



**AAUN**

**AUSTRALIA AFRICA**  
UNIVERSITIES NETWORK

**Annual Report**  
**2015-2016**

With thanks to  
our sponsors

AAUN wishes to acknowledge the following partners for their sponsorship. The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Department of Education & Training, the International Mining for Development Centre (IM4DC) and the National Research Council (NRF) in South Africa have all contributed to AAUN’s Partnership and Research Development Fund (PRDF) and our international conferences.

Without support, AAUN would not be able to carry out its vision sustaining research and education collaboration and leadership across areas of priority for Australia and Africa and marshalling Australian and African expertise as an equal partnership to address the challenges both continents face.



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AAUN Mission

To enhance targeted Africa-Australia partnerships through a network of collaborative research and education initiatives

AAUN improves the capacity and connectivity of academic talent across the two continents

Through working with research institutions, business and government, AAUN delivers sustainable solutions to joint challenges

Key Research Areas

Food Security

Public Health

Mining & Minerals

Education



# Message from the Chairpersons



Professor Cheryl de la Rey  
AAUN Chair, Africa



Professor John Hearn  
AAUN Chair, Australia

In our third year since launch in 2012, we are pleased to report steady progress in AAUN policy alignment, partnerships and programs. The African and Australian wings of AAUN proceed to function with a simple and effective governance, through equal partnership and teamwork. We raised adequate resources to provide proof of concept and establish intercontinental, multi-disciplinary research programs that address mutual challenges. Due to funding priorities, we have focused more towards food and nutrition security, climate and environment, and higher education related to these areas. Projects in mining, public health and public sector reform will continue, depending on the further availability of Australian, African and international funding.

**POLICY:** At an international level 2015 has been a pivotal year, ending with advances in the global framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the COP 21 Paris in Climate Conference, the Trans Pacific Partnership in trade and security, and the Chinese Dream, Belt and Road engagement strategies led by President Xi Jinping. These policies shape high level global frameworks and development. AAUN can align and contribute an intellectual and practical research, mobility and capacity program that can contribute in teamwork and capacity towards solutions.

**PROGRAMS:** In the past three years, AAUN has invested its subscription income, matched by the support of our sponsors and funders, in 26 established research programs that are now on the ground, led by experts and with committed teams that engage all of our 9 Australian and 9 African Universities, along with opportunities for emerging researchers and students. The AAUN Partnership and Research Development Fund has an annual round when a few competitive proposals are funded, with modest catalytic funds, and with the prospect of more substantial funding from national and international agencies. We are especially grateful to the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australian Government agencies in agriculture and food (ACIAR/AIFSRC), mining (IM4DC) and the Department of Education. In South Africa we are grateful for the support of the National Research Foundation.

At the end of this report we summarise our future directions and priorities, along with our requests for continuing support from these and other sponsors – including major international agencies in 2016-17.

**PEOPLE:** Perhaps the most exciting of AAUN’s achievements has been to unlock the novel opportunities and to attract the expertise and passion of the many leaders and members of our research teams, who are our major asset and capacity for the future. AAUN is special in its community of scholars who want to work together and deliver results. We thank our University partners, stakeholders and supporters. At a turbulent time for international economies and partnerships, we continue to build a platform for both short and long term success in education diplomacy and impact between our countries.

# AAUN Governance



Members of the AAUN Steering Group during the 2015 International Africa Forum. Left to right: Prof Kevin Hall, Prof David Morrison, Prof John Saka, Prof Cheryl de la Rey (AAUN Chair, Africa), Prof John Hearn (AAUN Chair, Australia) Prof Kadambot Siddique, Prof Stephen Simukanga

## Australia

Chair: Prof John Hearn, University of Sydney  
Program Manager: Bee Nortjé

**Steering Group members:**

- Mr Dave Connell, Curtin University
- Dr Berhan Ahmed, University of Melbourne
- Prof Simon Evans, University of Melbourne
- Ms Joanna Donagan, Monash University
- Prof Abid Khan, Monash University
- Dr Emmanuel Laryea, Monash University
- Prof David Morrison, Murdoch University
- Mr David Doepel, Murdoch University
- Prof Kevin Hall, University of Newcastle
- Prof Kadambot Siddique, University of Western Australia

