



The Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016

4th GCHERA World Dialogue 2016: Global Leadership and Transformative Changes to Meet the Challenges of the 21st C In Partnership with the Global Forum on Agricultural Research (GFAR)

Concept Note

Background

GCHERA, the Global Confederation of Higher Education Associations for Agricultural and Life Sciences, whose member universities educate, research and lead innovation in agricultural and life sciences. GCHERA’s members are 14 regional or national Higher Education Associations which represent over 900 individual universities worldwide. GCHERA is proud to be **harnessing this expertise in higher education** to contribute to certain GCARD3 outcomes.

[GCHERA](#), a [GFAR partner](#), played an active role in developing GCARD3’s goal to adopt measures to keep science timely and relevant, and to take immediate collective action to scale out best practices in capacity development. GCARD3 participants looked for ways to “transcend fragmented efforts” and work collectively to deliver a “vibrant new generation of agricultural researchers and entrepreneurs.”

Three collective actions were proposed:

- 1) Developing a program of **continuing professional education** for researchers, educators, extensionists and farmers.
- 2) **Reforming undergraduate education** across 100 universities on five continents, with a focus on producing graduates who meet 21st century needs.
- 3) **Training an additional 1000 PhDs per year** under a new North-South partnership model that twins universities and research centres in developing and developed countries.

GCHERA is **taking a lead** in collaboration with GFAR in further developing two GCARD3 actions – reforming undergraduate education and training an additional 1000 PhDs per year. This work is directly in line with

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GCHERA’s goals and objectives as laid out in [GCHERA’s 2016-2020 Action Plan](#) which was developed with the support of [GFAR](#).

We all know the importance of education in agricultural and life sciences to provide the leaders to address our ever growing population needs for safe and nutritious food, and the need for the conservation of energy and natural resources and the sustainability of environment. New technology –nanotechnology, communications technology, GIS and biotech - must be used to enhance intensive, but sustainable, production.

Our agricultural and life science universities need to provide graduates with the knowledge, skills, ethical foundation, and creativity to have successful careers in industry, government, NGOs and civil society. These employers require staff who not only have the knowledge, skills and competencies to act in specialist fields, but who are also leaders in their field.

Agricultural and life science universities around the world need to update their structures, curricula and teaching practices to deliver well qualified graduates at all levels with these competences to address the societal needs of the 21st C as exemplified by the Sustainable Development Goals.

Purpose of the Side Event

The 4th GCHERA World Dialogue 2016, in partnership with GFAR, will address how to provide leadership and invoke action to enhance education practices at agricultural and life science universities around the world. This meeting will be followed by the GCHERA General Assembly 2016.

Objectives of the side Event

- Establish an Alliance which will take steps to deliver the GCARD3 outcome- Undergraduate Education Reform to meet 21st Century Societal Needs. The possible approaches will be considered, likely ranging from small scale action to large scale action investment opportunities.
- Identify potential partners that GCHERA and GFAR can invite to join the Alliance to execute the identified opportunities.

Approach and Methodology

Members of the GCHERA Higher Education Associations, GFAR, representatives from other selected networks, and partners from the private sector will identify opportunities to take action to deliver on the

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GCARD 3 Theme Undergraduate Education Reform to meet 21st Century Societal Needs. The discussion will focus on identifying the steps in change management that will be required to enhance the education process to provide the future leaders with the required knowledge, skills and competences.

Venue and Participants

The GCHERA meeting will be held on Monday 17 October 2016, from 09:00 to 18:00, in Meeting Room 11 of the Century City Conference Centre, No. 4 Energy Lane, Century City, Cape Town, 7446, South Africa.

Side Event Organizers and Contact

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