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TICON AFRICA INAUGURAL CONFERENCE 2023

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TICON Africa Inaugural Conference

UNIFYING ICT TALENT TO POWER THE AFRICAN CONTINENT TO 2030 AND BEYOND

TICON Africa serves as a unifying platform for ICT professionals across Africa, aimed at promoting excellence in the field of technology through education, networking, and collaboration among its members with the goal of bringing together a community of like-minded professionals who share a passion for advancing technology and driving innovation in Africa.

The Technology Information Confederation Africa (TICON Africa) is the ground-breaking Pan-African body of technology professionals spearheading the ongoing development of the highest possible standards of information technology knowledge and practice across Africa. It is a continental nonprofit organization which aims at adding value to African ICT professional associations across the continent through research and development on ICT needs on the African continent; publications of ICT related activities in various countries for knowledge sharing of best practices; education to build capacity of ICT professionals in various countries through professional qualifications;

networking events such as annual conferences that bring together ICT professionals from different African countries to share knowledge and business contacts, and finally, revenue mobilization for capacity building of professionals in various countries. Founded in 2022, its founding members are ICT Association of Zimbabwe (ICTAZ), Information and Communications Technology Association of Zambia (ICTAZ), Institute of ICT Professionals, Ghana (IIPGH), ICT Association of Uganda (ICTAU), South African ICT Association (SAICTA), with its first elected president from Ghana (David Gowu, IIPGH). Its new additions are Botswana Information Technology Society (BITS), and ICT Association of Malawi.

The objective of TICON Africa is to add value to its members by helping them to develop standards for African ICT professionals and make ICT a career worthy of choice to propel socio-economic development of the continent. TICON Africa is poised to connect with all active ICT professional associations in all countries on the African continent to build a vibrant confederation that will ensure standardization of professional qualifications, research, publications, events, and regulation reforms. In addition, it aims at supporting countries without ICT professionals' association to set up and mobilize professionals within those countries.

THE CONFERENCE

The Inaugural TICON Africa conference, took place at the Imperial Botanical Beach Hotel, Entebbe, Uganda, from September 6 – 9, 2023, aiming at powering Africa into the future with the latest technological innovations. Hosted by the ICT Association of Uganda (ICTAU) this year seeks to unify ICT talent and pave the way for a brighter future for the entire continent.

The conference featured keynote speeches, interactive sessions, and panel discussions to equip delegates with the knowledge and skills to tap into, and to develop Africa.

DR. AMINAH ZAWEDDE
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of ICT and
National Guidance, Uganda

The technology space in Africa is developing rapidly as governments and businesses on the continent are deploying technology to transform and become more efficient. New and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), internet of things (IoT), software engineering, robotics, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), metaverse among others are becoming common. Technology has become an effective tool enabling how individuals and businesses interact. It has also helped governments engage their citizens, and influencers such as celebrities connect with their community, fans, and followers. However, the continent is yet to realize the full potential and benefits of these emerging technologies due to skills gaps, technology infrastructural gaps, cultural barriers, regulation red tapes in some countries just to name a few. One major area identified to help bridge the gap is building the capacity of ICT professionals across the African continent through a platform that will help with knowledge sharing, skills development, partnerships, and investment by technology organizations.

UNIFYING ICT TALENT TO POWER THE AFRICAN CONTINENT TO 2030 AND BEYOND

Our theme for this conference, "Unifying ICT Talent to Power the African Continent to 2030 and Beyond," underscores the urgency and importance of our mission. Africa stands on the brink of a digital revolution, and it is our collective responsibility to ensure that this transformation benefits all its people, leaving no one behind.

Opening the conference, Professor Robert Ebo Hinson, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Ghana Communication Technology University, touched on Strategy and Technology, Expanding the Success of Pan-African Brands.

The 3 -day event delved into 5 critical sub-themes.

Bridging the Digital Divide

Africa's technological disparity hampers progress in multiple sectors, which requires strategy to ensure equal access to technology, connectives across the continent.

Capacity Building and Skills Development

Empowering our young people with ICT skills, promoting digital literacy, and fostering entrepreneurship as essential steps toward a brighter future.

Public and Private Sector Collaboration

By enhancing collaboration between public and private organizations, to leverage ICT for sustainable development, creating lasting impact

Policy and Regulation

Robust policies, regulations, and frameworks crucial to supporting the growth of ICT infrastructure and digital innovation in Africa.

Innovation and Emerging Technologies

Exploring the potential of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and the Internet of Things (IoT), in transforming Africa's future.