## Africa

Chair: Prof Cheryl de la Rey, University of Pretoria  
Executive Assistant: Desirée Homann

**Steering Group members:**

- Prof Danie Visser, University of Cape Town
- Prof Ernest Aryeetey, University of Ghana
- Prof Isaac Adewole, University of Ibadan
- Prof John Ddumba-Ssentamu, Makerere University
- Prof JDK Saka, University of Malawi
- Prof Romeela Mohee, University of Mauritius
- Prof Peter Mbithi, University of Nairobi
- Prof Stephen Simukanga, University of Zambia



# Research Highlights

## Sweet potato post-harvest value addition for improved food and nutrition security in Kenya

Sweet potatoes are an essential crop to people in Kenya—not only as a diet staple, but also as a valuable cash crop. However, about 90% of small-holder farmers face losing quality and nutritional value of their sweet potato harvests. There are significant losses incurred in the sweet potato value chain due to lack of proper curing and storage chains and poor handling of the harvested roots can lead to poor quality of processed products.

Dr George Okoo Abong from the University of Nairobi developed a project which establishes post-harvest and processing technologies that ensure safe and high quality sweet potatoes in Kenya. The project goal was to improve food security and incomes for communities in western regions of Kenya and Uganda where the crop is widely grown. Furthermore, the project facilitated research capacity in Kenya through the exchange of knowledge and skills with the Australian institutions and local partners. Partners included Makerere University, the University of Queensland, Kibabii University College (Kenya), Kenya Agricultural Livestock Research Organization Kitale and the Queensland Alliance for Agriculture and Food Innovation (Australia).

Dr Abong's project explored what the current post-harvest handling practices are and worked to establish what physico-chemical properties can lead to developing innovative and appropriate handling technologies. In addition, the team focused on different processing methods that may add variety to the form in which the sweet potato is consumed. The team also explored various different market-oriented products together with small to medium scale producers in order to enhance sweet potato utilization.

In 2015, the team had meetings in both Johannesburg and Nairobi and Dr Abong visited Uganda to review the baseline information collection process. Furthermore, a baseline survey of existing post-harvest handling practices had been conducted in Uganda and partially in Kenya. An MSc student was involved in the root and leaves sampling for analysis process, which was completed in December 2015.

A draft paper is currently under peer review for publication considerations and the team expects to present their project during a March 2016 conference in Nairobi.

***“The project goal was to improve food security and incomes for communities in western regions of Kenya and Uganda where the crop is widely grown”***

## Agro-diverse farming systems in Africa: potential for improving food (and nutritional) security in the context of climate variability and change

It is often presumed that increasing agro-biodiversity would reduce vulnerability to climatic risks and increase food security. On this basis, agro-biodiversity has been proposed as an adaptation to climate change—especially under small holder farming conditions in developing countries. However, this proposition has not been tested and evaluated extensively, especially at farm scale in a holistic context of integrated food value chains and using multiple environmental, cultural and socio-economic criteria for evaluation.

Dr Peter Johnston (University of Cape Town), Prof Janet Bornman (Curtin University) and Prof Richard Warrick (Curtin University) developed a project which intends to fill this research gap. The project asks the key question, “To what extent can agro-biodiversity improve food security and climate resilience, given both current and future climatic risks?” The goal of the research project is thus to assess the potential benefits of agro-biodiversity for decreasing climatic risks and increasing food security.

This project will carry out comparative case studies of farms selected from Australia, South Africa, Malawi, Nigeria and Kenya. The approach is interdisciplinary and the methods are diverse, including field observations, surveys, modelling, pilot trials, and comparative environmental, social and economic assessments. The principal and lead investigators have been selected for their knowledge of local agricultural and environmental conditions and their ability to marshal the expertise in their country, including early-career researchers and PhD students, to meet the multi-disciplinary skills required.

The research group, consisting of 8 members (from the University of Western Australia, Curtin University, University of Pretoria, University of Ibadan and Lilongwe University) met in Cape Town in June 2015, after a few team members met during the AAUN meeting in Johannesburg, for very productive discussions. The meeting in Cape Town was held over three days, two of which included intensive discussion of aims, objectives, tasks and outcomes while the third day involved a field trip to a potential case study site in the Swartland wheat lands of the south-western Cape.

