

RUFORUM MONTHLY

RUFORUM MEMBER UNIVERSITIES IMPROVE THEIR ONLINE PRESENCE & EXCELLENCE

According to the 2012 world rankings of universities, Makerere University has moved 4 places up from its previous (15th) to the current (11th) followed by University of Nairobi (14th), Kenyatta University (30th), University of Botswana (39th), Universidade Eduardo Mondlane (42th) and Moi University (49th) among the 50 top ranked universities in Africa. Thirteen (13) RUFORUM member universities have been ranked among the 100 top African Universities with South Africa Universities taking the lead (Please view table on page 2). Webometrics ranking original and still valid main objective is to support Open Access (OA) initiatives and to promote global access to academic knowledge as produced by universities worldwide. Ranking is a useful tool showing the commitment of the institutions to the OA through carefully selected web indicators which are explained below:

1. PRESENCE (20%). The global volume of contents published on the university web domains as indexed by the largest commercial search engine (Google). It counts every webpage, including all the formats recognized individually by Google, both static and dynamic pages. For the purposes of

(Continued on page 2)

- ***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

The RUFORUM 9th Annual General Meeting. 24th November, 2012. Botanical Beach Hotel, Entebbe-Uganda

Field Attachment Program Award (FAPA): Call for Proposals for the 2013 Funding Round.

Deadline for application is 30th November 2012 [Read more](#)

Doctoral Regional Research Grants (DoGs): Call for Proposals 2012 [Read more>>](#)

Competition Announcement and Extension of Deadline: IMPRESSA AWARDS 2012. [31st May 2013](#)

More information on RUFORUM activities can be accessed on the RUFORUM BLOG at <http://ruforum.org/a/ruforumblog/>

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY HAS A NEW VICE CHANCELLOR PROF. JOHN DDUMBA SSENTAMU



On the 28th August 2012, Professor John Ddumba-Ssentamu received an Instrument of Appointment as Vice Chancellor of Makerere University, from the Chancellor – Prof. George Mondo Kagonyera. He replaced Prof. Vanansius Baryamureeba who started his own university awarding international degrees in Uganda called Technology and Management University (UTAMU). Prof. John Ddumba Ssentamu is a renowned Professor of Economics and has made his mark as an Economics currently chairs the board of Trustees of one of the most successful banks in Uganda. He holds a PhD in Economics from Makerere University, a Masters in Economics from the University of Waterloo Ontario – Canada and a Bachelors in the same field from Makerere University.

Prof. Ddumba Ssentamu is the Chair of Makerere University Senate, Makerere University Management, and is a member of Makerere University Council. The charismatic Professor is on record for spearheading the team that trans-

formed the Department of Economics under the then Faculty of Social Sciences into a fully fledged Faculty of Economics and Management (FEMA), with substantial physical facilities and human resource capacity. This Faculty was later transformed into the College of Business and Management Sciences, where Prof. Ddumba has been serving as the Acting Principal until his elevation to the Vice Chancellorship. He mobilized UGX 5 billion for the construction of 3 buildings that currently house the Schools of Business and Economics in this College. Prof. Ddumba, has served Makerere University in various capacities including Associate Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences (1993-1994), Head of Economics Department (1994-1998), Director, Makerere University Institute of Economics (1998-2004), Dean Faculty of Economics and Management (2004-2010), Member of Senate representing the School of Economics and Vice Chairman of the Change Management Committee.

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 the RUFORUM Website at www.ruforum.org.



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the Ranking the web presence is a good proxy of the activities performed by the Universities in the 21st century.

2. IMPACT (50%). The quality of the contents is evaluated through a "virtual referendum", counting all the external in-links that the University web domain receives from third parties. Those links indicate the institutional prestige, the academic performance, the value of the information, and the usefulness of the services as introduced in the web pages according to the criteria of millions of web editors from all over the world.

3. OPENNESS (15%). The global effort to set up institutional research repositories is explicitly recognized in this indicator that takes into account the number of rich files (pdf, doc, docx, ppt) published in dedicated websites according to the academic search engine Google Scholar.