DAY 1

Bridging the Digital Divide

The keynote speaker, Professor Fred McBagonluri, President of Academic City University College, Ghana, spoke on Unveiling the State of ICT and Comparative Analysis Across the Continent, which set the tone for a panel discussion on Bridging the Digital Divide in Africa, moderated by Badru Ntege, Co-Founder and Director Technology and Innovation, NFT Consult, Uganda. On the panel were, Alain Gbeasor, Technology and Digital Entrepreneur, Ghana, Binimbi Chellah, Business Solutions Development, Sybrin, Zambia; Francois Venter, Project Lead, Belgium Campus iTversity, South Africa; and Aidah Bukubuza, Founder & Team Lead AYDIA Gender and Technology Initiative, Uganda.

PROF. FRED MCBAGONLURI
President, Academic City University College, Ghana

CONFERENCE CHAIR
MICHAEL NYITEGEKA
» Director, Refractory, Uganda
» Board member, ICTAU

CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR
MRS. ANGELA SEMWOGERERE
GM, Spidd Africa

Michael Nyitegeka, Director, Refractory, Uganda, addressed the second topic, The State of ICT in Education, leading to the next industry panel discussion, The Future of ICT Education, moderated by Hanna Schlingmann, Project Manager, AFOS Foundation. The panelists were Grace Achire Labong, Manager, International Business Development, East and Central Africa {ECA}, Arxia; Dr Jan Mentz, Academic Dean, Belgium Campus IT University, Richard Kafui Amanfu, Operations Director, IIPGH. This was followed with the last discussion for the day on Skills Development Initiatives: Coding Caravan & Tech Education, moderated by Angela Semwogerere, MD Spidd, Africa, with her panelist Gifty Mottey-Gowu, Administrator, IIPGH Coding Institute, and Juliana Ametorwogo, RF Specialist, Vodafone Ghana.
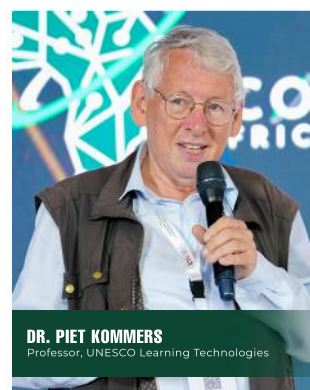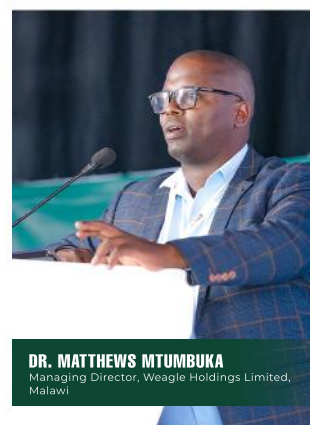
DAY 2

Public & Private Sector Collaboration | Innovation & Emerging Technologies

Dr. Aminah Zawedde, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, Uganda, started the day on the topic, "One Africa, One Vision: Collaboration for Inclusive ICT Development". This led to two great presentations. "Unveiling the Uganda's Digital transformation roadmap", by Shirley Gladys Nakyejwe, Senior ICT Officer & Intellectual Property Management Specialist, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, and "Unleashing Public-Private Partnerships & Policy Frameworks", by Dr Piet Kommers, UNESCO Learning Technologies.

Discussing Innovation & Emerging Technologies, Noah Baalessanvu, Head of Technology – Savannah, presented on Blockchain and Cryptocurrency.

DR. JABU MTSWENI
CSIR Chief Researcher and Centre Manager:
Information and Cyber Security Research

DR. MATTHEWS MTUMBUKA
Managing Director, Weagle Holdings Limited,
Malawi

NOAH BAALESSANVU
Head of Technology – Savannah

DR. PIET KOMMERS
Professor, UNESCO Learning Technologies

DAY 3

Marketing, and ICT

The closing plenary keynote on Marketing and ICT – working together to attain Africa's $3.4 trillion opportunities for the AfCFTA, a trade agreement that brings together a population of over 1.3 billion people and a combined economy of about USD 3.4 trillion, was addressed by James Byarunhanga, Managing Director, Raxio Data Centre, Uganda. This led to further discussions by Professor Robert E. Hinson Pro Vice-Chancellor, Ghana Communication Technology University; Mr. Terrance Alinda – COO Liquid Technology; and Dr Mathews Ntumbuka, Managing Director, Weagle Holdings, Uganda.