The project's eventual outcome will be increased knowledge of the types of agro-biodiverse systems that will enhance food security and sustainable livelihoods. This knowledge will be disseminated in both academic and non-academic publications and will provide the foundation for scaling-up such systems in the countries involved for practical application.

***“The eventual outcome will be increased knowledge of the types of agro-biodiverse systems that will enhance food security and sustainable livelihoods”***



## Where does your food come from? Food supply in the context of trade, agriculture and nutrition

Where does our food come from? This might seem like a mundane question but its answer represents a complex mix of local, national and international agricultural production, food processing, trade policy, transportation infrastructure, and consumption choices.

While the notion of food security is usually understood as being based on agriculture, the reality is more multi-faceted and requires a broader examination of food supply and its influences.

Led by Dr Joel Negin from the University of Sydney, the project's partnership and research activities aim to deepen understanding of where food comes from by drawing pathways from trade and availability, purchase and consumption and nutritional outcomes.

The project's initial focus was on urban areas in South Africa and Uganda and the team focused on a small number of key commodities (both healthy foods and unhealthy items) and mapped where households purchased those items and, in turn, where those items came from with regard to transport, import and origin.

The expected outcome of the research is a better understanding of the policy levers available to influence food supply for urban households in order to promote healthier diets, local agriculture and a sustainable health system that supports food security.

The project also has three manuscripts in preparation: one on food consumption, one on location of food purchasing and a commentary piece—and it is expected that two of the articles will be submitted early in 2016. This project will continue through to May 2016.

## Surveillance and monitoring of food security for Africa: proposal development

In the last 9 years the demand for poultry meat in Africa has increased by 49%. As a consequence, the slaughtering and production of chicken have increased, however chicken products have been implicated in many food-borne disease outbreaks—which have caused numerous human deaths. In order to develop a robust secure food system, it is imperative that such outbreaks are controlled.

Dr Ranil Coorey from Curtin University produced a project which aimed to build a researcher network that works with government and industry. The team worked towards writing a major research proposal on the development of a food security and food safety surveillance system for poultry meat production. The team met in South Africa in May 2015 to develop a strategic plan, which enabled them to gather preliminary data and write a review of current practices within the Australian and African chicken processing industries. The initial data had been gathered from Australia and South Africa and students from Curtin University also collected data from Botswana. Subsequently, data is also being collected in other countries.

***“The team worked towards writing a major research proposal on the development of a food security and food safety surveillance system for poultry meat production”***

In September 2015, Dr Coorey and Prof Elna Buys from the University of Pretoria met to progress the literature review. The rest of the team members are in the final stages of completing their respective sections for the literature review and a second literature review on potentially hazardous foods has also been drafted for submission. Dr Coorey will submit both reviews to leading international journals.

In addition, the team was invited to present a keynote address in September 2015 at the South African Association of Food Science and Technology Annual Conference in Durban, South Africa. The team also delivered a keynote address at the Indonesian Association of Food Technologists Annual Conference in Semarang, Indonesia in late October 2015.

A group of researchers from Wageningen University in the Netherlands have indicated that they are interested in joining Dr Coorey's team to help develop a proposal for funding through the European Union. The Dutch research team has suggested a meeting in Pretoria in February 2016 to develop the EU proposal.

Dr Coorey's team further plans to meet in 2016 to finalise the data collation and the first literature review, which will be submitted to an international journal specialising in food safety. The team has also submitted a concept note for research funding to the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR).







### Building an AAUN coalition to support improved nutrition and health of children under 5 years, pregnant and lactating mothers

This project, led by Professor Mavis Mulaudzi from the University of Pretoria, examined the nutritional situation of children under the age of 5 years and women of child bearing age in South Africa.

By uncovering the food security issues in children aged under 5, the project addressed the UN Millennium Development

Goal to reduce child mortality. In collaboration with relevant government agencies and sectors, the project reviewed the current food and nutrition security situation and associated diseases in selected countries in Africa. The team worked with government agencies in areas of public health, nutrition, gender, agriculture, livestock and natural resources to review and compile food security data and interventions existing in relevant administrative units.

