

MINISTERIAL COMMUNIQUE

The Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe hosted a Round Table Meeting of Ministers of Agriculture, Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation during the 18th Annual General Meeting of the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM). The meeting was held on Wednesday 14th December 2022 at Harare International Conference Centre.

The Round Table was attended by the Ministers of the Governments of Angola, Benin, Botswana, DRC, Malawi, Mozambique, South Sudan, Uganda and Zimbabwe, as well as Development Partners including the Food and Agriculture Organisation, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa, and Africa Union Commission.

We, the Ministers of Agriculture, Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation assembled at the Roundtable meeting,

1. **RECALLING** that agriculture contributes significantly to the livelihoods of most communities in Sub-Saharan Africa: close to 30% of Gross Domestic Product in several countries; 60% of the population is involved in agriculture; and 80% of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa are dependent on agriculture
2. **NOTING WITH CONCERNS** the increasing volume of food imports on the continent impeding the existing opportunities for African farmers and agricultural transformation
3. **NOTING THAT** the recent United Nation Food Systems Summit 2021 (UNFSS) called for urgent actions to transform food systems, while championing greater participation and equity, especially amongst farmers, women, youth and indigenous groups;
4. **NOTHING THAT** human needs (e.g. food, water, shelter, sleep, connection, innovation, peace) must inform education, science and technology, which produces industries that serve the needs of our people
5. **RECOGNISING** the need for an initiative on Enhancing African Agricultural Productivity to increase productivity, reduce Post-harvest losses and improve

Value Addition, Infrastructure, Human Capital Development and Women Empowerment

6. **NOTING** the decisions of the First Summit of The Committee of African Ten Heads of State and Governments championing Education, Science, Technology and Innovation held in Lilongwe 2018, that identified key actions to be undertaken by Member States and African Universities to address the gaps;
7. **RECALLING** that the Africa's Ministerial meetings held in 2016 (Cape Town), 2017 (Lilongwe), 2018 (Nairobi), 2019 (Cape-Coast) and 2021 (Cotonou) called for support to continental initiatives to Strengthen Africa's Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capacity (SASTIE), Build Africa's Science Technology and Innovation Capacity (BASTIC), Escalate Postgraduate Training in Africa, and Increase staffing capacities and the pool of Women Scientists in African Universities and Research Institutions (RISSCAW), and Support for Africa Digital Agricultural Programme (AfriDAP)
8. **NOTING WITH APPRECIATION** the efforts by African Universities to support Africa's development through the Africa's Universities Agenda for Agricultural Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (AHESTI);
9. **NOTING WITH APPRECIATION** the efforts by African Universities to increase staff capacities in African Universities through the RUFORUM Graduate Teaching Assistantship Programme (GTA);
10. **NOTING WITH APPRECIATION** the commendable efforts RUFORUM has made to implement activities assigned to it by the Committee of Ten African Heads of State and Governments Championing Education, Science, Technology and Innovation development in the Continent, and implementation of STISA 2024 Priority One on Reducing Poverty and Enhancing Food and Nutrition Security);

11. **ACKNOWLEDGING** the high level support of the African Governments during the United Nations Food Systems 2021 Summit and follow up on the commitments made;
12. **FURTHER NOTING THAT** partnerships, co-developing, co-ownership and joint implementation of initiatives to promote quality STI and Agri-food systems which must be inclusive and provide equitable opportunities for all will drive positive development process;
13. **RECALLING** that Africa's Ministerial meeting held on 23 October 2018 in Nairobi, Kenya called on Member States to ratify the RUFORUM Charter following each country's specific procedures.
14. **RECOGNISING** the need to integrate a business oriented approach in the loan-based funding from development partners
15. **RECOGNISING** the need to create a protocol on capacity building for workforce planning and development in Africa
16. **RECOGNISING** the need to focus on technologies and innovations to advance agricultural transformation in Africa
17. **RECOGNISING** the need to integrate agriculture education, science, technology and innovation at basic education levels.
18. **RECOGNISING** that a number of member states are identified as less endowed
19. **RECOGNISING** the new member institutions joining the RUFORUM network

HEREBY THANK

The Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe and its people for hosting the 18th RUFORUM Annual General Meeting, and the Development Partners for

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their support to higher education, agriculture and Science, Technology and Innovation development in Africa.

