

RUFORUM MONTHLY

LAUNCH OF REGIONAL DOCTORAL PROGRAMME IN AGRICULTURAL & RURAL INNOVATIONS

After four years of planning (with ACP-EU-Edulink support), a new PhD Regional Program to facilitate agricultural innovation processes in Africa, has been launched by RUFORUM universities. During the launch, Dr. Paul Kibiwika, the convener and Regional Coordinator, Agricultural and Rural Innovations PhD ARI program welcomed over 50 international delegates



Above: Stakeholders at the launch of the Agricultural and Rural Innovations program

who came to witness the occasion. The program was jointly designed and will be implemented by European partner universities (Wageningen University and Montpellier SupAgro) and the three implementing African partner Universities (Makerere University, Egerton University and Sokoine University of Agriculture). The launch also featured a five day workshop which aimed at retooling of lecturers from the five partner universities in concepts of innovation and innovation systems so that they are better positioned to handle the different courses/modules in the new regional PhD program of ARI. The launch of the ARI (the program had been approved in all the three universities by 21st

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WEB 2.0 TRAINING AT MEKELLE UNIVERSITY, ETHIOPIA



Above: Some of the participants at the workshop

RUFORUM in collaboration with Futuristic Ltd held an Information Literacy workshop (IL) & Web 2.0, training between 28th May and 1st June 2012 at Mekelle University, Ethiopia. The focus was to create awareness on how to use emerging tools and technologies for teaching, learning and research, collaboration and information dissemination. A total of 35 participants attended with 74% of the participants male and 26% were female.

During the evaluation of the training, the participants were asked whether they gained new knowledge and ideas from the workshop; 70% of the participants rated

it excellent, and 25% rated it good and 5% rated it as average. All the participants agreed that they will apply lessons learned during teaching, learning and research activities.

One of the participants wrote to the secretariat saying, "I thank you on behalf of my office as Human Resource Director and myself as a trainee. The training was very interactive and encouraging for me as a person from academic environment. There were participants from diverse working environment within the university, it was also very important for experience sharing on the over all utilization of web 2.0 tools. Thank once again!". From Berhe Sharew, Human Resource Directorate Director, Mekelle University. She can be reached by email at berhes2006@gmail.com.

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.

- **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

3rd RUFORUM Biennial Conference. 24 – 28 September 2012. Entebbe, Uganda

African Network for Internationalisation of Education (ANIE) 4th ANIE Annual Conference. 26–28 September 2012 Pretoria, South Africa. [More](#)

Conference 2012: Growing the Bioeconomy – Social, Environmental and Economic Implications. 2 - 5 October 2012, Banff, Alberta, Canada

The International Conference on Management of Emergent Digital Ecosystems (MEDES) 28-31 October, 2012. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. [More](#)

Training of Trainers on Climate Change Adaptation for Agriculture & Natural Resource Management. October, 2012

Vacancies at EARTH University for the African faculty members available. [More](#)

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

LAUNCH OF REGIONAL DOCTORAL PROGRAMME IN AGRICULTURAL & RURAL INNOVATIONS

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May 2012) was an opportunity for people who reviewed different modules to share their experiences. Issues to deal with supervision of the students to enrolled in the program were also explored.

In her remarks during the function, Dr. Almekinders mentioned that she had come to lesson learn and also share her experiences in the world of science and academics with participants. She lamented that scientists or academicians rarely reflect on what we are supposed to do especially with regards to their roles as lecturers or researchers. Scientists or academicians tend to take things for granted yet in reality they are different and need to be thought about/through. She is by training a crop physiologist but engaging with the world of sociology has made her change the way she looks at the world and how she works as a scientist and researcher.

Partner from Montpellier SupAgro (Prof. Didier Pillot):

Didier was very happy to join ARI when he met with Dr. Paul Kibwika in one of the several RUFORUM organized meetings in Kampala. "Since then I became proactive in interacting and engaging of the unfolding process of ARI". He mentioned that there was a similar course in Montpellier and then shared the same concern like the Universities in Africa. "We are not happy to see students leaving their countries or regions to study in Europe or else where when the situation they are to work with is in Africa – very different from what they are studying". On behalf of Agrinatura, he promised that the European universities will use their experiences to help build the ARI program to make it very workable. Montpellier took part in formatting the program and was keen to work with other partners through the ARI program to collectively build capacity for capacity building in Africa. Didier mentioned that the workshop offered opportunity for the players in ARI to interact and build consensus with regard to implementation of the ARI program.

Remarks from RUFORUM Executive Secretary (Prof. Adipala).