The team further conducted a literature review and the study resulted in a database containing childhood nutrition status (stunting, underweight and wasting, micronutrient status) and maternal nutritional status, food quality and production (crops and animals), people living with HIV, and poverty levels.

This project also fostered active collaborations between AAUN member institutions in Australia and Africa and 12 AAUN members participated in the project. Furthermore, the project included participation from graduate students from several African universities and contributed to developing multidisciplinary teams of academics. A Master's student from the University of Pretoria graduated in September 2015 and a draft article has been submitted.

Furthermore, Prof Mulaudzi presented at the Annual Australia Africa Conference in Canberra in August 2015 as well as at the Agricultural Research Symposium in Nairobi in November 2015.

***“The project addressed the UN Millennium Development Goal to reduce child mortality”***

### Mining for a healthier community

The impact of illness on mineworkers' health and productivity threatens the economic viability of the African mining industry (and Australian investments in this sector) by endangering its ability to remain globally competitive. Social scientists holistically commit to studying biological, social, cultural and political contexts of infections in order to complement, challenge or contribute to scientific expertise or medical practice by asking: How do miners and mining communities negotiate health risks and biomedical knowledge and practices that aim to create 'responsible' patients and workers?

Dr Helen Macdonald from the University of Cape Town worked to develop comparative approaches to the study of health risks, specifically tuberculosis (TB), among mineworkers and communities affected by mining activities.

Dr Macdonald's team held an intensive 3-day workshop from 7-9 December 2015 in Cape Town, which coincided with the 46th Union World Conference on Lung Health. Three Australian scholars travelled to Cape Town and met with South African scholars, where papers were presented and a collaborative intellectual project was strategized.

From the workshop, 6 scholars have committed to working together in the future around the research question 'What is dust?' as it cuts across the disciplinary divides of occupational health, mineralogy, toxicology and the social sciences. The team also agreed to publish three papers, some of which have already been presented at conferences, and the team has recruited a Master's student, who is examining the impact of gender on health and health decision-making. Furthermore, a curriculum component has been developed and introduced into the 1st year and post graduate curriculum in Anthropology at the University of Cape Town.

Dr Helen Macdonald has further secured a Wellcome Trust engagement grant for an interactive installation around TB and the artistic community—the team hopes to incorporate mining as a theme.





### 21st Century skills for education practitioners: rapid e-Learning tools to develop interactive learning materials

In the digital age, education-technology has become a very effective and accessible learning platform for scholars around the world. Associate Professor Santally Mohammad Issack from the University of Mauritius, is developing an online postgraduate professional learning program in Rapid e-Learning methodology. This program aims to equip educators with the relevant 21st Century Learning Skills where Information Communications Technology (ICT) is integrated in education practices.

With support from Microsoft, the Rapid e-learning Methodology is currently implemented at the University of Mauritius to develop its online courses and it is used in capacity building e-learning initiatives.

The same methodology was applied to Makerere University in Uganda, and to the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) Lifelong Learning Programme for Farmers in Agriculture in India. The program's purpose is to empower education practitioners to develop their own engaging and interactive materials that can be disseminated and shared among educators. It further aims to build local and regional capacity in the field of multimedia-based open and distance learning.

The e-Learning platform to host the programme contents has already been set up and the team is currently working on content for the 4 modules. A set of hands-on tutorials has been developed and the team is working on the video tutorials to facilitate the content understanding by users. The first two full modules will be completed by February 2016.

Associate Professor Santally was also invited by the Commonwealth of Learning under the Virtual University for Small States of the Commonwealth (VUSSC) to facilitate a workshop in the Seychelles in October 2015 with 30 educators at the Seychelles Institute of Training and Education on "Interactive Materials Development".

## The Partnership & Research Development Fund (PRDF) - 2013/14

The Partnership & Research Development Fund (PRDF) offers grants of an average of \$10,000 AUD to foster partnership within the network and support planning workshops and research collaborations that address distinct mutual challenges. The PRDF provides one year of catalytic seed funding which may cover the costs of exploratory research initiatives, targeted workshops, faculty exchanges and the formation of collaborative networks, among other activities.