The World Bank for providing support under the ACEII Additional Funding that has enabled establishment of six additional African Higher Education Centres of Excellence (ACEs) in Malawi (5) and in Mozambique (1)

The Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa for support to Digital Learning in African Universities and support for Youth Entrepreneurship development

ENDORSE

The BADEA Initiative for strengthening Africa Agricultural Productivity, reduce Post-harvest losses and improve Value Addition, Infrastructure and Human Capital Development.

The BADEA initiative to work with other partners to establish a RUFORUM Higher Agricultural Education Trust Fund for Food and Nutrition Security.

The BADEA initiative to establish a BADEA-RUFORUM Women in Food Security Series.

AND FURTHER

1. URGE the Member States and Governments to:

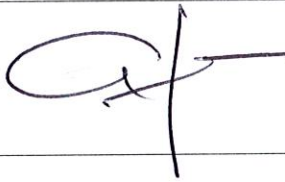
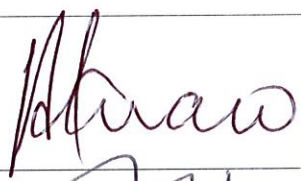
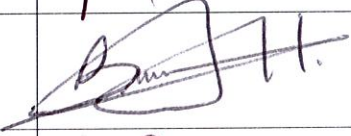


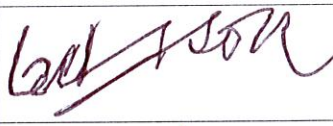

- 1.1. Endorse the RUFORUM Charter through their respective procedures;
- 1.2. Support the strengthening of TVET systems and broader educational value chains in Africa;
- 1.3. Increase support for Graduate, Doctoral and Post-Doctoral Training in Africa;
- 1.4. Intensify efforts to strengthen staff capacities in Universities in Africa;
- 1.5. Request World Bank to provide additional funding to the ACEII AF

2. **URGE** the African Union Commission and Member States to engage RUFORUM as a Technical partner in the design and implementation of the Higher Agricultural Education, Science, Technology and Innovation Initiatives;
3. **URGE** the African Governments in the Committee of Ten African Heads of States and Governments championing Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in Africa (C10) to follow up on the need for conducting regular meetings and guiding on needed actions
4. **CALL** upon Member States and Development Partners to provide support to African Universities and Research Institutions for building capacity to respond to the increasing challenges posed by climate change and transboundary animal and human health pandemics
5. **URGE** the RUFORUM member institutions to
 - 5.1. Advance the dignity of Africans by developing education systems that answer to people's needs
 - 5.2. Support each other for capacity development for agriculture, science, technology and innovation transformation.
6. **URGE** African Governments to follow up on the above recommendations.

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Have Signed:

Ministers and Ministers' representatives

Name	Title and Country	Signature
H.E Prof Dr Alice de Fátima Pinto de Ceita e Almeida	Minister, Minister of Higher Education, Science, Technology and Innovation, Angola	
Hon. Gaston Dossouhoui	Minister, Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Benin	
Hon. Aubrey Lesaso	Deputy/Assistant Minister, Ministry of Education and Skills Development, Botswana	
S.E. Muhindo Nzangi Butondo	Minister, Ministry of Higher Education, DRC	
Hon. Agnes Makonda Nyalonje	Minister, Ministry of Education, Malawi	
Hon. Josephine Lagu Yanga	Minister, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security South Sudan	
Hon. Gabriel Changson Chang	Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology South Sudan	
S.E. Dr. Monica Musenero	Minister, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation Uganda	
Hon. Prof. Amon Murwira	Minister, Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, Zimbabwe	