The final presentation for day 3 was on "New Exponential World (find your purpose) – Changing Technology, Changing Customer, Changing Competition" presented by Mr. Edgar Kasenene, CEO IDEX, gave in to the last panel discussion on the topic, "The pace of business transformation in the face of rapidly evolving technological innovation". It was moderated by Haruna J Mawanda, ICT business transformation Specialist, and panelists Elolo Konglo, Head IT Infrastructure HTU, Ghana; Herbert Olowo, Head of Operations & IT, Absa Bank, Uganda; Ken Stober, CEO and Co-Founder of Simplifi Networks, Uganda; Clement Sinyangwe, Head ICT, Chalimbana University, Zambia.

Conference Summary was given by Professor Fred McBagonluri, President of Academic City University College, Ghana, touching on "Summary of Challenges and Opportunities – Call to Action – Bridging the Digital Divide in Africa".

MR. JAMES BYARUNHANGA
Managing Director, Raxio Data Centre

MR. TERRANCE ALINDA
COO, Liquid Technology

MR. EDGAR KASENENE
CEO, IDEX

Declaration by Inaugural Conference of TICON Africa 2023

We, the participants of the inaugural TICON Africa Conference, convened on 6th September 2023 at the Imperial Botanical Beach Hotel, Entebbe, Uganda affirm our commitment to harness the power of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to bridge the digital divide and lead the process of digital transformation across the African continent.

Recognising the enabling potential of ICT to drive economic growth, social development, and sustainable progress on the African continent, we make and commit to the following declarations:

BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

- We acknowledge that the digital divide remains a significant challenge in Africa, with disparities in access, connectivity, and digital literacy.

- We are committed to assist in closing this divide to ensure that every African citizen has equitable access to the benefits of ICT.

- We will work to promote affordable and inclusive access to broadband internet, digital devices, and digital literacy training, particularly in underserved and rural areas.

- We recognize the importance of public-private partnerships, regulatory frameworks, and innovative solutions in addressing the digital divide and fostering digital inclusion.

- We commit to actively initiate, participate, and collaborate in public-private partnerships as well as the development of regulatory frameworks.

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PROMOTING INNOVATION AND DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TRANSFORMATION

- We believe that innovation is the cornerstone of technological advancement.

- We commit to fostering a culture of innovation by participating in and supporting research and development, entrepreneurship, and startup ecosystems across Africa.

- We acknowledge the transformative potential of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, Internet of Things (IoT), and 5G.

- We will actively explore the application of these emerging technologies to address local challenges and drive economic growth.

- We commit to creating enabling environments for business developing technology to thrive, including policies that support digital infrastructure development, data privacy, and cybersecurity.

STRENGTHENING DIGITAL SKILLS AND EDUCATION

- We recognize that a digitally skilled workforce is essential to harnessing the benefits of ICT in Africa.

- We commit to enhancing digital literacy and educational programs at all educational levels in Africa, from primary schools to lifelong learning.

- We will collaborate in the development of vocational training programmes and initiatives that equip the youth and workforce with the necessary skills to participate in the digital economy.

FOSTERING REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

- We acknowledge that the challenges and opportunities in ICT transcend national borders.

- We will actively collaborate with fellow African nations and other global partners to share knowledge, expertise, and best practices.

- We encourage the development of regional ICT infrastructure and cross-border Africa initiatives to promote connectivity and digital trade.

ENSURING ETHICAL AND INCLUSIVE TECHNOLOGY

- We commit to developing and adopting ethical guidelines and standards for the responsible use of technology, including AI ethics, data governance, and digital rights.

- We will actively promote gender equality in the ICT sector and ensure that technology benefits all members of society, including marginalized and vulnerable populations.

ACTION STEPS TOWARDS 2024 CONFERENCE

The Conference Identified the following initiatives/projects for 2024 between member organisations under the guidance of TICON Africa to be reported on at the next conference. Some of these initiatives can include:

- Regular sharing of member country news, projects, conferences, and activities in the field of ICT which can be shared on social media.

- Identify potential sponsors for members to support delegates to attend the 2024 conference in Mombasa, Kenya and to support the Kenya Associations to be able to present a successful conference.

- To activate the four committees to be able to make presentations to the conference about progress.

- Identify short courses which can be marketed through TICON platforms to the benefit of the organisations with initiative.

- Nominate participants who are willing to participate actively on the research project:

"Evaluating ICT Readiness and Future Preparedness of the African Continent"

In conclusion, we, the participants at the TICON Africa Inaugural Conference, pledge our unwavering commitment to bridging the digital divide and leading the technology transformation in Africa.

By working together, we believe that ICT will empower our continent to achieve sustainable development, economic prosperity, and social progress for all.

TICON Africa member bodies

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