



The Fifth African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference 2016

Strengthening African University Leadership and Management Capacity for Economic Transformation in Africa

A convening of RUFORUM Vice Chancellors

Concept Note

Background & Introduction

African economies still lag behind the rest of the world in all sectors with growth rate of only 5% registered in the last decade. Even after fifteen years of growth, Africa's overall competitiveness has remained limited. The Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) identifies the majority of African countries as being among the least competitive in the world. Despite low growth rate and competitiveness, the Continent's natural and human resource endowments present a great potential for sustainable economic growth and development. To harness this enormous potential, economies need to shift towards technology and knowledge driven activities that will provide cutting edge solutions to the persistent challenges such as; food insecurity, climate change, poor infrastructure, unemployment, among others, to lay the foundations for sustained growth. The precursors to make this happen are all available in the continent in terms of development policy frameworks and political commitment to guide decision making and actions implementation. As outlined in Aspiration 1 of Africa's Agenda 2063, the African people and institutions reaffirm creating an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa based on inclusive growth and sustainable development driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in the global arena. The institutions have committed to building a society of well-educated citizens and igniting a skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation for a knowledge based society. This will result into highly productive agriculture driven by science and technology for Africa's collective food security, high standard of living, and quality of life, healthy and climate resilient environment and ecosystems and economies and decent jobs for all Africans.

Page 1 of 4

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To achieve these aspirations, institutions of higher learning and research for development play a great role. Universities remain central to achieving the targets given their triple role of training the required skilled labor force, knowledge generation through research and innovations, and knowledge dissemination through outreach. The universities, therefore, need to strategically position themselves and anchor their core mandates to achieving the aspirations of Agenda 2063. The Science, Technology and Innovations Strategy for Africa (STISA 2024) maps out the path for the first 10 years of the Agenda 2063 and emphasizes the needed enhancement of technical and professional competencies, building a strong scientific culture, curbing brain drain and partnerships as prerequisite actions for the economic transformation. The technical competencies relate to quality of post graduate training especially doctoral training. University leadership and management should, therefore, become aware of the significance of the role of universities in achieving economic transformations in the continent.

African universities, however, have internal and external leadership and management challenges that hinder their performance which need to be overcome to allow them effectively execute their role in economic transformation of the African continent. Some of these challenges include inadequate funding, particularly for research, increasing demand for higher education, with little parallel increase in infrastructure or human resources, limited autonomy and academic freedom. Universities thus remain encumbered by weaknesses and inefficiencies often caused by 1) limited fore sight and lack of strategic planning for effective execution of the stipulated roles of different university units; 2) Poor management of existing human resources including attracting and retaining high quality faculty; 3) Low quality and relevance of research; 4) limited capacity for resource mobilization and financial management; 5) limited capacity to harmonize the republic of scholars and the university as a stakeholder organization; and 6) Poor external relations and partnership management. These result in weak universities, unable to deliver the type of products required to contribute meaningfully to agricultural and overall sustainable development. Targeted capacity building for university leadership and management is therefore required to enhance leadership and

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management competencies to steer universities to economic transformation of the African Continent through training proactive and skilled human resource, innovations and technology generation and dissemination of such technologies for adoption.

Purpose of the Event

The purpose of the two days convening is to bring together African Vice Chancellors to jointly develop practical approaches for addressing leadership and management challenges in African universities. The focus of the meeting is to create a shared understanding of the role of universities in economic transformation of society and how university leadership can strategically position and steer universities towards meeting this mandate. Necessary frameworks and mechanisms including personnel management and partnership management for effective delivery of university programmes will be discussed.

Objectives of the side Event

The specific objectives of the meeting are;

- a) Create an open interaction platform for Vice Chancellors to reflect on university leadership and management challenges
- b) Develop working approaches for effective management delivery of university mandates
- c) Develop a framework and mechanism for continuous exchange of experiences and lessons beyond RUFORUM.

Approach and Methodology

A two day side event will be organized and held on 15th and 16th October 2016 as a preconference activity of the 5th African Higher Education Week and RUFORUM Biennial Conference in Cape Town, South Africa from 17-21 October. The meeting will be attended by 60 Vice Chancellors of the RUFORUM Network. Guided discussions, small group discussions and plenary sessions will be deployed.

Expected outputs

The following will be the key outputs of the convening;

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- a) A synthesis report highlighting mechanisms for addressing leadership and management challenges at African universities
- b) A framework for continuous exchange of lessons on leadership and management among RUFORUM Vice Chancellors.

Venue and Participants

Venue: Century City Conference Centre, Cape Town, South Africa, Hall A

Date & Time: 15th & 16th October 2016, from 0830

Side Event Organizers and Contact

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM)

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