



HOW
AFRICA
TRANSFORMS
AFTER THE VIRUS

STORIES . INSIGHTS . MOONSHOTS

2021

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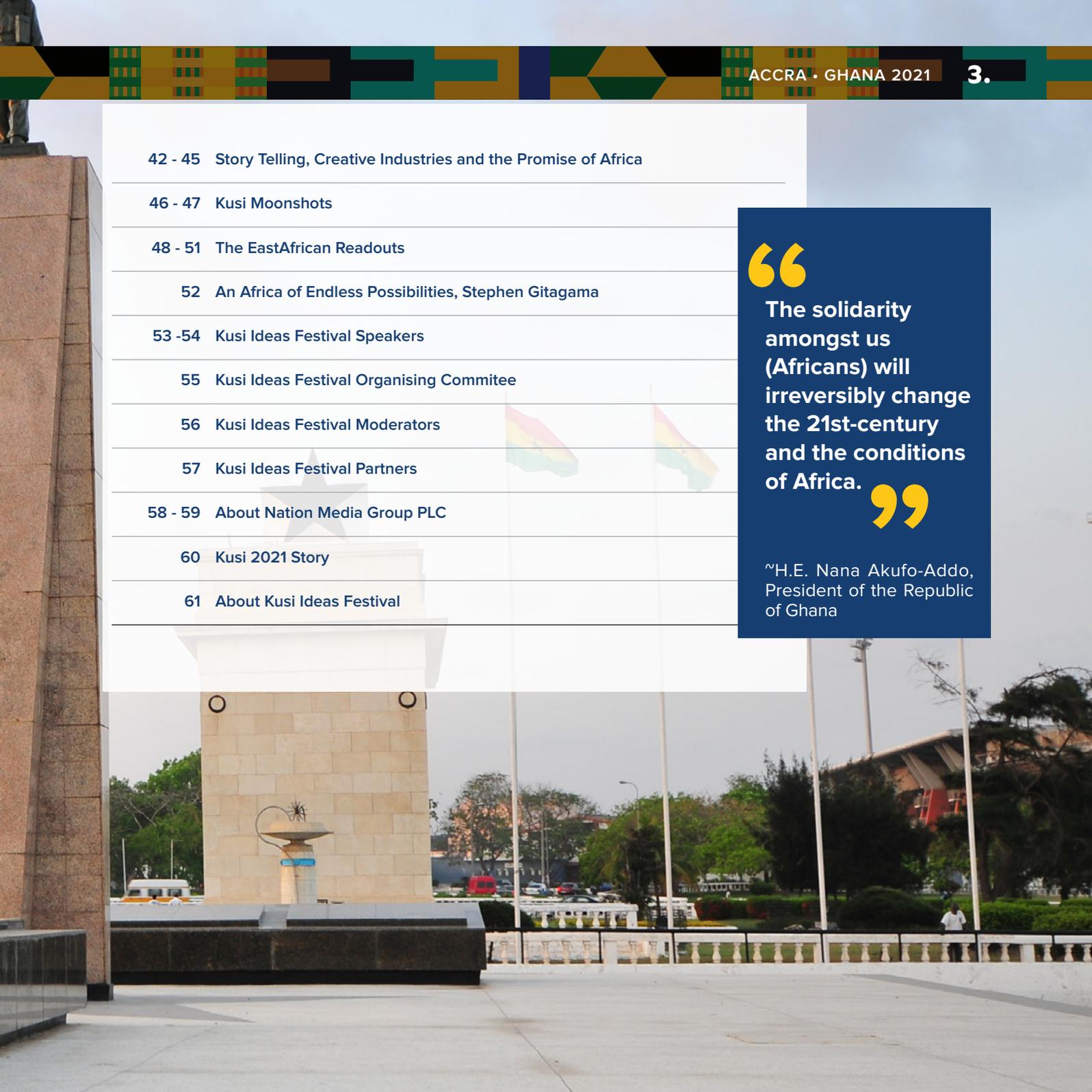
61 About Kusi Ideas Festival

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The solidarity amongst us (Africans) will irreversibly change the 21st-century and the conditions of Africa.

