and business networks in order to contribute toward Africa's development.

8. Resolutions on integrating agricultural tertiary education in the CAADP processes

- 8.1 The Vice Chancellors, Rectors, Governing Boards and Senates to engage more actively in CAADP processes
- 8.2 NEPAD-PCA and FARA to work with the private sector and governments to provide student internships for enhancing skills and awareness of the demands of farmers and agro-industry
- 8.3 NEPAD-PCA, Association of African Universities (AAU), African Higher Education Networks, FARA, and development partners to mobilize support for the following specific urgent actions:
- 8.4 develop a set of tools and an action plan designed to put CAADP in a position to effectively advocate for strengthening Africa's approach to higher level agricultural education and training at national, sub-regional, and continental levels
- 8.5 carry out a participatory process to develop an Africa-wide Action and Investment Plan for Agricultural Capacity Strengthening
- 8.6 identify demand-driven priorities for the Africa-wide Action and Investment Plan for Agricultural Capacity Strengthening

RUFORUM thanks her sponsors and stakeholders for making this conference a success.