4. EXCELLENCE (15%). The academic papers published in high impact international journals are playing a very important role in the ranking of Universities. Deepening the commitment to this measurement started in previous edition. Webometrics has introduced the Excellence indicator, the university scientific output, being part of the 10% of the most cited papers in their respective scientific fields. [For more information on global ranking of universities, please visit http://www.webometrics.info/en.](http://www.webometrics.info/en)

Below is the list of the top 100 universities in Africa

Africa Rank	World Rank	University	Country
1	336	University of Cape Town	South Africa
2	337	Stellenbosch University	South Africa
3	611	University of Pretoria	South Africa
4	671	Rhodes University	South Africa
5	773	University of Kwazulu Natal	South Africa
6	777	University of the Witwatersrand	South Africa
7	796	Cairo University	Egypt
8	1012	University of South Africa	South Africa
9	1017	University of the Western Cape	South Africa
10	1109	Ain Shams University	Egypt
11	1174	Makerere University	Uganda
12	1319	Polytechnic of Namibia	Namibia
13	1394	University of Khartoum	Sudan
14	1435	University of Nairobi	Kenya
15	1452	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	South Africa

Africa Rank	World Rank	University	Country
16	1518	American University in Cairo	Egypt
17	1685	Mansoura University	Egypt
18	1786	University of the Free State	South Africa
19	1797	University of Ghana	Ghana
20	1831	University of Johannesburg	South Africa
21	1903	Addis Ababa University	Ethiopia
22	1949	Cape Peninsula University of Technology	South Africa
23	1977	University of Dar Es Salaam	Tanzania
24	2020	Sudan University of Science & Technology	Sudan
25	2185	Université Mentouri de Constantine	Algeria
26	2249	Zagazig University	Egypt
27	2273	Université Abou Bekr Belkaid Tlemcen	Algeria
28	2334	Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar	Senegal
29	2367	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science & Technology	Ghana
30	2454	Kenyatta University	Kenya
31	2485	University of Benin	Nigeria
32	2487	Auchi Polytechnic	Nigeria
33	2543	Assiut University	Egypt
34	2583	Al-Azhar University	Egypt
35	2700	University of Mauritius	Mauritius
36	2823	Université Abdelmalek Essaadi	Morocco
37	2832	Strathmore University Nairobi	Kenya
38	2921	Université Cadi Ayyad	Morocco
39	2929	University of Botswana	Botswana
40	2935	Université des Sciences et de la Technologie Houari Boumediene	Algeria
41	2941	North West University	South Africa
42	3074	Universidade Eduardo Mondlane	Mozambique
43	3102	Mauritius Institute of Education	Mauritius
44	3124	Helwan University	Egypt
45	3215	University of Ibadan	Nigeria
46	3280	Benha University	Egypt
47	3342	University of Ilorin	Nigeria
48	3390	Moi University	Kenya
49	3410	Université d'Antananarivo	Madagascar
50	3514	Université Hassan II Ain-Chock	Morocco

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Africa Rank	World Rank	University	Country
51	3517	University of Education Winneba	Ghana
52	3521	University of Namibia	Namibia
53	3566	École National Supérieure de l'Informatique (ex-INI)	Egypt
54	3661	Mogadishu University	Somalia
55	3691	University of Lagos	Nigeria
56	3778	Université Badji Mokhtar de An-	Algeria
57	3799	Al Akhawayn University Ifrane	Morocco
58	3850	Université Mouloud Mammeri de Tizi Ouzou	Algeria
59	3874	University of Zimbabwe	Zimbabwe
60	3946	Kafrelsheikh University	Egypt
61	3956	Jimma University	Ethiopia
62	3959	Egerton University	Kenya
63	4009	Université Hassiba Ben Bouali	Algeria
64	4031	University of Nigeria	Nigeria
65	4039	Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology	Kenya
66	4089	Minia University	Egypt
67	4106	Arab Academy for Science & Technology and Maritime Trans-	Egypt
68	4132	University of Tanta	Egypt
69	4132	University of Zululand	South Africa
70	4151	Université de Batna	Algeria
71	4157	National University of Rwanda	Rwanda
72	4183	Open University of Sudan	Sudan
73	4280	University of Zambia	Zambia
74	4308	École Mohammadia d'Ingénieurs	Morocco
75	4367	University of Malawi	Malawi
76	4379	Ahmadu Bello University	Nigeria
77	4404	Alexandria University	Egypt
78	4410	Université Mohammed Premier	Morocco
79	4433	Obafemi Awolowo University	Nigeria
80	4622	El Asher University	Egypt
81	4640	Durban University of Technology	South Africa
82	4691	German University in Cairo	Egypt
83	4761	Tshwane University of Technol-	South Africa
84	4833	Université Mohamed Khider	Algeria
85	4884	Université Mohammed V Souissi	Morocco
86	4892	South Valley University	Egypt