Project Title	Principal Investigator(s)	AAUN Partners
Evaluating effectiveness of photosensitization in controlling aflatoxins accumulation in maize	Professor Shelia Okoth, University of Nairobi	University of Queensland, Murdoch University
Improved productivity, postharvest handling, safety and biosecurity of cowpeas/bambara groundnuts: a value chain analysis in Eastern, Western and Southern Africa	Dr Casper Madakadze, University of Pretoria & Dr Amin Mugeru, University of Western Australia	University of Cape Town, Murdoch University, University of Ibadan, University of Pretoria, Makerere University
Harnessing the benefits of agro-biodiversity for sustained food security in the context of climate change and variability	Dr Peter Johnston, University of Cape Town	University of Malawi, Curtin University, University of Pretoria, University of Ibadan, University of Melbourne, University of Western Australia
Value chain analysis: improved nutrition & health of children under 5 years and pregnant & lactating others through the production of high quality extruded foods supplemented with leaf and legume proteins	Associate Professor Kolawale Falade, University of Ibadan	University of Pretoria, Curtin University
Building an AAUN coalition to support improved nutrition & health of children under 5 years, pregnant & lactating mothers	Associate Professor Robyn Alders, University of Sydney, Professor A Oelofse, University of Cape Town & Prof Mavis Mulaudzi, University of Pretoria	University of Nairobi, University of Queensland, University of Wollongong, Makerere University, Griffith University, University of Melbourne, University of Western Australia, University of Ibadan, Curtin University
Reducing hypertension in sub-Saharan Africa through salt reduction strategies	Associate Professor Karen Charlton, University of Wollongong	University of Ghana, University of Newcastle
Integrating HIV and gender related issues into environmental assessments for Australian mining companies operating in Africa	Associate Professor Angus Morrison-Saunders, Murdoch University	University of Pretoria, Makerere University

# The Partnership & Research Development Fund (PRDF) - 2014/15

The 2014 Partnership & Research Development Fund (PRDF) attracted 27 applications, of which 14 were funded. These 14 projects comprised two development projects, one mining project, seven food security projects, four education related projects and one health project. Many of these had been developed through workshops in Pretoria and Canberra in 2014.

Project Title	Principal Investigator(s)	AAUN Partners
Surveillance and monitoring of food security for Africa: proposal development	Dr Ranil Coorey, Curtin University	University of Ghana, University of Pretoria, University of Nairobi, Makerere University
Where does your food come from? Food supply in the context of trade, agriculture and nutrition	Dr Joel Negin, University of Sydney	University of Pretoria, Makerere University
Mining for a healthier community	Dr Helen Macdonald, University of Cape Town	University of Mauritius, University of Melbourne, University of Queensland
21st Century skills for education practitioners : rapid e-learning tools to develop interactive learning materials	Associate Professor Mohammad Issack Santally, University of Mauritius	Makerere University, Curtin University
Mapping Australia-Africa partnerships in higher education	Professor Crain Soudien, University of Cape Town & Professor Anthony Welch University of Sydney	Makerere University, University of Pretoria
Assessing the benefits of agro-biodiversity in the context of climate variability and change	Dr Peter Johnston, University of Cape Town, Prof Janet Bornman, Curtin University & Prof Richard Warrick, Curtin University	University of Ibadan, University of Pretoria, University of Western Australia
Master of biosafety joint development project	Associate Professor Andrew Drinnan, University of Melbourne	University of Ghana, University of Nairobi,

Project Title	Principal Investigator(s)	AAUN Partners
Development of sweetpotato postharvest handling technologies for improved safety and quality of fresh and processed forms	Dr George Abong', University of Nairobi	Makerere University, University of Queensland
Developing and retaining the next generation of academics and researchers	Associate Professor Mbulungeni Madiba, University of Cape Town	University of Mauritius, University of Pretoria, Monash University, University of Sydney
Integrated design of highly palatable extruded and other foods for nutrition	Prof Kolawole Falade, University of Ibadan	University of Pretoria, Curtin University
Building an AAUN coalition to support improved nutrition and health of children under 5 years, pregnant and lactating mothers	Professor Mavis Mulaudzi, University of Pretoria & Associate Professor Robyn Alders, University of Sydney	Griffith University, University of Wollongong, University of Melbourne, University of Ibadan, Makerere University, University of Mauritius, University of Nairobi, University of Zambia, University of Western Australia
A study of the experiences of Ghana, Kenya and Mauritius with special economic zones (SEZ): imperatives of law and economics	Dr Emmanuel Laryea, Monash University	University of Ghana, University of Nairobi, Murdoch University
Enhancing community-based farming systems by integrated and efficient soil-water-nutrient management regimes in sub-Saharan Africa: from research to farm business enterprises	Associate Professor Inakwu Odeh, University of Sydney	University of Nairobi, University of Ibadan, University of Ghana
An analysis of the value chain for indigenous edible insects and their potential role in mother and child nutrition in Eastern and Southern Africa: focus on Mopani	Professor Mavis Mulaudzi, University of Pretoria	Makerere University, University of Zambia, University of Melbourne



