

PRESS RELEASE

RUFORUM and GODAN sign a Memorandum of Understanding to cooperate in capacity building and research in agriculture and nutrition in Africa.

Release Date: February, 17th 2020

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) and Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to cooperate in human capacity development and research in agriculture and nutrition for Africa.

RUFORUM is a consortium of 126 universities across 38 African countries, which was established in 2004. Its mission is to strengthen the capacity of universities to foster innovative responses to demands of small-holder farmers through the training of high-quality researchers. It is committed to the output of impact-oriented research, and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, national agricultural research institutions and governments.

GODAN, founded in 2013, seeks to support global efforts to make agriculture and nutritionally relevant data available, accessible, and usable for unrestricted use worldwide. The organisation focuses on building high-level policy, and public and private intuitional support for open data. On a practical level, GODAN lends its expertise to advising on open data policy and support initiatives that aim to make a positive impact in the areas of agriculture and nutrition through use of open data. It was established and still focuses on directing data to support the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, and to end world hunger by 2030.

The two organisations will cooperate in five areas aimed at accelerating Africa's economic growth with universities as important players:

1. Engagement of youth in agriculture, including youth agri-entrepreneurship,
2. Data science and ICTs in agriculture (open data, geographical information systems, remote sensing etc.),
3. Competence based curriculum development in agriculture and related sciences,
4. Agricultural Tertiary and Vocational Education and Training (ATVETs),
5. Engagement of policy makers on youth, data, competence-based curricula and ATVETs

Prof Adipala Ekwamu, the Executive Secretary of RUFORUM, on signing the MoU welcomed the partnership and expressed optimism of great gain for Africa: *“Research, teaching and entrepreneurship across the globe is going digital for more efficiency and effectiveness. Data, which is lacking in most of our African countries is now, more than before, so critical for decision making and foresight for African countries to grow based on knowledge, technology and innovation. The partnership with GODAN is an opportunity for African universities to engage with other technical specialists across the globe to strengthen their capacity and drive a digital and data revolution for Africa's growth.”*

Andre Laperriere, GODAN's Executive Director is looking forward to a dynamic new partnership: *“GODAN has a keen interest in the South-South Countries' desires to realize their commitments to the UN General Assembly's Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the realization of the data revolution agenda of the Africa Union's Agenda 2063. It is for this reason that GODAN, with its Network of 1,000 global partners, has evolved co-creation models with African organisations that help build data sourcing initiatives which ultimately improve yields, increase rural incomes and enhance nutritional outcomes. The desire to work to*

work with this union of African Universities meets GODAN's commitment to support South-South governments and realize the ambitions of the Nairobi Declaration.”

GODAN strengthens its commitment to Africa through the RUFORUM Member universities. The new partnership will deliver learning on open data, and support universities to undertake joint knowledge-sharing forums and competitions that promote learning and cross-platform sharing. Through this approach, RUFORUM and GODAN aim to make open data in agriculture and nutrition a theme that all those that teach agriculture will aspire to deliver to their students. It will not only focus on increasing agricultural productivity but will also target greater understanding of all the elements required to manage an efficient and healthy food system able to better serve communities across Africa.

As a key organizational framework, the universities allied to RUFORUM will be supported by GODAN to integrate geospatial and information learning at a practical and actionable level. This will provide practical data sourcing that can be applied to agricultural research on the Continent.

For further information please contact:

Kathryn Bailey, Communications Consultant, GODAN: kathryn.bailey@godan.info

Ms. Maureen Agena, Cooperate Communication and Advocacy Officer, RUFORUM: m.agena@ruforum.org

To find out more about both organisations visit: www.godan.info and www.ruforum.org