”

~H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo,
President of the Republic
of Ghana





Festival in Accra, Ghana

The third edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival was held in Accra, Ghana, on 10th - 11th December 2021, following two successful ones in Kigali (Rwanda) in 2019, and Kisumu (Kenya) the following year. The first edition set the stage for the continent's great minds, leading thinkers, entrepreneurs, business leaders, activists and artists to reflect on the past 60 years, and imagine together what the next 60 years could portend for Africa. The "Kusi" in Kusi Ideas Festival is named after the south easterly trade winds that blow on the Indian Ocean to the Eastern African coast, making possible the historical, cultural, technological and intellectual exchanges between Arabia, India, and the eastern coast of Africa and its hinterland, and by extension the greater Indian Ocean seaboard.

The second edition was held in the throes of the Covid-19 pandemic, which was feared would decimate the continent. Instead, Africa has weathered the pandemic better than most developed regions. Still, there are many who lost their loved ones, and millions have had their lives upended or ruined by the economic blow brought about by the pandemic. Convening a Festival of such magnitude under these conditions in 2020 in turn underscored the resilience of the African imagination – that even in a year of lockdowns and uncertainty, Africa still found room to dream and imagine a better future for the continent.

It was against this backdrop of rugged determination that the third edition of the Festival was held in Accra, under the theme, "*How Africa Transforms After the Virus*". The theme hints at renewal and recovery, but also transformation emerging from the virus crisis. The Festival was intended to uncover the learnings from the pandemic, including its impact on intra-African trade, and the progress the continent was making in handling health crises, including life saving vaccination. It explored the possibilities of technology, innovation, and creating the

next African wins, telling our own stories as Africans, opening borders for connecting Africa, and the return of the African diaspora. It also sought to examine the impact of Covid-19 on the African continent, and the innovations, opportunities and partnerships that will enable Africa to survive and thrive in a post-pandemic world.

Accra, Ghana

Ghana has been positioning itself as the meeting hub of Africa, and holding this Festival in Accra was in line with this strategy to attract more conferences, meetings and other international events as part of its tourism agenda, and for the development of the country.

Ghana has also become the main convening point between African and the black diaspora, following its "Year of Return -2019". The event was a major marketing campaign targeting the African diaspora to mark 400 years since the first enslaved Africans arrived in Jamestown, Virginia. The Year of Return sought to make Ghana the focus for millions of people of African descent seeking to trace their ancestry and identity. In so doing, Ghana has become a beacon for African people living on the continent and in the diaspora.

The official opening of the Festival was conducted by Ghana's President, His Excellency Nana Akufo-Addo, who delivered a brief yet moving speech, highlighting the unique position of Ghana on the continent that made it particularly suitable for hosting the third edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival, foremost of which is Ghana's support for continental collaboration, with its deep historical roots in developing and practising the philosophy of Pan-Africanism.

“Even beyond the pandemic, we still need to work together, and you can count on Ghana to keep up the support and solidarity, because this same solidarity is what will change the 21st century and the

Setting The Stage

On his part, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda - the pioneering host of the Festival (joining virtually) – emphasised the need for the continent to take advantage of the moment to develop the necessary technology and innovation to weather the shocks that the continent continues to face, even as the immediate threat of the Covid-19 pandemic is muted in the present moment.

President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda also joining the Festival by video link, acknowledged that Uganda had to institute tough measures to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, but in so doing experienced disruption in key sectors to the economy, including tourism, hospitality and transport.

conditions of Africa irreversibly. We’ll stretch our hands to our brothers and sisters in the Caribbean, forming a formidable alliance of people with talent and ingenuity,” said President Akufo-Addo.

Wamkele Mene, Secretary-General of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) underscored President Museveni’s remarks on the global justice inequalities that the pandemic had put into sharp focus.

These, and other statements made the transformation focus of this edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival urgent and necessary. African countries need to set up and accelerate efforts towards transforming economies, diversifying export markets, and developing inclusive and sustainable markets even after the pandemic ceases to be an immediate threat.

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My point is, this disease [Covid-19] can be defeated. ”

~H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
The President of the Republic of Uganda



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The work of the African CDC and AU procurement platform has highlighted the value of working together. This has emphasized the need to break-down barriers and silos across borders to create the Africa we want to see.

”



H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo

The President of the Republic of Ghana

Insights from Kusi Ideas Festival Host President

It is my pleasure to welcome each of you, from across the continent and beyond, to Ghana, and to our city, Accra. Over the past few years, Ghana has positioned itself as the meeting hub of Africa and hosting this event is in keeping to our plan to attract meetings, conferences and events as part of our trade and tourism agenda for the development of this country.

We embrace the spirit of Kusi, named after the trade winds that blew over the Indian Ocean. The Kusi Ideas Festival therefore looks at the modern 21st Century currents and trends that keep the wider Africa as a part of the global system to shape its future and define its response to the world and itself.