# The Partnership & Research Development Fund (PRDF) - 2015/16

The 2015 Partnership & Research Development Fund received 8 applications, of which 5 are being funded. Many of these are building on existing AAUN programs, which have shown significant development and progress. The main areas of focus for the 2015 programs are in food and nutrition security, education and health. Further funding initiatives are a priority.

Project Title	Principal Investigator(s)	AAUN Partners
Academics without doctorates – an investigation into the nature and extent of under qualification of academics in South Africa, Mauritius and Australia and strategies and policies to address the issue	Dr Mignonne Breier, University of Cape Town & Dr Lorraine Towers University of Sydney	Monash University, University of Mauritius, University of Pretoria
Monitoring and modelling of food security practices from retail to home in Australia and Africa	Dr Ranil Coorey, Curtin University	University of Ghana, Makerere University, University of Nairobi, University of Pretoria
Integrated whole-of-grain utilisation of cereal-legume composite for extruded and other foods targeted at specific consumers’ nutrition, health and wellbeing needs	Prof Kolawole Falade, University of Ibadan	Curtin University, University of Pretoria
Agro-diverse farming systems in Africa: potential for improving food (and nutritional) security in the context of climate variability and change	Dr Peter Johnston, University of Cape Town, Prof Janet Bornman, Curtin University & Prof Richard Warrick, Curtin University	University of Ibadan, University of Pretoria, University of Western Australia
Phase 2: An analysis of the value chain for indigenous edible insects and their potential role in mother and child nutrition in Eastern and Southern Africa: focus on Mopani	Professor Mavis Mulaudzi, University of Pretoria	Makerere University, University of Zambia, University of Sydney

# Event Highlights 2015

## International Africa Forum, Johannesburg 11 May 2015

The AAUN International Africa Forum was held at the Indaba Hotel in Johannesburg on 11 May 2015. Around 60 delegates participated in the Forum, which focussed on bringing together the research theme leaders and teams funded from the AAUN Partnership and Research Development Fund (PRDF). The Forum gave members an update of AAUN’s activities and funding opportunities, provided insight into the progress of current PRDF projects and provided an opportunity for team members to progress their projects to the next phase.

During the Forum, the newly appointed African and Australian thematic leaders presented updates from their portfolio of projects and discussed challenges from their project streams. Delegates were also given the opportunity to work in their individual teams to develop ideas for additional funding, work on publication drafts or determine the next steps for their projects.

At the official conference dinner, the Deputy High Commissioner of Australia, Mr Ben Playle, gave the keynote address and reiterated the commitment of Australia to developing ties with Africa, particularly in the areas of health, food security and agriculture. Other guests included the Kenyan High Commissioner to South Africa, a representative from the South African National Research Foundation, a representative from AusTrade and many Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice-Chancellors from AAUN member universities.

The AAUN International Africa Forum was held in conjunction with the ACU-SARIMA 2015 Conference and hosted a joint session themed *Using Collaborative Research for Global Challenges*.



Q&A session during the 2015 International Africa Forum





Mr Matthew Neuhaus delivering vote of thanks



Ms Emma Stone (DFAT) during Q&A session



HE Mr Isaiya Kabira presenting the Communiqué

## Annual Australia Africa Conference, Canberra 26-28 August 2015

The Annual Africa Australia Conference (AAC) was held at the Crawford School of Public Policy, Australia National University, with the theme *Enhancing strategic engagement and partnership between government, academia and business*.