Africa Rank	World Rank	University	Country
87	4924	Université des Sciences et de la Technologie d'Oran Mohamed Boudiaf	Algeria
88	5040	University of Jos	Nigeria
89	5079	University of Fort Hare	South Africa
90	5099	University of Cape Coast	Ghana
91	5123	Presbyterian University College	Ghana
92	5264	Université d'Abomey-Calavi	Benin
93	5477	Université Mohammed V Agdal	Morocco
94	5489	Covenant University Ota	Nigeria
95	5532	Groupe EIER-ETSHER	Burkina Faso
96	5613	Université M'Hamed Bougara de Boumerdes	Algeria
97	5662	Al Azhar Al-Sharif Islamic Research Academy	Egypt
98	5698	Université de Bejaia	Algeria
99	5712	Copperbelt University	Zambia
100	5748	Université Virtuelle de Tunis	Tunisia

COMPETITION ANNOUNCEMENT and EXTENSION OF DEADLINE: IMPRESSA AWARDS 2012

Eligibility

The 2012 IMPRESSA Awards competition will be restricted to agricultural researchers and scientists from the **29 RUFORUM member universities**. Participation in the competition is by peer nomination. Both individuals and teams whose work, done in sub-Saharan Africa has contributed to the objectives of IMPRESSA are eligible for nomination. **The Deadline has been EXTENDED to midnight 31st May 2013.** [Click here to Read More>>.](#)

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KENYAN UNIVERSITIES RANKED TOP IN EAST AFRICA IN ICT

Kenyan universities edged out their East African counterparts to emerge top in a new survey focused on the adoption of information and communication technology in higher education. Private universities outperformed public institutions and Uganda's Makerere University was placed first.

The survey by the research firm CPS international, sponsored by the Pan African Education Trust, found East African universities to be increasingly embracing ICT in teaching and learning and comparing favourably with international universities in the use of technology.

Kenyan universities, the survey showed, are leading the pack in the use and accessibility of ICT in education in East Africa, while Burundi is lagging behind. Uganda came in second, Tanzania third and Rwanda fourth. The five countries make up the East African Community.

The survey, conducted among 250 institutions and based on data collection and interviews, showed that ICT has opened up East African universities to sharing and accessing academic and research materials and corporate information.

"The use of websites, subscribing to academic journals, use of intranet, social media and other e-learning tools have revolutionised the academic sector in East Africa," said Dann Mwangi, CPS regional director. Kenya had invested more heavily in ICT than other East African countries while Burundi has invested the least, the survey showed.

However, double intakes of students by public universities in Kenya have reduced their ratio of students to ICT facilities in the past two years. Kenya has been rolling out a double-intake plan in a rush to clear a longstanding admissions backlog of 40,000 students. The CPS survey comes at a time when Kenya is considering a national university [ranking system](#) in an effort to boost quality and make institutions more globally competitive.

A proposed ranking has been crafted that will see universities compete across a range of indicators. The ranking system, developed by the Commission for Higher Education, is also aimed at helping students to choose the best institutions and study programmes. Ranking of universities in Kenya is an emotive issue, with rivalry among institutions rising and claims of bias usually accompanying surveys. Competition has been triggered by rapidly growing student numbers and the emergence of more universities, presenting students with a wider choice.

"Ranking can foster healthy competition among higher education institutions while a university can use its position on that ranking as leverage to secure funding and grants," said CPS.