Ghana stands out as one of the points of modern African enlightenment, and one of the continent's functioning liberal democracies today. Accra is the headquarters of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and has become the main convergence market between Africa and the black diaspora. We are glad that by choosing to host the third edition of the festival here, Nation Media Group has shown interest in beginning to tap into this stream.

When the pandemic broke out, a number of steps were taken to minimize the effect of the pandemic. Committees were established to look into the country's pain points, and schools (from kindergartens to universities) were supplied with free Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs). Up to 11.5 million people - students, pupils, lecturers, teaching and non-teaching staff - received the much-needed items. Fighting this pandemic has been and continues to be a battle, and through it all we are learning lessons and iterating our response to the situation at hand.

There have been successes in the local manufacturing industry, with the 11.5m PPEs distributed, produced locally and seven of these companies exporting PPEs to other West African countries. The long supply chain disruption has made a strong case for allocating supplies close to home on the continent. We in Ghana have embraced this and stay committed to making this a reality beyond the pandemic.

The work of the African Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) - centered on support for Covid-19 PPEs and vaccines - and the AU procurement platform, have highlighted the value of working together as a continent. This has then emphasized the need to break down barriers and silos across borders to create the Africa we want to see.

This has been a great period for African cultural production and it is amazing and heartwarming to see how much the market for African art has grown globally. Africa, however, faces challenges in other areas key to its development - climate change, migration, the proliferation of extremist and violent groups and widening inequalities.

Over the next two days, we hope to hear more about the anticipated transformation of Africa and the steps we shall take to achieve our desired goals as a continent. The solidarity amongst us (Africans) will irreversibly change the 21st Century and the conditions of Africa. We should then stretch our hands across the Atlantic to our brothers, sisters and kin in the Americas and the Caribbean, to form a formidable alliance of people with talent, ingenuity and energy to deliver the most predicted century of Africa and people of African descent.

Thank you so much for coming. I am very happy to declare this conference duly open and wish you the very best. Thank you

Transformation to Build a Resilient Future

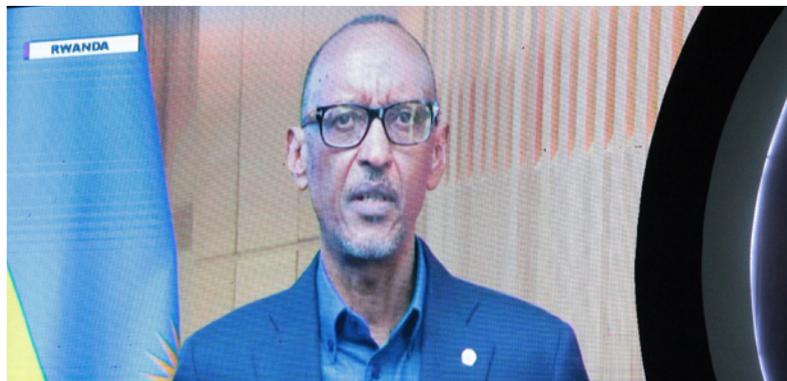
I would like to start by congratulating Nation Media Group for putting together this third edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival in these very challenging circumstances. This past year, significant progress has been made towards Africa's recovery, but we still have a long way to go. In Rwanda, we have learned that transformation is a continuous process that requires thinking ahead to build a more resilient future. As we continue to build the Africa we want, let us apply the same mindset.

The Kusi Ideas Festival is about innovation and I would like to highlight three key areas needed to drive pan-African transformation. For one, technology constantly creates new and better ways to share ideas and in essence, that is what the Africa Continental Free Trade Area aims to facilitate. We need to see significant investment in the digital capabilities of our people, especially the youth.

Second, climate smart agriculture should be scaled up. This practice would improve productivity while keeping our environment safe, even with the dual threat of Covid-19 and food insecurity that we are currently witnessing. Lastly, innovations should be introduced in the delivery of social protection with the support of the private sector.

These three items are all part of the important conversations taking place at the Kusi Ideas Festival. The level of cooperation in Africa since the beginning of the pandemic has been encouraging and we will need to continue working together beyond the crisis to see tangible results.

Please continue counting on Rwanda's support for this homegrown African initiative. I wish you a successful conference.



H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda gives his remarks at the Kusi Ideas Festival III opening ceremony.

