

## Kenya Universities seek Ksh. 250M for RUFORUM Conference 2018.

**Date and time:** Tue, 2018-02-27 11:38

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The University of Nairobi together with partner universities in the country are seeking Kshs. 250 million to be able host the upcoming RUFORUM Biennial Conference and the sixth African higher education week in October, 2018.

Speaking during the breakfast meeting University of Nairobi Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Peter Mbithi appealed to the University partners and sponsors to come on board and support the event. RUFORUM is the biggest agricultural event that bring together industry practitioners, academia, researchers, farmers, extension officers and everyone in the agricultural space. University of Nairobi is proud to be a founding member of RUFORUM. We are all keen on improving the level of education through such national and regional forums.

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), was established by ten Vice Chancellors in 2004, is a consortium of 85 African universities operating within 35 countries spanning the African continent. RUFORUM is coordinated by a Secretariat hosted by Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. The organization evolved from its predecessor, the Forum on Agricultural Resource Husbandry (FORUM) program of the Rockefeller Foundation. RUFORUM is registered as an International Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and has mandate to oversee graduate training. In July, 2014, RUFORUM signed a cooperation agreement with the African Union to support the implementation of the new African Union for Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa, 2024 (STISA 2024).

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Published on Vice-Chancellor's Office (<http://vc.uonbi.ac.ke>)

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RUFORUM has since plugged into Agenda 2063 of the African Union, which is to ensure that the continent is food secure and the challenges of famine and food insecurity are eliminated.

Chairperson of the RUFORUM Board, Prof. Mabel Imbuga, who is also the Vice-Chancellor of JKUAT noted that Africa has many challenges which are being addressed by RUFORUM. Such challenges include: feeding the population, post-harvest loss and food production. She appealed to the African Universities to come forward and support the event. She added that even commercialization of research has been on the increase.

Prof. Laban Ayiro, Vice-Chancellor of Moi University, observed that 'we could achieve a lot by working together'. He called upon partner universities to share teaching staff, facilities and laboratories to improve the quality of graduate training. He said that the focus should be to understand the needs of farmers, strengthen entrepreneurship programs, link graduates with agricultural stakeholders among others.

Dr. Moses Osiru, the Deputy Executive Secretary, RUFORUM Secretariat, noted that RUFORUM has become the implementing agency of the African Union. He observed that the purpose of the upcoming conference is to explore opportunities for growth, stimulate innovation, engage policy makers, bring dialogue on African higher education and to provide exposure to graduates. Dr. Osiru went further to explain that RUFORUM gives the Vice-Chancellors a platform for networking, resource mobilization among others. By bringing the VCs together, they are able to strengthen research, establish centers of excellence, strengthen agricultural faculties in the universities and to showcase the impact of research to the society.

For more information , visit ; <http://www.ruforum.org> [8]

**Expiry Date:** Thu, 2019-02-28 11:38

**Contact Person:**

Peter Oluoch

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