Prof. Adipala mentioned that the Launch was a very

happy moment for him and the entire RUFORUM Network. The Vice Chancellors (VC) in the region wanted RUFORUM to foster capacity building and collaboration among African Universities and also with other knowledge centers elsewhere. He was glad this is working. He mentioned that he was impressed with the novelty in ARI program. According to Prof. Adipala, the VCs wanted the network to build capacity and train at PhD level as a way of establishing a mechanism for replenishing the aging staff. They also recognized the need for each university to develop a PhD program and agreed on a phased approach using comparative advantage. Under that approach, the network had launched five programs hosted at different universities which included; Fisheries and Aquaculture at Bunda, Agricultural Resource Economics also at Bunda College of Agriculture, Soil & Water Management at Sokoine University of Agriculture, DryLand Resource Management at University of Nairobi and Plant Breeding and Biotechnology at Makerere University. This arrangement was meant to be a learning process and we needed to think of new models. He was very glad that had hatched. RUFORUM had already taken decision to support development of two post graduate programs building on the ARI model: The Food Science and Nutrition PhD program (to be jointly implemented by Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Makerere University and University of Stellenbosch, South Africa) and the MSc in Agrometeorology and Natural Risk Management(a joint program by Haramaya University, University of Gezira and Makerere University) is being remodeled along the ARI path.



Left: Logos of partners in the design and implementation of the ARI programme

HARAMAYA UNIVERSITY APPOINTS NEW PRESIDENT



Dr. Girma Amente, Honorable Member of Parliament in Ethiopia is the newly appointed President of Haramaya University. He is a strategic thinker trained and qualified in the area of forest resource management. He is one of the few individuals who designed and spearheaded the establishment of the Oromia State Forest and Wildlife Enterprise, which is the first of its kind in Ethiopia. With his capacity as the head of the enterprise he coordinated forest and wildlife conservation and sustainable utilization activities.

Dr. Girma has extensive experience in the area of sustainable and participatory forest management. He is actively involved in various development activities initiated by Ethiopian governmental, non-governmental organisations and private and civil society institutions. He is also a member of the Board of Directors for several institutions. He is one of the leading role players in designing effective development approach and strategies to ensure food security and alleviate poverty in the country which for which he has been given an award of medal for his best performance from Oromia National Regional State; the award was presented to him by the late His Excellency Prime Minister Meles Zenawi.

SADC MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING MEET IN JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

An Extra-Ordinary Meeting of Ministers of Higher Education and Training was held on the 5th of June 2012 in Johannesburg, South Africa. Honourable Ministers from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Swaziland, and Deputy Ministers from Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe attended the meeting. The Seychelles and Mauritius were represented by their Ambassadors to the Republic of South Africa, while Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, the United Republic of Tanzania were represented by Senior government Officials. Also in attendance were representatives from the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA), African Development Bank and the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA). The SADC Secretariat was represented by the Director for Social and Human Development and Special Programmes.

In his official opening remarks, Honourable Prof. Arlindo Chilundo, Vice Minister of Education, Government of the Republic of Mozambique reminded delegates that higher education is the cornerstone of innovation, socio-economic and human development of all nations. It should therefore be prioritized in SADC.

Ministers reviewed the situation of higher education and noted with concern that compared to other regions in Africa and globally, the SADC region is experiencing very low levels of enrollment and participation. Investment in higher education falls far short of what is required to match the current and future demands for the predominantly young population of SADC. The leadership and management of higher education institutions are in many cases weak, while the quality of teachers and the education that is available does not always provide relevant and adequate knowledge and skills required for the labour market. As a result, many young people who complete secondary education do not proceed to higher education. Many of those who graduate fail to find jobs and are not always capable of initiating and growing their own entrepreneurial and business enterprises. It is clear that higher education is not adequately contributing to socio-economic development, improving the well-

being of the majority poor citizens, and to realizing the regional integration aspirations of the people of SADC.

To address these challenges, Ministers agreed to radically transform the way higher education is provided in the region, to improve and expand the higher education sector to adequately respond to the development needs and challenges of the region. They underscored the urgency to expand the enrollment and access to higher education through including through expansion and use of information, communication technologies (ICT), and enhance its quality and relevance to the socio-economic and human development demands of SADC.

Ministers called upon SADC member states and other relevant stakeholders to mobilise and invest more funding, infrastructure and human resources, and improve leadership, governance and management of higher education institutions. They encouraged more research, monitoring and evaluation to be conducted to guide the transformation of higher education, and to inform policies and programmes that respond to the needs of the growing economies of the region.