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The level of cooperation in Africa since the beginning of the pandemic has been encouraging and we will need to continue working together beyond the crisis. ”

H.E Paul Kagame

The President of the Republic of Rwanda



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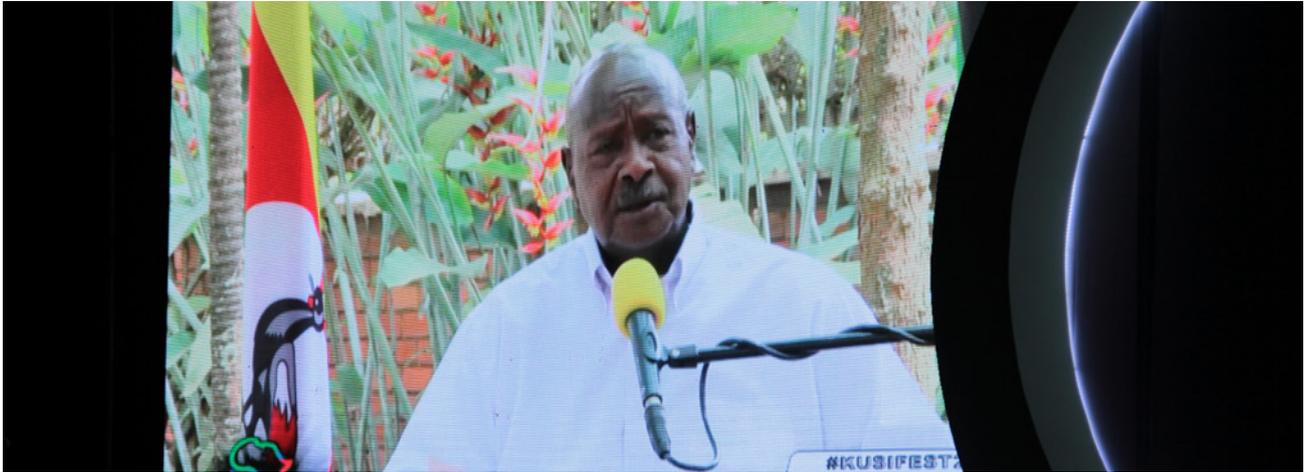
The Covid-19 pandemic has acted as a lesson for us to prioritize our pharmaceuticals and manufacturing industries.

”

H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

The President of the Republic of Uganda

Taking Lessons from the Pandemic



H.E. Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, gives his remarks virtually at the third edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival in Ghana

In Uganda, we have lost about 3,000 people since the start of the pandemic, with another 120,000 being affected by Covid-19, a majority of these being 50 years old or with pre-existing conditions.

We have, however, taken stringent measures to curb the spread of the virus, putting in place social distance, lockdowns and hygiene measures as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO). Unfortunately, some of these restrictions had disruptive effects on key sectors of our economy such as tourism, the hospitality industry, transport and logistics. Other industries such as agriculture were not severely affected.

One of the key learnings from the pandemic was that Covid-19 was preventable with the right measures and could be vaccinated against.

We are grateful that the Covid-19 vaccine has been developed quickly, unlike HIV for which a vaccine still does not exist decades since its discovery. It is, however, unfortunate that when the vaccine became available, there was selfish hoarding and monopoly across the globe.

It has, however, acted as a lesson for us to prioritize our pharmaceuticals and manufacturing industries to enable us to produce our own vaccines. We have embarked on the journey to develop our own vaccine here in Uganda, and though we have encountered a number of obstacles, we remain optimistic.

Our conclusion, therefore, is that while Covid-19 is a terrible virus, it can be defeated. I thank you and I wish you a successful conference.

The African Age

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of Nation Media Group to say Karibu (which means welcome in Kiswahili) to the third edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival.

I would also like to acknowledge the help and support we have received from the Government of Ghana through the Ghana Tourism Authority and all our partners from Asaase Radio to Kirinyaga County, Kenya Airways, Christian Aid, Thika Cloth Mills, African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat, Image Registrars and many others who have made this festival possible here in Accra.

The inaugural Kusi Ideas Festival held in the city of Kigali, Rwanda in December 2019, was co-hosted by the President, H.E. Paul Kagame, who has remained a very close and dear supporter of this initiative. The second conference was held at the lake city of Kisumu in Kenya co-hosted by H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta and the Governor of Kisumu, Professor Anyang' Nyong'o. We are very proud to have been able to bring this pan-African initiative to West Africa. It does not belong to Kenya, neither does it belong to Nation Media Group; it belongs to all of us Africans.

