

# Press Release



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## FAO AND RUFORUM SIGN A NEW PARTNERSHIP TO TRAIN THE NEXT GENERATION OF AGRICULTURAL CHANGE AGENTS

03<sup>rd</sup> November, 2017  
Lilongwe, Malawi



(L-R) Dr. Dan Gustafson, Deputy Director - General for Programmes at FAO, and Prof Kanyama-Phiri, RUFORUM Vice Board Chair during the signing of the MoU in Lilongwe, Malawi

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the Regional Universities Forum for Capacities Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) on the 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2017 signed a Memorandum of Understanding and committed to work together to strengthen the capacities of RUFORUM member universities to better contribute to food and nutrition security, increase sustainability of agricultural and food systems, reduce rural poverty and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa.

The event took place as one of the key highlight events of the RUFORUM 13<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting which took place in Lilongwe, Malawi, October 25-27 October, 2017. The partnership agreement was signed by Dr. Dan Gustafson, Deputy Director - General for Programmes at FAO,

and Prof Kanyama-Phiri, RUFORUM Vice Board Chair.

“Together with FAO, RUFORUM can provide the students from its member universities with the most up to date knowledge resources and skills to produce high quality agricultural research and enable them to work with rural communities to generate innovative development solutions”, said Prof Kanyama-Phiri.

Similarly, Dr Moses Osiru, the RUFORUM Deputy Executive Secretary indicated that the implementation of this partnership agreement between RUFORUM and FAO will help students and university staff to increase their hands on experience placements in the FAO country level programmes as well as update their knowledge through FAO e-learning hub currently co-hosted by RUFORUM and FAO

“As highlighted on the World Food Day, migration from poor rural areas is a huge challenge in Africa. Youth have the potential to revolutionize the agriculture sector and change the future of migration. We must increase the quality of agricultural education to strengthen the food and agriculture sectors in Africa and ensure employment opportunities to build healthy, bright and safe futures, making migration a choice rather than a necessity”, said FAO Deputy Director-General Daniel Gustafson.

Talking about the importance of this MoU at country level, Mr James Okoth, FAO Malawi's Resilience Officer indicated that through this MoU they will be able to formalize the ongoing collaboration between FAO Malawi office and Malawian universities in terms of student's internship placements and access to the available rich e-learning material provided by FAO.

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## Notes to Editors:

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), is a consortium of 83 African universities operating within 35 countries in the continent with mission to ‘strengthen the capacities of Universities to foster innovations responsive to demands of smallholder farmers through the training of high quality researchers, the output of impact oriented research and the maintenance of collaborative working relations among researchers, farmers, national agricultural research institutions’. RUFORUM was established in 2004, with Secretariat hosted by Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. RUFORUM signed MoU with the African Union and has mandate to support capacity building for science, research and technology development in Africa. RUFORUM has supported the training of over 2,152 postgraduate students, the generation of over 300 agricultural technologies and mobilized over US\$169 million for strengthening postgraduate education in Africa. Please visit [www.ruforum.org](http://www.ruforum.org) for more information.

Headquartered in Rome, Italy, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations system with Strategic Objectives to eliminate hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition; make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more productive and sustainable; reduce rural poverty, enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems; and increase resilience of livelihoods to threats and crises. FAO works closely with a range of partners to support member states in carrying out these five Strategic Objectives which are aligned to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

For additional information, photos and interviews with key delegates, contact Ms Joan Apio, Communications Publicity and Marketing Officer, below.

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