

Republic of Zambia



Ministry of Higher Education

REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES FORUM FOR CAPACITY BUILDING IN AGRICULTURE (RUFORUM)

“Making Higher Education, Science and Technology Deliver for Africa”

Commented [SM1]: Add name of the Conference Here before the Theme Below.

STATEMENT

DELIVERED AT THE

BY

MINISTER OF HIGHER EDUCATION

HONORABLE. DR. ENG. BRIAN C. MUSHIMBA, MP

AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST, ACCRA, GHANA

Honorable Ministers' from different countries present;
The Permanent Secretaries here present;
Senior Government officials;
The RUFORUM Board Chairperson;
RUFORUM Executive Secretary, Prof. Adipala Ekwamu;
The Vice Chancellors from Representative Universities here present;
Representatives from the Private Sector;
The Academia from across the continent of Africa;

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I bring you warm greetings from the President of the Republic of Zambia, His Excellency, Dr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu and the warm-hearted people of Zambia.

I am delighted to be here. A visit to Ghana is and will always be a special undertaking because this country has immensely contributed to the development of the African continent. Speaking for the country I am representing, at a time when Zambia experienced a shortage for Teachers of Mathematics and Sciences in the 80's and 90's, the Government of the Republic of Ghana significantly supported the us through the supply of these teachers. It is true to say that many Zambians have passed through the hands of Ghanaian Teachers. For this selfless effort, I wish to thank you.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

From the outset, allow me to commend RUFORUM for creating a perfect platform for sharing perspectives and expectations on the role of Africa's universities in development and generation of technology and innovation. In this era, all of us are called to action in placing premium on higher education, it is important that we interrogate our policies and put in place institutional mechanisms that spur needed changes in order to attain both our national and continental development agendas. The basis for real development that impacts society is investment in Education. But to create a pool of thinkers who are the epicenter of socio-cultural and developmental needs of a country, more investment in Higher education is needed. This Higher Education should be at the center of research, innovation and a generation of new thinking which in turn positively impacts industry and society in general.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Zambia is currently implementing the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP) which underpins the Country's aspiration to of becoming a prosperous middle-income country in line with its Vision 2030. To attain this Vision Zambia has four strategic objectives:

- (1) To diversify and make economic growth inclusive;
- (2) Enforce environmental and socially sustainable development principles;
- (3) Improve competitiveness and be innovative; and
- (4) Strengthen governance mechanisms and institutional capacities for sustained development.

In line with these strategic objectives, Zambia seeks to be a diversified, private sector-driven and competitive economy that provides equal opportunities and supports entrepreneurship and investment. It is envisaged that these objectives will lead to the following:

- (1) A Country free from hunger, poverty and other forms of deprivation;
- (2) An educated society with a youthful, economically productive and innovative population as a major asset for the country's productive base;
- (3) A healthy society with a low disease burden and low mortality rate;
- (4) A peaceful, tolerant, resilient and cohesive society with positive aspirations;
- (5) A modern country with cities, towns and provincial areas that are secure, well-planned, providing basic amenities and linked by good roads and accessible by other types of transport systems;
- (6) A thriving democracy based on political diversity, respect for human rights and freedom and the rule of law;
- (7) A Country served by modern, productive, efficient and performance-oriented public service; a country of culturally diverse, friendly, neighborly people well-integrated into the African and international community; and
- (8) A Country with rich biodiversity where humans and the natural habitat mutually co-exists by 2030.

These are just but few key areas we are placing premium on in order to collectively navigate the country towards the Vision 2030. This entails us placing priority on accelerating economic diversification by exploiting the resource

endowments and diversifying away from copper with an evident increase in the GDP contribution of the agriculture, manufacturing and tourism sectors relative to the mining sector.