However, the report added, rankings can also work against

students as some employers use them to measure probable graduate success and are less likely to recruit graduates from universities that are not well placed. Kenyan universities rely on international ranking institutions, such as Webometrics in Spain, to gauge their reputation in the continental and global higher education arenas. Webometrics is based on the web presence of universities. The CPS survey, carried out between April and October 2012, focused on how institutions have embraced the use of ICT in teaching and enhancing quality and effective education.

In terms of the number of universities appearing in the [Top 100](#) in the CPS rankings, Uganda had the highest number, which researchers attributed to the fact that Uganda has more fully fledged universities than any other East African country.

Government statistics show that Uganda has 45 universities, with the majority being full universities, while most of Kenya's 67 institutions are constituent university colleges. Tanzania has 23 higher education institutions, Rwanda 24 and Burundi five.

Kenyan universities, however, took six out of the top 10 positions: Strathmore University, Multimedia University College, African Virtual University, University of Nairobi, Mount Kenya University and Kenyatta University.



Uganda's Makerere University (pictured) was number one in the ranking, followed by Strathmore University. Rwanda's School of Finance and Banking

topped the list of Rwanda's institutions while the University of Dar es Salaam was Tanzania's peak institution.

Upcoming constituent university colleges of public universities in Kenya had better ICT facilities generally than the main universities, while private universities had invested more in ICT than public universities in all the East African countries.

"Further, private universities mostly offering business courses and social sciences have performed better in the use of ICT than public universities offering similar disciplines," reads the CPS report.

"Public universities performed poorly because the bulk of students supported by governments are admitted to study business and other related social sciences courses, which overstretched ICT resources."

This story has been reproduced from Gilbert Nganga11 November 2012 Issue No:247

THE SECRET BEHIND PRIMARY SCHOOL GARDENS



My name is Stella Apolot. I have just completed my MSc. in Agriculture Extension/Education from Makerere University. Not only was my MSc. fully funded by RUFO-

RUM but I was also privileged to be among the students who won a Field Attachment Programme Award (FAPA), a grant intended to interest and enable students disseminate their research findings in the communities where the research was conducted. My research and attachment was on School Gardening and based in Soroti District with an implementing office of the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) known as Temele Development Organization (TEMEDO).

For one reason or another school gardening existed in the 1980s but has since been neglected. Why school gardens? Whereas agriculture is the most important source of livelihood in the rural communities, its requisite knowledge and skills are largely acquired through experience and not so much through the education system. This phenomenon creates disconnect challenges to the relevance of education in preparing the young people who mostly after dropping out at primary school level turn to farming as a source of livelihood. In as much as school gardening has the potential to provide the much needed knowledge and life skills to the pupils as well as sustain the school feeding programs, its uptake in UPE schools is largely dependent on the willingness and cooperation of the various stakeholders including pupils, teachers, parents, school management and the community at large. SNV has an on-going community empowerment program focusing on getting parents

involved in school monitoring of pupil - teacher performance and parent - led gardening. My Master's research and the Field Attachment on the other hand focused on the potential of school gardening in: 1) developing life skills in agriculture and 2) improving the quality of education and community food security. While the SNV approach focused on community as a whole I on the other hand focused on imparting pupils with skills, which were later transferred to their parents and or care-givers. From my Attachment it was evident that my research findings greatly complimented the work of SNV thus the provision for a slot for me to participate and share my experiences in four of their forums. I was also able to share my findings with an additional 12 primary schools located in Arapai Sub-County, having initially worked with only two schools during my research.

Participation and interaction in the different Fora brought me to the realization that there was insufficient and ineffective parents/community participation in school programmes and indeed, school gardens have the potential to graduate into centers for learning agricultural practices as well as becoming a source of improved agricultural technologies for communities. My FAPA engagement together with SNV School gardens/Community Empowerment Programme heralded the effective involvement and participation of parents in school activities geared towards improvement of the quality of education of their children. Evidence gathered during the SNV/LCBs review workshop entitled, "Start, stumble & Self-correct", which ran 15th – 16th May, 2012 indicated that education stakeholders were beginning to support up-scaling of school gardening activities at their various levels of responsibility.

Thank you a great deal RUFORUM and SNV/TEMEDO for the opportunity to interact with education stakeholders and the little ones (pupils) - BRAVO TO FAPA. LONG LIVE MAKERERE UNIVERSITY.

