

Innovation summit for Kenya

NAIROBI, Kenya - Kenya will for the second time in three years host a summit organised by The Economist Events, on February 1, 2017, at the Radisson Blu Hotel, in Nairobi. The day long summit themed, 'Driving economic and health-care innovation for tomorrow's Africa' is expected to bring together local and international delegates drawn from the private sector, the business community, African governments, media and international bodies.



The Economist Events

INNOVATING ECONOMIES

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Join Hon. **PHYLLIS KANDIE**, Cabinet secretary, east African affairs, commerce and tourism, Kenya, as she discusses in a ministerial debate about the need of "Innovating to increase productivity" for Africa's Economy.

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According to the organisers, the [high-level summit](#) will explore how African economies can effectively innovate and navigate through the challenges experienced in health care, infant health, infrastructure, productivity, education and make changes in their already established systems.

"The 'Innovating Economies' Summit will bring together institutions, investors and innovators from diverse industries with policymakers from across the continent to discuss the changes and benefits brought on by high-tech inventions and technology as well as policy interventions and business processes that add value and solve real challenges," said Sunayna Sethi senior programme editor EMEA at *The Economist*.

Africa's 'Silicon Valley'

Nairobi's bold growing profile as an innovation and entrepreneurship hub informed the decision to have the summit held in the city. Sethi is of the opinion that Kenya has emerged as a continent-leading country for innovation, making Nairobi the natural choice for a conference that focuses so heavily on innovation and the technology sector.

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"Nairobi has been described by many as 'Africa's Silicon Valley', with an established tech scene and start-up incubators like iHub, which has spawned over 1,300 jobs. Technology accounts for over 8% of Kenya's GDP. The Kenyan government has also shown commitment to growing the sector even further, improving IT infrastructure and making it easier for entrepreneurs to set up their own start-ups" said Sethi.

Recently the International Monetary Fund (IMF) warned that economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa will slow to 3% this

year due to low commodity prices, urging diversification away from an over-reliance on revenues from natural resources and transition to services and knowledge based economies to ensure sustainable progress.

“There is a need for innovation in the literal sense: a need to make changes to established economies and their frameworks by introducing new methods, ideas, and products. These are some of the areas to be deliberated upon in the Nairobi summit,” adds Sethi.

Amrote Abdella, regional director for Microsoft’s 4Afrika initiative agrees: “Innovation is the cornerstone of Africa’s growth into the digital age. Through affordable access to broadband, skills development, and investment in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, Africa can become a net exporter of value-added goods and services in this knowledge economy.

“As we enter the Fourth Industrial Revolution, it is critical that Africa becomes a producer, and not just a consumer of technology.”

The Economist believes that such a conference couldn’t have come at a more opportune time. The ‘Innovating Economies’ summit is focused on two areas of innovation - innovation for economic growth, and innovation in health-care.

The high-level meeting has the potential to transform African economies, which have experienced incredible growth during the past 15 years. The summit will focus on the role of innovation in transforming established economies, and how governments can foster innovation in order to ensure growth, and increase productivity and efficiency.

“We are also looking in particular at the role of innovation in transforming the health-care sector, and in doing so, changing lives. Africa has greater health problems than any other continent, but good progress has been seen over the past few years, and with recent advances in technology, there is a huge opportunity to improve standards of health-care and the efficiency of their delivery,” concludes Sethi.

The health-care aspect of the summit will bring together a diverse range of businesses, NGOs, policymakers and health-care practitioners to discuss what needs to be done to ensure African economies capitalise on the opportunity that innovation offers in health-care. Issues as diverse as the skills shortage, private sector health-care, and non-communicable diseases will be discussed, reflecting the broad variety of benefits that technological innovation could bring.

Innovation enablers

The high-level roster of attendees, drawn from South Africa, the US, the UK and Africa will also help identify innovation enablers and discuss innovative solutions for a broad range of issues faced by Africa's economies from poor infrastructure to their growing youth population, and from high rates of urbanisation to the lack of manpower development skills.

Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of East African Affairs, Commerce and Tourism, Phyllis Kandie is expected to open the summit. Other speakers at the event include Amit Thakker, chairman, Africa Healthcare Federation; Githinji Gitahi, CEO, Amref Health Africa; and Toni Townes-Whitley, corporate vice president, Worldwide Public Sector, Microsoft. The

meeting is organised by *The Economist* Events and sponsored by Microsoft, Johnson & Johnson and EIB.

To register for the event visit: www.Innovating-Economies.Economist.com.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>