We have had major successes in the previous conferences with some of our speakers at Kusi I flagging the risk that the reckless exploitation of nature would lead to an age of zoonotic diseases, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to this, two years before the COP-26 conference that just took place in Scotland, our scientists had indicated a climate change crisis on the horizon that we needed to prepare for. This has come to pass, with climate change being the biggest topic globally.

NMG created the festival to provide a platform to explore the place of Africa in the world today and to create a body of ideas that look into the future of our continent. The objective of the conference was to understand how we can collectively manage the risks of its transformation and take advantage of the opportunities that abound on the continent.

We have had this dream of connecting East to West with a railway line and I think that dream is one of the things that we are going to discuss at this conference. We need to have a convergence of ideas between ourselves and the young men and women around this room, who will actualize the ideas and thoughts brought forth here. The festival also aims to offer a pulpit for learning from the brilliant Africans seated here today - from academicians, engineers, doctors, artists, investors, scientists, captains of industries, young entrepreneurs and innovators to media practitioners, businessmen and women.

It is really a shame that six decades after most African countries fought for and gained their independence, Africa continues to be treated contemptuously by the developed world as we have seen with the ongoing debacle on vaccines politics. African nations were asked to pay two to three times what the developed nations were paying for the Covid-19 vaccine. Being treated with that kind of contempt is the reason we are here today - to put our minds together and see how Africa can transform itself to be heard on the global stage and play its role.

Africa is home to about 1.4 billion people but does not have a seat on the Security Council of the United Nations whilst a small country like Britain, with half the population of Nigeria, has a seat! And this, ladies and gentlemen, is simply not right and it is up to us Africans to sit together and figure out how we are going to change that sort of situation.

We, however, also have ourselves to blame. As a continent, we continue to ignore, procrastinate and fail to implement good ideas like giving life to the treaty on the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, which we know can make a difference to the lives of the millions of people that reside in Africa. We need to get out of our slumber and get our act together if we are to survive this digital age.

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*Africa telling her own story
is a strategic imperative with
far-reaching consequences
on our survival.*”

As we meet here in Accra, we are challenged to reflect on what the last two years have taught Africa. We have had some success stories – governments built hospitals in record time; Ghana and Rwanda were collecting samples for tests using drones way ahead of Europe and United States; Uganda had its biggest ever coffee export; and a company in Kenya, Revitalise, became Africa’s biggest producer and exporter of vaccine syringes, supplying over 70 million Covid-19 syringes to over 20 countries. These are some of the things that show the resilience of our African people.

Globally, there is a stereotypical characterization of Africa as a continent for the poor, a continent that can never get its act together. If you want to learn anything about Ghana, Togo, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Botswana, etc, you would probably go to BBC, CNN or Sky News. Today, we have the capacity and media platforms to tell the stories in our own words and therefore paint the picture of the continent accurately. Africa telling her own story is a strategic imperative with far-reaching consequences on our survival.

This year’s festival will focus on various elements of enhancing Africa as a continent, from infrastructure, pan-African trade, climate change and so much more. This year’s conference is about you, it’s about me, it’s about our children, it’s about our grandchildren and it’s about the future of Africa. Let us invent the Africa we want for tomorrow, here! I believe we have the intellectual capacity to do it. What we need is the will to actualise it and enable Africa to take its place in the international community. Thank you.



*Nation Media Group Chairman, Dr. Wilfred Kiboro
welcomes guests to the third edition of the Kusi Ideas
Festival in Ghana*



H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary General, Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) gives his speech at Kusi III held at the Accra International Conference Centre

AfCFTA Role in Africa's Future

The Kusi Ideas Festival comes at a critical time when our continent is confronting an unprecedented public health crisis that has recently also become a political crisis. The pandemic has caused significant disruption and hardship in nearly every aspect of our lives, and almost two years since its onset, it continues to weigh heavily on our national economies.

While our continent is expected to transition from the Covid-19 induced recession, the expected growth rate of 3.4% and 4.5% in 2021 and 2022 respectively, indicates that Africa's recovery will be the slowest in the world due to the limited room that our fiscal policies

have to support our economies and the slow vaccine rollout. This means there is a risk that Africa's growth could be slower for longer, setting back gains in economic development with the prospect of facing a lost decade. There is, therefore, an urgent need for African countries to step up and accelerate efforts towards the transformation of our economies through diversified export markets, inclusive and sustained patterns of economic growth post Covid.