Stella can be contacted by email at sapolot@yahoo.com

STUDENT RESEARCH ENGAGES IN STREET MARKETS OF AGRI-FOOD PRODUCTS IN TANZANIA



Habib, Zobida Habib Omer graduated in 2011 with MSc in Agriculture Economics and Agribusiness from Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) in Tanzania. Her MSc thesis research focused on the performance of street evening market of agri-foods products in Tanzania. After the MSc training, she joined

her home institution, Kordofan University in Sudan where she is working now as Assistant lecturer in the Department of Agriculture Economics and Rural Development. She is involved in various activities in agriculture economics and agribusiness such as coordinating the project activities for Strengthening Africa's Strategic Agricultural Capacity for Impact on Development "SASASID" programme in the institution, and helping in supervising dissertations of graduate students. HABIB ZOBIDA still works on street marketing of agri-food products. She can be contacted by email at zobidahabib@yahoo.com.



MAKERERE HAS MORE THAN 50% POSITIONS STILL VACANT

More than half of the posts supposed to be filled in Makerere University are still vacant, a report from the office of the Auditor General has revealed. According to the government accountant, of the 1,618 members of academic staff supposed to be recruited in the eight selected colleges, only 655 had occupied the posts by December 2011. This means that 963 posts were still vacant, an equivalent of 59.5 per cent.

Among the worst hit colleges are the College of Computing and Information Sciences which has 89 percent vacancy rate, College of Business and Management Sciences, where the new Vice Chancellor; Prof. John Ddumba Ssentamu was the principal, with 81 per cent vacancy rate.

"Through interviews with senior staff in the human resource department and review of the appointment board minutes, it was noted that the vacant posts were due to failure by the university to attract, recruit and retain staff because of low pay and lack of auxiliary benefits such as: housing and transport," the report reads in part.

Burden: The report notes that the staff constraints have increased the burden on lecturers in way of increased contact hours as well as the increased lecturer to student ratio. For example in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the average contact hours of a lecturers stands at 30 which is far above the 10 hours recommended by the National Council for Higher Education.

It added: "Staffing gaps lead to work overload and fatigue to

the existing staff, which affects effective teaching of students and supervision of their research projects. This will in turn negatively impact on the quality of education received by students."

The issue of understaffing in the university, especially with staff on the level of Professors, has hit the 90-year old university hard. Recently, the university released a list of 14 professors who are to leave the university soon.

The head of Information and Technology Department, Dr Jude Lubega, however, said the appointments board has made some appointments though he did not know the specifics. "I do not know the specific number because the letters go direct to the people appointed and I only get photocopies," Mr Lubega said.

RUFORUM calls upon African governments to take action to address the above mentioned issues.

This story has been published from the Daily Monitor with a few modifications. Written by Abdu Kiyaga. He can be contacted at akiyaga@ug.natonmedia.com.



Makerere academic staff in a recent meeting. A new report shows that the institution lacks more than 50 per cent of the staff it needs. Photo by Faiswal Kasirye

PROFILING THE VICE CHANCELLOR-UNIVERSITY OF JUBA,SOUTH SUDAN



Professor Aggrey L. Abate has been Vice Chancellor, University of Juba, South Sudan since 2009. Prior to his present position, he was Dean, College of Natural Resources and Environmental Studies at the same University. An Animal Scientist, Professor Abate has demonstrated expertise in Food Security, Smallholder Livestock Production Systems, Research and Development and Environment Vulnerability. Professor Abate started his academic career in 1978 as a Teaching Assistant and later, in 1984, as Lecturer at the University of Juba. In 1985 he joined the University of Nairobi as Lecturer and got promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1988. After 8 productive years as Senior Lecturer he left University of Nairobi in 1996, on leave of absence, to join the University of Namibia (UNAM) in the capacity of Associate Professor and established the Department of Animal Science as Founding Head. Professor Abate officially left University of Nairobi in 1997 and was promoted to Full Profes-