Ministers recognized the need to scale up higher education using various strategies and methodologies. To demonstrate their commitment to cooperate and work together as a region, the Ministers reviewed and approved the SADC Regional Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Policy Framework which provides policy direction to accelerate access to quality education in all sectors of education, including higher education.

To ensure that their decisions and resolutions will be effectively implemented Ministers established a SADC Technical Committee on Higher Education and Training and Research and Development. They mandated the Committee to develop a regional strategic plan on higher education and training, research development guided by the deliberations of the Extra-Ordinary Meeting.

The Honourable Dr. David Namwandi, Deputy Minister of Education in Namibia offered a vote of thanks urging Mem-



11th African Crop Science Society conference
11e Conference de la Societe Africaine de la Science de Culture
14-17 October 2013



The African Crop Science Society is pleased to announce the upcoming 11th African Crop Science Conference for 14-17 October, 2013. [Please click here to download full announcement](#)

TESTIMONY ON THE IMPACT OF RUFORUM'S FIELD ATTACHMENT PROGRAMME AWARD (FAPA)

Richard Osaliya, who graduated in 2011 with M.Sc. Environment and Natural Resources from Makerere University, was one of the lucky Winners of the RUFORUM Field Attachment Programme Award (FAPA). Please visit www.ruforum.org for more information about the FAPA. He was attached to Kasese Cobalt Company Limited (KCCL) and Hamukungu Bay Fishing Communities, on the shores of Lake George, Western Uganda. The field attachment engaged the community in investigation of the impact of the Kilembe Copper Mine pollution and subsequent interventions by KCCL, a corporate body, on the health of Lake

George ecosystem and part of Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area (QECA), as a contribution to tackling the lack of appreciation of the benefits of environmental protection and management of natural resources which is an impediment to natural resources management. He worked with the communities to study changes in concentrations of copper metal in tissue of fish and sediment north of

the Lake around the community's landing site by engaging them in activities such as monthly (for three months) sampling of lake sediment and fish, and identification of fish (*Oreochromis leucostictus*). The investigation was not aimed at making a scientific case as the samples were statistically inadequate but was a strategy to disseminate findings of the (MSc) dissertation, raising environmental awareness and promoting environment and natural resources management and conservation in the communities. It was also aimed at enhancing community and corporate engagement in prevention of the potential adverse impacts of industry on the environment, fisheries and the livelihoods of the communities; and to enhance individual members of the communities' knowledge of the importance of natural resource management so that they can apply it at the micro (farm and household) level. The attachment had a great

impact on creating the importance of research and environment management among the communities in the remote areas through interactions, sharing of knowledge and experiences, with the residents showing a lot of interest in gaining more knowledge and understanding by asking questions. This can best be described in the words of one of the residents of Kahendero landing site who said: "People come here, do their research, but they go to their offices and do not give us feedback". The approach of the field attachment for the MSc graduate student enhanced participation of in the KCCL community environmental activities. The attachment also linked with other actors in the area. These were the Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area (QECA), WWF Project at Mount Rwenzori National Park, and the Environmental Staff of Kasese District. Although their engagement remained passive they generally agreed on the need for restoration of the mine polluted site and expressed that limited financial resources was a major hindrance for implementing environmental sound interventions. However, by the end of the three month field attachment, these actors began to appreciate the need for promoting more effective interactions with communities in environment management. As a result of the field attachment, Richard Osaliya has been considered as one of the researchers in the QECA. He was invited to the 2012 researcher's symposium in Queen Conservation Area. He now vows to utilize the platform that the field attachment under the RUFORUM FAPA has granted him to create more development impact.



Above: Sites visited by Richard Osaliya during this investigation of the impact of the Kilembe Copper Mine pollution

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Above: Fish Samples from the lake George

Source: Osaliya Richard. Department of Environmental Management, Makerere University. Email: rosaliya@muenr.mak.ac.ug



9th Triennial Conference



The African Potato Association (APA) is a non-profit organization formed in 1983 and its core objective is to promote the production and the use of potato and sweetpotato in Africa. Currently, most APA members are scientists and practitioners drawn from 20 African countries, including North Africa.

Every three years, the APA holds a scientific meeting to review progress in potato and sweetpotato research in Africa. The meeting is also an opportunity for scientists to interact with other stakeholders in the sector through exhibitions, presentations and panel discussions. Kenya is the selected country for the 9th Triennial APA Conference because of the critical role potato and sweetpotato contribute towards its food security. The Ministry of Agriculture, the National Potato Council of Kenya and the International Potato Center have joined hands to host this international event for an expected 200 participants. The meeting begins on the evening of 30th of June through the 4th of July 2013.