With this context, the focus of this year's Kusi Ideas Festival "*How Africa Transforms After the Virus*" is opportune and relevant. The significant disruptions to supply chains, trade restrictions and export bans, particularly on materials that are required to fight the pandemic, exposed Africa's weakness, over reliance on global supply chains and lack of self-sufficiency. These disruptions resulted in a decrease in the availability of final and intermediate goods imported to Africa. By some estimates, African industries import over 50% of their industrial machinery in manufacturing and transport equipment from outside of

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The days of negotiating for our dignity as Africans are long gone... We must not allow our dignity to be subject to negotiation or to be taken away by others.

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the continent and approximately 82% - 92% of the continent's food items, medical and pharmaceutical products originate from outside. The pandemic experience comes with lessons for the continent with the first being that Africa must accelerate industrial development through the establishment of regional value chains. The AfCFTA secretariat in collaboration with the MasterCard Foundation has developed an AfCFTA private sector strategy focusing on four priority value chains - agro-processing, automotive, pharmaceuticals and transport & logistics. These value chains have the potential to contribute over \$11 billion annually in production and over \$5 billion annually in intra-African trade. This represents more than double their current contribution to intra-African trade. The resulting increase in production and trade has the potential to create over 700,000 jobs, 55% of which will be for women and young people.

The second lesson that we have learnt from the Covid-19 pandemic is that we must use the AfCFTA as a tool to redress the global imbalances we see today in intellectual property rights. Only 7% of Africans today (December 2021) are fully vaccinated. Many developed countries procured five times more vaccines than they require, and are currently issuing a third shot, while Africa did not get nearly enough quantities for its population. The hoarding of these vaccines by developed countries further points to the urgency of the task - we must accelerate our ability to manufacture and produce vaccines and generic drugs to improve public health.

I want to congratulate the scientists from Botswana and South Africa for detecting the Omicron variant, which we now know existed in other parts of the world. These countries have, however, suffered greatly for sharing their knowledge and expertise and more importantly, for expressing global solidarity in the fight against a pandemic, while evidence suggests that Dutch scientists were aware of the variant and did not disclose this information to the international community.

It is very shameful that the government of Canada would today require travellers from banned countries (e.g. Botswana, South Africa, Zambia and Malawi) to transit through a third country to obtain a PCR test which they deem to be authentic. This is modern day neocolonialism! It was very common for the apartheid regime to arbitrarily decide that black South Africans could no longer access a particular area for whatever reason. What we are seeing around the world is exactly what the apartheid government did - arbitrarily restrict travel of people of their origin or because of their skin color. Today these restrictions have been imposed on us because we are African, there is no other reason.

The days of negotiating for our dignity as Africans are long gone... they were not happy days, anyway. We must not allow our dignity to be subject to negotiation or to be taken away by others. We can, however, only assert out dignity where we have self-sufficiency, economic independence and industrial capability. I wish you very successful deliberations. Thank you very much.

New Opportunities for Accelerating Pan-African Trade

01



**Mathuki****Grynspan****Grant**

Speakers:

Rebeca Grynspan

Secretary General, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Hon. Dr. Peter Mathuki

Secretary General, East African Community

Yofi Grant

CEO, Ghana Investment Promotion Centre

Julians Amboko

Business Editor, NTV Kenya (Moderator)

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), founded in 2018, under the auspices of the African Union, aimed at accelerating intra-African trade and boosting the continent's trading position in the global market by strengthening its common voice and policy space in global trade negotiations.

There's still a lot of scepticism on the effectiveness of AfCFTA, despite holding so much promise. This panel explored the gains that pan-African trade had registered so far, and what remains to be done.

For starters, it is encouraging that as of February 2021, thirty-six African countries had ratified the AfCFTA agreement and deposited their instruments, said Dr. Peter Mathuki, Secretary-General of the East African Community. "Negotiations on the harmonisation of processes in particular digital protocol especially for women and youth, and conflict resolution strategies have already begun."

Even with this strong start, one of the challenges facing AfCFTA is harmonising standards and investment protocols, seeing that the continent has various regional integration bodies, and many African

DATA DIVE



\$22
billion

projected profit revenue

With AfCFTA, it is estimated that trade in Africa will grow by 33%, producing a projected profit revenue of \$22 billion.

countries belong to more than one. There is also the question of an uneven landscape of development and industrialization, and with this, what liberalised trade would mean on a competitive scale. How do we ensure that there is mutual gain as far as the AfCFTA is concerned?