sor at UNAM in 2000. At the University of Namibia, Professor Abate was Member of Council representing Senate besides serving on many University committees and task forces. He was the first Coordinator of the University Central Consultancy Bureau (UCCB). Professor Abate has published widely and has 145 papers and presentations to his name with 97 of these published in peer reviewed journals, edited proceedings, as chapters in books or reported as consultancies. He has served as External Examiner at Sokoine University of Agriculture, Tanzania, University of Zimbabwe; University of Botswana; University of Swaziland; National University of Lesotho; Makerere University, Uganda; The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University, Copenhagen, Denmark; and University of the Free State, South Africa. In his country, Professor Abate is Member of the National Council for Higher Education and Member, Board of Directors of South Sudan Urban Water Corporation. Professor Abate studied at Makerere University for his Bachelors degree, University of Nairobi for his Masters and holds a PhD in Animal Nutrition from the University of Bonn, Germany. He can be contacted by email at abateal@yahoo.com.

WIDE SUPPORT FOR BAN ON SPURIOUS HONORARY DEGREES

A recent decision by the Association of Vice-chancellors of Nigerian Universities to ban the awarding of honorary degrees to serving political office-holders has elicited overwhelming support from the public and from professional bodies.

The association has recently been at the vanguard of moves to sanitise university campuses of venal and un-academic values, and to return higher education to its former glory, when robust scholarship was the order of the day. The 27th conference of the Association of Vice-chancellors, held at Nassarawa University in central Nigeria last month, took a number of far-reaching decisions regarding the awarding of honorary degrees.

According to Professor Micheal Faborode, former vice-chancellor of the University of Ile-Ife and current secretary general of the association, university leaders have decided to put an end to the mercantile and pecuniary rackets behind the awarding of honorary degrees.

“The award of such a degree should not be tied to wealth considerations or political alignment. Rather, it should be based on leadership, service and the contribution of the recipient to the social and economic development of society,” he affirmed.

He pointed out that in some universities, the number of honorary degrees awarded had got out of hand, with up to 20 being handed out at a single convocation ceremony and at times presented to surrogates.

“We have also noted that most of these awards are based on wealth, and political office, and as a means of generating revenue with little or no consideration for integrity. There is no consideration for contribution to the development of the university and no consideration for national development,” he lamented.

To end this ugly situation, vice-chancellors came up with what Faborode called the “Keffi Declaration”.

Among the highlights are the following: from January 2013 no serving public office-holder may receive an honorary degree; only universities with postgraduate programmes are eligible to award such a degree; only people of integrity who have a proven track record of service to humanity and have contributed to knowledge can benefit; and to avoid duplication of honorary degrees, universities will endeavour to organise ceremonies on the same day.

The Keffi Declaration, Faborode said, conformed with guidelines and procedures, enshrined in the laws and statutes of universities, for selecting honorary degree recipients.

The declaration met with instant approval in the university community.

The Academic Staff Union of Universities issued a statement supporting the decision of the vice-chancellors.

The National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) called on President Goodluck Jonathan and the 36 governors of Nigeria’s states – who are visitors of federal and regional public universities – to throw their weight behind the vice-chancellors’ crusade.

“Our honorary degrees are not for sale”, declared Peter Kole, a spokesperson for NANS.

Rumours flew that the vice-chancellors sought to change the honorary degree system to spite Dame Patience Jonathan, wife of the president, and some government ministers who were recently awarded honorary degrees.

But the vice-chancellor of one ‘first generation’ university, who did not want to be named, denied this.

Taking a stroll down memory lane, he said, it had become a fad among Nigeria’s ruling elite to purchase spurious honorary degrees from dubious American universities, and then return to Nigeria claiming that the degree was an authentic PhD.

He recalled that when the military junta seized power, this decadent practice was promoted by some university authorities who awarded honorary degrees to military generals and some of their wives. This trend had not abated.

It was uncharitable to insinuate that the Keffi Declaration was aimed at Nigeria’s president, his wife or cabinet ministers. “In fact, if President Goodluck Jonathan supports and backs the Keffi Declaration, he will go down in history as a champion of restoring the enviable values of the university system. After all, he calls his regime a transformational regime,” he said.

Two aspects of the declaration were commented on by Professor Jide Elemo, a former dean of the postgraduate school at Lagos State University. He said honorary degrees should not bear the title ‘Dr’, and agreed that honorary degrees should only be awarded by universities with postgraduate programmes.