Please contact: **Jan W. Low** (IPC) at j.low@cgiar.org. [Read more >>](#)

TESTIMONIES—COMPETITIVE GRANT AWARD



In 2010, Prof Robert Obura and Dr. Tabu (Egerton University) and Dr. Washington Ochola (RUFORUM) facilitated a Southern African Development Community (SADEC) proposal writing and scientific communication workshop for MSc students in different programs in Southern Africa with funding from SADEC Secretariat. There has been good outcomes in the past from this workshop.

One of the participants wrote saying “Hi Washington, It's been a long time and hopefully I find you well. The good news is that my concept note has been approved (for the first time) for funding to the tune of US\$180,000 over the next 3 years. The skills you and your colleagues imparted to us in Lusaka were not in vain after all. If all goes well, I should be able to submit my PhD thesis in Dec 2013 to the University of Free State, RSA. Regards, Charles.” **Charles Mutimaamba is based at Crop Breeding Institute, Harare Zimbabwe**

TESTIMONIES—MENTORSHIP & COMPLETION OF MY PhD



Odong Thomas is one of the RUFORUM Sponsored students undertaking his PhD at Makerere University. He writes; Dear Prof Adipala, I hope this e-mail finds you in good health. I am doing well. I am very happy to inform you on 13th June 2012 I successfully defended my PhD thesis and was awarded the degree. The examination committee rated my thesis as very good and my supervisors were really impressed by my work. My promoter described me an exceptional student!

I would like to thank you very much for mentoring me and giving me several opportunities to improve myself. In our current world it is very rare to find selfless people like you. I have learned so much from you and I pray that I should be able to treat other people (especially students) the way you treated me. I pray that you continue to receive many more blessings from God.

At the moment I am completing a project that helped fund part of my studies after the official PhD project ended. I have already learned a lot from this project which involve analysis of Next generation Sequencing (NGS) data and I hope that Makerere and RUFORUM will benefit from this knowledge. I will be back early 2013. Once again I would like to say thank you for standing by me when I needed support most. Regards, Odong Thomas. **Odong Thomas is one of the RUFORUM sponsored students. He can be contacted at thomas.odong@wur.nl**

ANNOUNCEMENT: THE 3rd RUFORUM BIENNIAL REGIONAL CONFERENCE 2012

Partnerships and Networking for Strengthening Agricultural Innovation

The 3rd RUFORUM Biennial Conference,
24th – 28th September 2012

We are pleased to inform you that the Third RUFORUM Biennial Conference will be held on the 24-28 September, 2012 in Entebbe, Uganda in conjunction with the RUFORUM Annual General Meeting. Please note these dates and block them to schedule your attendance to this important event.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

OVERALL CONFERENCE THEME: Partnerships and Networking for Strengthening Agricultural Innovation and Higher Education

1. Showcasing RUFORUM success stories
2. Exciting Side Events and Parallel Sessions
3. Exhibition/Market Place scheduled for 27th September 2012
4. Launching of the TEAM Africa Tertiary Education for Agriculture Mechanism for Africa initiative - created to improve the capacity of Tertiary Agricultural Education institutions to respond to the current challenges of agricultural development

IMPORTANT DEADLINES:

- Conference Registration: 30th July 2012;
- Special sessions submission: 30th July 2012
- Exhibition Registration: 15th August 2012; and
- **Extended Abstracts: CLOSED**

Please make booking for exhibitions to : Dr. Paul Nampala. Email: p.nampala@ruforum.org

[Please click here to access more information on the conference >>](#)

FEATURED PLATFORMS

Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research for Innovation (SCAIN) is a new initiative which provides support to agricultural research and training organizations in sub-Saharan Africa. Working through the three sub-regional research organizations namely: ASARECA, CORAF/WE CARD and SADC-FANR.

Together with RUFORUM, and with support from the Natural Resources Institute of the University of Greenwich (UK), SCAIN documents and disseminates approaches, methodologies and lessons from capacity strengthening initiatives. In doing this, the initiative builds on a recently completed project on Strengthening Capacity for Agricultural Research for Development in Africa (SCARDA). [Read more >>](#)



The Climate Exchange Network for Africa (CENA) is a network of researchers, policy makers and practitioners engaged in climate change

adaptation issues affecting Africa. This network was developed to bring together partners of various organizations in Africa funded by the Rockefeller Foundation to implement projects on Climate Change Adaptation.

This network is borne out of the realization that many households in Africa are unable to adequately handle the challenge of climate variability and climate change hence the growing food insecurity and declining household incomes. This challenge will get worse as global warming intensifies due to increasing concentration of greenhouse gases. [Read more>>](#)