“This is a question that every trade region has had to ask themselves. With the continental free trade area, even the less developed countries will have a fair chance to trade, as compared to trading outside the continent,” said Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

Trade grows, but inclusive growth takes more time, she said. “AfCFTA will give these less-industrialised countries a chance to get into regional value chains. You also have to take into account that the trade benefits will spread across the continent, not just to one part.”

Grynspan emphasised that we cannot expect this project to reach maximum benefit in just a year or two; it’s designed to be a long-term project dedicated to real African transformation.

Increasing productivity and helping small and medium-sized businesses will give Africa the opportunity for inclusive growth. “We need to keep the perseverance and the long term vision for Africa being a real continental free trade area,” she stressed.

“In almost all integration schemes, small and medium-sized enterprises are better integrated into trade. The opportunities are there for them, as long as they abide by the rules of the framework. We need to simplify transaction costs, improve infrastructure, and have more inclusive digitised government processes in order to lessen the burden on them,” said Grynspan.

What financing models would work for this region to unlock their full potential without being strained economically? For Dr. Mathuki, this would entail thinking innovatively, highlighting data from the African Development Bank that indicates the continent needs US\$170 billion annually in order to close present funding gaps.

“Our financing options as a continent, apart from seeking external funding, include domestic resource mobilisation, such as infrastructure bonds or road levies, or transfer duties to a private company to build, operate and transfer a certain project for a specified period

of time. Strengthening capital markets that can generate income to support our projects is also another [possibility], as is promoting digital payment systems.”

Yofi Grant, CEO of Ghana Investment Promotion Centre weighed in, stressing the need for reliable and affordable energy solutions, as this has been a key chokepoint for growth of small, medium and even large scale enterprises on the continent.

“We have energy power pools on the continent already; how do we then harness this surplus energy plus the infrastructure that already exists and use it for trade? The distance between countries with a surplus and those with a deficit needs to be bridged. We need to understand our power needs and re-allocate accordingly,” said Grant, acknowledging the need for these energy solutions to be in line with current climate challenges, that is, decarbonising from oil and gas and transitioning into renewable energy.

The digital economy continues to provide opportunities, though the outstanding question is one of cost and accessibility. “Digitization can generate over three million jobs in Africa by 2025,” said Dr. Mathuki, while Grant highlighted that governments must reflect more deeply on their tech policies and plans.

DATA DIVE



85%
SMEs

90% of the world’s platinum comes from Africa, as well as 90% of the world’s cobalt, 75% of the world’s coltan, and 50% of the world’s gold. Meanwhile, the African economy is made up of approximately 85% SMEs.



Julians Amboko, NTV Business Editor (Left) and Yofi Grant, CEO, Ghana Investments Promotion, prepare to discuss Pan-African Trade at Kusi Idea Festival III in Accra, Ghana.

“Digital services taxes have been introduced [across the continent]. We need to find a way to scale down the cost and ramp up accessibility while also appreciating that governments are under fiscal constraints and in pursuit of more revenue,” said Grant.

“One of the reasons technology is so expensive is because we hardly own our own data as a continent,” he added. “We need to build our own platforms just like China did and own our data. Bringing in more people to use technology also brings down its cost. We also need a standard unionised payment system that works across Africa.”

Overheard at Kusi

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There are two constant things in this world, God and taxes. ”

~Yofi Grant

Beyond the Return- African Diaspora and New Possibilities





Obeng-Bediako



Sambili



Prof. Wa Goro



Agyeman

Speakers:

Akwasi Agyeman

CEO, Ghana Tourism Authority

Prof. Wangui wa Goro

Academic Translator, Writer, Poet & Cultural Cultivator

Jake Obeng-Bediako

Ghana Youth Ambassador for Diaspora Affairs

Katra Sambili

Founder and Executive Director, My Early Bird Africa

Dentaa Amoateng

Founder & CEO, GUBA Enterprise (Moderator)

The United Nations (UN) declared 2014-2024 as the international decade for people of African descent; on its part, Ghana designated 2019 as the 'Year of Return', intended to signal to the African diaspora that Ghana was ready to welcome them 'back home'. It was to position the country as a key travel destination for African Americans and the larger African diaspora. This second panel explored the new possibilities that these travel and cultural connections could bring.

Setting the tone for this panel, Jake Obeng-Bediako stressed that an African anywhere is home on the continent. "We are African citizens, first and foremost. So when we leave the diaspora to come back to the continent, we're coming home. We are doing the same things as our peers on the continent, studying the same courses, using the same technology. The value we bring is that we have this fire in our bellies, and the excitement to make things better for our continent," he said.