“How can any university that is not running a postgraduate programme award honorary degrees?” he asked, quickly adding that the National Universities Commission (NUC) should ensure that universities do not rush to set up postgraduate programmes if they did not have the necessary human and material resources.

According to reliable sources, the NUC intends to make strong representations to the Nigerian government to back the Keffi Declaration.

Source: Tunde Fatunde 11 November 2012

COMMUNICATING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION TO FARMERS

RUFORUM funded my MSc. studies at Makerere University between 2010 and 2011. On submission of my thesis, I was privileged to compete and be among the winners of the Field Attachment Program Award (FAPA), a grant which provides opportunity for RUFORUM Alumni to communicate their research findings with different audiences. The focus of my MSc research was **climate change and variability adaptation practices among rural farming communities**.

As a pre-requisite under the FAPA, I headed to the steep hills of South Western Uganda in Kabale to a community where I carried out my research. On reaching here I linked up with the Sub-county Agriculture Officer with whom I worked to mobilize the households for sensitization meetings. In a meeting attended by over 25 community members I was able to share my findings on the effects of climate change and variability on agriculture as well as available coping mechanisms.

We shared the most appropriate and effective adaptation and mitigation technologies to climate change and variability. Among them were the land management practices especially those which increase soil carbon, enhance moisture holding capacity, improve soil biological activities and consequently reduce climate-induced agricultural production risks.

FAPA grantee sharing research findings with farmers

Applicable practices that were discussed included terraces and cover crops like lablab and *Tithonia diversifolia*. The locals a few of them already using lablab were excited on realizing that this crop has multiple benefits as an excellent cover that suppresses weeds, reduces soil erosion and also fixes nitrogen in the soil and improves soil quality by increasing soil organic matter. On realizing



Above: Robert Louis speaking with some of the farmers during his field visit

that this same crop could be used as fodder, poultry feed, fuel wood, compost, land demarcation, soil erosion control, building materials and shelter for poultry, more locals were very eager to plant it on their land. However, they expressed

lack of *T. diversifolia* seeds for planting.

In order of importance the locals shared the most common and cost effective management practices in responding to climate change as: timely planting, timely weed control, use of pest and disease resistant varieties and post-harvest handling practices like harvesting at the right moisture level, proper drying, avoiding contamination by inert materials like stones and soil matter and control of post harvest pests and diseases.

At the close of the meeting, participants expressed gratitude for the use of the local dialect in communicating with them and for new knowledge they acquired for coping with climate change and variability. They requested more technocrats to always engage them and share research findings with them. They expressed concern however over lack of subsidies on agricultural materials like seeds and fertilizers. They requested for soft loans since agriculture has become a highly risky business due to climate change.

The writer, Robert Louis MWERERA is a FAPA grantee . He can be contacted at mweras@yahoo.com.

FEATURED PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Breaking Down the Silos Within Academe Through Inter-disciplinary Research. Throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, small-scale agriculture forms the backbone of economies, and is inextricably linked to a host of interlocking local and global issues, ranging from climate change to land tenure to issues of trade and subsidies. Faced with these heightening complexities, African universities are recognising the need to educate a new generation of well-rounded, inter-disciplinary researchers who are not just specialists in a single area, but are well-versed in many different research methodologies, and understand the broad emerging trends, in order to ensure that research from the region is mounting an effective response to these challenges. This is the aim of a master's degree programme in agricultural research methods, offered by the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). [Read More>>](#)

Getting the Green Revolution: What are the challenges?

A PhD Programme to Tackle Challenges of Ecology and Livelihoods in the Drylands: Climate change has impacted on livelihoods, food security and health across wide swathes of Eastern Africa's arid rangelands, producing a tremendous need for new knowledge, technologies, and scientists who are equipped to help the region withstand and adapt to the effects of climate change. For Dr. Mary Baaru, climate change became a clear and tangible reality when she travelled to an impoverished farming community in Northeastern Kenya to conduct field research for her PhD. Working closely with local farmers, and using Geographic Information System (GIS) techniques, she mapped the water and other resources available to the community, and studied the rainfall patterns in the area over the past 50 years. [Read More>>](#)