The AAC 2015, co-hosted by AAUN, the Australia Africa Business Council (ACT & NSW chapters) and the Africa Heads of Mission Group in Australia, attracted 150 delegates from across Australia, Africa and Europe. Delegates included prominent international researchers, business leaders, High Commissioners, embassy representatives and government officials.

***“The purpose of the AAC was to facilitate building equal partnerships in key research areas”***

Mr Steven Ciobo, Minister for International Development and the Pacific, delivered the opening presentation and outlined Australia’s continuing engagement and commitment to Africa in selected countries and fields where Australia and Africa have mutual challenges and objectives and can work towards mutual solutions.

The conference focused on areas of food, nutrition and education as a foundation of Australia’s economic and education diplomacy and partnerships. The purpose of the AAC was to facilitate building equal partnerships in the key research areas and brought together researchers, business leaders and Heads of Mission to pool their strategic thinking and experience in developing the best priority programs for Australia and Africa. In three plenary sessions, the conference identified opportunities, gaps and ways in which Australia and Africa can take best advantage from a time of special focus and capacity, with limited resources.

The plenary sessions were followed by three related workshops where the conference participants explored priority research, education and mobility programs that could deliver the best advantage and result. Mr Matthew Neuhaus, Head of the DFAT Africa Section, presented the vote of thanks and the practical capacities for Australia’s future engagement in Africa.

At the end of the conference, the High Commissioner for Kenya, HE Isaiya Kabira, presented the communiqué, which is an action agenda for 2015-16. The AAC report is available on the AAUN website.

## Joint AAUN-Australia Awards Agricultural Research Symposium, Nairobi 25 November 2015

Drying of indigenous vegetables for improved food and nutrition security was one of several innovative projects to arise out of the Joint AAUN Australia Awards Agricultural Research Symposium held on 25 November 2015 at the Southern Sun Mayfair Hotel in Nairobi, Kenya. Around 70 agricultural researchers, extension officers and academics met in Nairobi for the Symposium, which brought together researchers from both Africa and Australia.

The Symposium was opened by the Australian High Commissioner to Kenya, HE John Feakes and Prof Charles M. Mulei, who was speaking on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Nairobi. Mr Feakes said that Agriculture and Food Security have been a focus of Australia’s engagement in Africa for many years. “This priority is in keeping with our focus on supporting economic growth and trade links to Africa. Further, given the particular role that women play in the agricultural sector, this also supports our efforts to increase gender equality and women’s economic empowerment,” he said.

After the opening speeches, three panels of AAUN researchers presented their research projects. The Symposium was part of the Australia Awards Africa Short Course “Increasing the Development Impact of Agricultural Research” (IDIAR), funded by the Australian Government and delivered by the University of Sydney, in conjunction with lead partner, the University of Nairobi. A highlight of the day was the 24 Awardee ‘lightning’ presentations with each person given one slide and one minute to present their research ideas. This gave rise to four working groups developing collaborative research proposals among AAUN partner universities.



Panel discussion during the Symposium. Left to Right: Associate Prof Robyn Alders, Dr Peter Johnston, Dr Casper Madakadze and Prof Ngugi Robinson Kinuthia.



# Future Directions 2016-18

**POLICY:** In the introduction to this report, we noted the emerging global policy frameworks which will shape the next ten years, and also be relevant to the resources invested in African and international development. AAUN will align and build strengths in selected areas where Australian and African equal partnerships between universities, governments, business and NGOs can impact on pressing challenges.

**PARTNERSHIP:** In building further, we will carefully expand our partnerships to admit selected new members who are requesting membership, at a sustainable rate that facilitates research alignment and development. We expect to continue the subscription at its current level, allocate 30% of that subscription to the Partnership and Research Development Fund, and leverage resources with national and international agencies in research, education, mobility and leadership training.

**PROGRAMS:** We do not intend to expand outside our focus areas, and until the international funding climate improves we will concentrate on key questions, quality research, exchange of emerging researchers, and the exploration of further synergies in dual degrees and team-building with alumni and business stakeholders. Our research priorities will emphasize food and nutrition security, practical approaches to climate and environmental sustainability, and higher education innovation. International relations and dynamics underpinning these developments will be included, with interests in European, US and Chinese engagement.