All this agenda is anchored on increasing access to Higher Education as a key driver in developing human capital. Zambia is promoting training programmes and investments in technical and vocational skills that promote self-employment, especially among the youth. As continent, we need to place premium on strengthening governance mechanisms and institutional capacities in order to attain the diversified and inclusive economies.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In line with Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa (STISA-2024) aim to accelerate Africa's transition to an Innovation-led, Knowledge-based Economy, Zambia has initiated several programmes. Science, Technology and Innovation have a role in empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality. Therefore, Scientists and Engineers with Doctorates, Masters and bachelor's Degrees as well as Technicians and Artisans must be trained to enhance the role of ST&I in key sectors. The Government of Zambia sees the contribution ST&I as the driver of economic development and must necessarily be at the center of analysis.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Further, Zambia has linked ST&I to its development agenda of the following sectors: Health, Agriculture, Energy, Mining, Manufacturing, Industrialization, Tourism, Information and Technology. In order for the country to get the benefits and add value to the highlighted key sectors, science, technology and innovation has prioritized and focused on development of STI and Skills Policies. The country has also introduced Technical schools and Universities that focus on Science and Mathematics. Further, curriculum review that focuses on the key sectors while promoting apprenticeship and industrial attachments and improved linkages between Government, Private sector, Industry and Academia.

The Country has also focused on improving the infrastructure, equipment and laboratory facilities for research and development. The Zambian Government has also decided to expose young people to skills training from primary and secondary schools. In the background and to support education and Science, the Government has put in place the National Science and Technology Council.

The Council ensures that there is a national research agenda to guide and align research to focus on areas of national, regional and continental priority and to streamline research resources; specifically funds projects, through the SRF; promotes bilateral and multi-lateral collaborative research; maintains international initiatives engagements; promotes, coordinates, regulates, mobilizes resources and provides policy advice on ST&I.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In addition to the above, priority actions needed to strengthen Higher Agricultural Education, Science, Technology and Innovation in the Member State.

To enhance the efforts outlined above, actions are still required to:

- (1) Recapitalize Research & Developments;
- (2) Build human capital through training in updated and relevant curricula at university and TVET levels and exchange programmes with other countries;
- (3) Increase postgraduate programmes on national scientific priorities and technological needs; increase funding opportunities for ST&I; advocate for the creation of research Centers of Excellence;
- (4) Develop proactive policies to provide for incentives for researchers; develop a dedicated innovation policy and mechanisms for continuous production of information on ST &I;
- (5) Promote smart partnerships, networks and linkages among ST&I stakeholders in the public sector, the business community and academia to encourage their collaboration in R&D;
- (6) Promote the concept of innovation to SMEs; establish technology parks and incubation facilities;
- (7) Develop an integration policy to promote creation of industry and technology transfer; provide for technology transfer in HEI and public research institutions; and
- (8) Develop a cluster policy and an implementation plan to foster regional sector-based networks of innovation.

Dear Distinguished Participants,

As a country, we are not an island and as a result, we are working to partner with others in implementing regional and continental initiatives. With the aim to

strengthen ST&I and agricultural higher education in the Country, Zambia recognizes the alignment of its gap and opportunity areas to the five Regional Initiatives that have been developed by RUFORUM. Specifically, Zambia would like to:

- (1) Develop competent and relevant human resources and innovations responding to the agricultural sector needs through the Strengthening Africa's Science, Technology, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Capacity for Agricultural and Economic Development (SASTIE) SASTIE Regional Initiative of RUFORUM;
- (2) Develop relevant ST&I capacity for deployment in Agricultural and Environmental sectors through the Building Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity for Economic Growth (BASTIC) Regional Initiative of RUFORUM
- (3) To develop the capacity of universities in Zambia to enhance knowledge generation and improvement of livelihoods through high level graduate training at Masters and PhD level focusing on women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) through the Regional Initiative to Strengthen Staff Capacity and Increase the Pool of Women Scientists in African Universities (RISSCAW);
- (4) Zambia will also participate fully in any other existing or future initiatives that promote collecting, packing and sharing of knowledge for stronger and smarter partnerships, advocacy and decision making.

In conclusion,

I would like to report that Zambia will ratify the RUFORUM Charter at an earliest possible time as soon as it is cleared by the Attorney General of the Republic of Zambia. RUFORUM being a continental network of 121 universities in 38 countries has a strong coordinating advantage and wide continental coverage for any harmonized curriculum development and delivery, teaching and training capacity building in universities, regional academic staff motilities, the establishment of Centres of Excellence and regional anchor universities, resource mobilization, advocacy, brokerage and other activities pertaining to Zambia's gap and opportunity areas in agricultural higher education, science, technology and innovation.

For this reason, Zambia envisages and supports that RUFORUM will play that coordinating role to ensure that the entire network commits, participates fully and

benefits from the different initiatives and programmes for the Continent's overall economic development and prosperity.

I thank you