

**Good will message from the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in  
Agriculture (RUFORUM)**

**Delivered during the Launch of the International Research Consortium (IRC) on  
Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA)**

**By Prof. Theresia Nkuo-Akenji, the RUFORUM Board Chair**

**on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2022, Accra, Ghana**



Representative and Officers from the European Commission

Representative and Officers from the African Union Commission

Hon. Ministers from the Government of Ghana

The Executive Director of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa,

The Executive Directors of the Sub-Regional Agricultural Research Organisations

Ladies and gentlemen,

As already introduced by the Moderator, my name is Prof. Theresia Nkuo-Akenji, the Chairperson, Board of Trustees of the RUFORUM Network and Vice Chancellor of University of Bamenda, Cameroon.

RUFORUM is the Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM), a network of 157 universities in 40 African countries covering the five regions of Africa (Central, Eastern, North, Southern and West Africa).

RUFORUM brings together African universities to strengthen each other's capacity in quality training, research & innovation, business incubation & entrepreneurship and linkage to the wider society for relevance and impact in agriculture and food systems. Farmer organizations, private sector and government entities at national, regional and continental level are stakeholders that RUFORUM engages with as users of university outputs whose feedback is used to improve service delivery by the universities and by extension, the RUFORUM Network.

On behalf of the RUFORUM Network, I express our gratitude to the African Union and European Union with support of the respective Commissions to support the establishment of the International Research Consortium (IRC) in Food, Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA).

Having been a partner of the LEAP4FNSSA Project (**Long Term Europe-Africa Partnership for Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture**) actively participating in Work Package 3, the RUFORUM Network is committed to being a founding member of the International Research Consortium (IRC).

Ladies and gentlemen,

RUFORUM's engagement in the IRC is a win-win because the value proposition of the IRC aligns to the mandate of universities and by extension, the RUFORUM Network. As I did mention in my discussion during the session of "functions and services of the IRC" on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September, the RUFORUM Network brings on board the following expertise;

- A network of African university researchers with expertise and experience to execute among other services, policy reviews, consultation surveys, analytical studies, foresight studies
- Contribute university developed knowledge and innovations to be integrated into the IRC's Knowledge Management and Communication System

- Support dissemination of the knowledge and innovations and any other services provided by the IRC to the university community in Africa
- Building capacity of IRC members to enable them derive value from the functions and services and for sustainability

Ladies and gentlemen,

The universities also expect to derive value from the IRC that improves their capacity to deliver services they are mandated to. Based on what I have heard and observed in the last three days of discussions about the IRC, RUFORUM network sees the IRC as a great opportunity to network, collaborate and partner with diverse stakeholders for;

- Provision of feedback by users of university products such as Private sector, Government Ministries, NGOs and farmers other stakeholders on the quality of training, research and innovation and how it should be improved
- Delivery of developed knowledge and innovation products to the end-users and create impact
- Access to funding opportunities to develop relevant knowledge and innovation products to drive transformation in the agriculture and food systems sector
- Engagement with policy makers for relevant policies and increased investment in higher agriculture education and scientific research and national and African Union level
- Learning from universities in Europe to enhance the quality-of-service delivery by universities in Africa

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the RUFORUM Network, I pledge the commitment of RUFORUM to the operationalization of the IRC. RUFORUM already expressed interest by endorsing the declaration of intent to be a founding member of the IRC and will continue to support its operationalization.

I once again thank the visionary leadership of the European Union and the African Union through the High-Level Policy Dialogue on Science, Technology and Innovation for supporting the creation of such an excellent platform that will

undoubtedly address the issue of fragmentation of efforts and enhance impact that science delivers at scale to address the challenges of food and nutrition security.

I enjoyed participating in the enriching events in the last three days and I do hope that all of you did.

I wish all of us a safe return to our various destinations.

**Thank you so much!**

**Prof. Theresia Nkuo-Akenji,**  
**Chairperson of the RUFORUM Board of Trustees**  
**16<sup>th</sup> September 2022, Accra, Ghana**