**KEY EVENTS:** In addition to the regular teleconferences and planning sessions of the AAUN steering group and Research Theme Leaders, the signature events will be the AAUN Africa Forum 5-6 May 2016 in Cape Town, immediately after and associated with the British Council Going Global conference; and the AAUN Australia Conference and AGM 4-7 September 2016, in advance of the Africa Down Under and Africa week activities in Perth. We envisage other strategic workshops in priority research areas.

**ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT:** We will give special priority to exploring dual degrees between members, an exchange program for early career researchers; and alliances with university networks, business interests, NGOs, international agencies and governments who can contribute to and profit from our activities.

**SUSTAINABILITY:** A major priority for 2016-17 is to attract broader resources and funding to build investment. The AAUN is already demonstrating capacity and delivery and showing return on investment for our sponsors. A further priority is to build an academic and business model that is fit for purpose and flexible for the new approaches to international partnership and development that are rising as global policy advances from 2015 start to take effect.

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## AAUN International Africa Forum Cape Town 5-6 May 2016



## Annual Australia Africa Conference Perth 5-7 September 2016





The Australia Africa Universities Network (AAUN), as the only consortium of universities spanning Australia and Africa, has established itself to inject new vigour into the academic relationships between the two continents.

With the purpose of working together to find innovative, long lasting solutions for critical issues concerning both continents, the consortium has identified 4 areas of focus:

- Food & Nutrition Security
- Public Health
- Education
- Mining & Development

AAUN is establishing select, high calibre partnerships in research and academia and has begun mutual research capacity building in order to bring positive improvements to our areas of focus.

AAUN has secured vital relationships and teamwork with international agencies and business to help propel us to achieve our mission. As a means of further engagement with these strategic associations, and in order to cultivate new ones, AAUN has set to work on a comprehensive knowledge sharing portal via its website that offers intelligence and advisory services for government institutions, the corporate sector and media on Africa-Australia relationships and research.

### Vision

High impact, strategic educational and research partnerships providing sustainable solutions to challenges jointly facing Australia and Africa.

### Mission

To enhance targeted Africa-Australia partnerships through a network of collaborative research and education initiatives. AAUN improves the capacity and connectivity of academic talent across the two continents. Through working with research institutions, business and government, AAUN seeks to deliver sustainable solutions to our joint challenges.

**Innovation**  
Committed to growing and supporting a culture of innovation within its network.

**Collaboration**  
Committed to fostering open & supportive collaborations for the benefit of our global community.

**Equity**  
Committed to promoting equal partnerships between African & Australian research institutions.

**Sustainability**  
Committed to being a leading advisory & advocate on sustainable solutions for issues affecting Australia & Africa.

### Objectives

### Strategies

**Scale up Africa-Australia institutional research partnerships**

Convene two major annual Africa Fora, one on each continent, to drive Australia-Africa research and education priorities.  
Host joint targeted strategic workshops and conferences on our key areas of engagement.  
Expand the Partnership & Research Development Fund and attract new resources from governments and agencies.  
Introduce an Africa-Australia mobility fund to fuel the development of new research partnerships.

**Strengthen the academic and leadership capacity of our network's partners**

Introduce a two-way research capacity building and training program.  
Promote and engage in the Australia Awards Africa scholarship programs.  
Provide support for African graduates or Awardees returning from international training or research programs, including supporting Australia-Africa alumni networks.  
Host an annual Presidents' Forum to drive actions that enhance our educational leadership capacity.

**Be an influential voice in policy making across the critical issues affecting Australia and Africa**

Produce a series of policy position papers on our six key areas of engagement.  
Engage with industry, government and civil society through conferences and events on joint Australia-Africa challenges.

**Provide an intelligence and advisory portal for expertise on Australia-Africa issues**

Create a 'one-stop-shop' intelligence and advisory portal for government institutions, the corporate sector, and media on Africa.  
Introduce Australia-Africa information service.





# AAUN AUSTRALIA AFRICA

## UNIVERSITIES NETWORK



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN  
IYUNIVESITHI YASEKAPA • UNIVERSITEIT VAN KAAPSTAD



Curtin University



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



Queensland, Australia



UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

MAKERERE



UNIVERSITY



MONASH University



Murdoch  
UNIVERSITY



University of Nairobi



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA  
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA  
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
SYDNEY



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN  
AUSTRALIA



UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA