



The Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016

Grow Further Club Engagement meetings at RUFORUM 2016 Biennial

Concept Note

Introduction & Background

Agriculture remains a corner stone to securing the livelihoods of many poor rural dwellers globally. However, over the last two decades, investment in agriculture at both national and international levels has been declining in per capita relativity compared to the 1980s. These declines in agricultural investment, have potential to offset and further limit progress towards global food security. Reversing these trends, requires concerted action from both the governments and private sector as well as from individuals at various hierarchies of the global commons. Investment in agriculture in the developed countries has shown commendable returns on investment with expanded benefits and employment opportunities in the various agricultural value chains including focused technological advancements. Consequently, the industrialised countries have over the years been able to benefit from agricultural research and development (R&D) investments in both the public and private sectors, but developing countries have by and large relied on public sector support from national programs and from international organizations to advance investments in agriculture at various points. It has therefore become critical that developing countries invest significantly in agricultural research and development with focused input from indigenous and international private sectors and individuals that have appreciation for the need for strategic investment in agriculture and agricultural research and development.

One entry point to agricultural and development is investment in higher agricultural education capacity building. However, higher agricultural education capacity building and research partnerships are diverse with increasing complexities in the recent past. This is particularly so because early post-independence history, higher education was barely developed in the global south. As such, higher education training largely remained

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	<p>controlled by the former colonial masters, requiring enrolment in Europe and the United States and/or Canada. This trend has since changed, with increased training now happening at the global south using locally developed capacity. However, challenges remain abound among others; (i) rapid enrolment in primary and secondary levels have produced an immense increase in enrolment to university, (ii) limited national governments financing of higher education, (iii) strained human resources in terms of number and technical capacity, (iv) increased development assistance in education but restrictive lines of spending thereby limiting the local level needs priority setting.</p> <p>RUFORUM has championed, regional, national and local engagements with 60 universities in Africa that have been able to undertake local, national to regional level research of importance and have been able to reach to over one million smallholder farmers over the last 10 years. This process has demonstrated the power of transforming universities to cause change at local level. Like other organisations in the global south, depending on donor financing to deliver its programmes, RUFORUM is faced with articulation of relevance, demonstration of impact, continued mobilisation of resources, diplomatic manoeuvres to engage policy and decision makers to set priorities that are relevant to smallholder farmers and further entrenching innovative higher education training programmes and processes. The Grow Further Club, has expressed interest to consult with RUFORUM and key individuals attending the Biennial conference. The Grow Further Club, is a proposed Foundation that will be established in the United States of America (USA). It envisions an open platform for middle-class Americans of diverse professions to learn about, engage with, and support agricultural R&D in developing countries for the benefit of poor farmers and the environment. In order to articulate how the two organisations can beneficially work together, a series of meetings have been organised at the 5th Biennial Conference in Cape Town, South Africa.</p>
<p>Purpose of the Side Event</p>	<p>Undertake consultation with RUFORUM and key individuals in agricultural research and development space at the Biennial Conference.</p>

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Approach and Methodology	Open discussion
Expected outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Status of agricultural research and development investment in Africa • Priority investment areas of interest in the present, mid-term and long-term • Synergy opportunities for resource mobilisation to invest in agriculture in Africa • Strategies for engaging individuals and foundations to further increase their investment in Agriculture in Africa and in the global south.
Contact person	Anthony Egeru (a.egeru@ruforum.org), Regional Coordinator, MCF@RUFORUM

Meeting schedules

Day/Date and time	Time	Meeting	Venue
Sunday 16 th Oct. 2016	11:00-12:00	International Advisory Panel	CCCC, Room 6
Monday 17 th Oct. 2016	9:30-12:00	Technical Committee and invited guests meeting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peter Kelly 2. Prof. Kaunda 3. Prof. Mwamgombe 4. Prof. Daniel Sherrard 5. Prof. Kyamanywa 6. Dr. Egeru 7. Mr. Okalany 8. Prof. Molteni 	Stellenbosch/STIAS
Wednesday 19 th Oct. 2016	19:30-20:30	Dr. Patel, Dr. Lynam and (Dinner meeting)	CCCC
Thursday 20 th October, 2016	11:30-13:00	Presentation during the META learning session	Hall A

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