Akwasi Agyeman, CEO of Ghana Tourism Authority, spoke about the 'Year of Return' being more than just an opportunity for cultural tourism. "When we started the Year of Return, the idea was to have more people come visit the motherland. We focused on cultural tourism in terms of what they saw, what they ate and where they went. But going forward, we want more engagement outside people just coming here as tourists to spend money. We believe there are a lot of business opportunities we can tap into with the diaspora. We are also looking at strengthening tourism ties between different African countries thus boosting each other's economies."

He continued to state that, "It feels good to see people connecting, and not just Ghana. It's not just about having citizenship but about coming back home. We are currently working on making the process easier, in terms of visa processing, so we hope that when the 'Africa Home Return Bill' becomes an act, we'll see more diaspora people encouraged to make the move."

However, the relationship between 'returnees' and the Africans they encounter on the continent is not always rosy. It is frequently assumed



Panel of speakers from across the continent discuss the theme

Overheard at Kusi

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The African identity is the skin you are in, the essence of your soul, wanting to dance when you hear drums beating. All humanity emerged from Africa, so our identity is the global identity. It is what you see in the mirror, and what you see around you, and you should be glad every single day that you are African.

”

~Katra Sambili

that diasporans are cash machines of sorts, with the expectation that they should come and open their wallets to help Africa. Is this a fair characterisation?

According to academic and researcher Prof. Wangui wa Goro, it is not necessarily a bad thing for Africans living abroad to be expected to ‘give back’ to the continent. “[Giving back] means we are still conscious of our roots, our communities, and our nations. We are not compelled to help or to pay tax, we provide this assistance voluntarily.”

“At the same time though, we can’t just be a source of cash without having rules or policies around remittances. The main return we can get is to see this money spent properly, with integrity.”

Removing visa and passport requirements for African citizens will also be a crucial driver of free movement and exchange of ideas across borders. Even though individual African countries and the regional integration blocs are at different stages when it comes to free movement, Prof. Goro acknowledges that it’s starting to happen already.

“[Free movement] may not be fully physical yet, but digitally, we are there. What we need to start with is a common language for all of Africa. Kiswahili was recently added as a global language in

international settings, so we need to do it before other continents beat us to the punch. We need to harness the value of Ubuntu (togetherness) for all Africans.”

Responding to the criticism that Kiswahili already ‘belongs’ to one part of the continent, Prof. Goro pushed back, asserting that “Kiswahili is a growing language, and only belongs to a small community in East Africa, so [using it] as a continental language really won’t be oppressing anyone. We need to drop the politics around nationalism and look at how important it is to have one common language for our growth.” A common language will open up trade borders, and strengthen our solidarity, she stressed.

As Africans, we are becoming increasingly confident in our identity, the panel heard. The music and entertainment scene has much to do with this growing confidence, for example, with Beyoncé featuring Shatta Wale on a hit song, or Wizkid filling out the O2 stadium.

“A lot of us grew up listening to music that came from outside the continent,” said Obeng-Bediako. “And now that Africa is part of that global entertainment picture, we are happy to finally be acknowledged. This only came about because we owned our music and its inherent cultural elements. The rest of the world had to pay attention, making Africa mainstream.”

Sambili echoed these sentiments, highlighting films like Black Panther and social movements such as Black Lives Matter. “We have realised the power of our culture, and are no longer on the periphery. We are front and centre, receiving awards in music, film, arts, sports, and literature. We are in all the rooms now, and we are proudly wearing our motherland,” she said.

At the same time, there needs to be caution in fighting against reactionary forces at this moment, urged Sambili. “While we are shining brighter, the colonial and racist forces are still fighting back. So before we celebrate, we need to heal the wounds we carry from our ancestors’ pain. We need to protect our culture.”

Ultimately, we are in a special moment of possibility. “We create our own culture. We can draw from our history, and draw from our creatives. We can have as much as we wish to have, and it is all for us. What you imagine is exactly what you get. That is our identity, that we can create,” said Prof. Goro.

Overheard at Kusi

“

Anything that colonialism threatened to destroy that we through our power are taking back, those are the elements that make up our identity.”

”

~Jake Obeng-Bediako

DATA DIVE



**80
Million**
Kiswahili Speakers

Kiswahili is spoken by an estimated 5 million people as a native language, and an estimated 80 million in East and Central Africa as a second language. After Arabic, Kiswahili is the most widely understood language in Africa.

Vaccination: the Killer App that will Get Africa out of Crisis





Mimi Delese Darko, CEO, Ghana Food and Drugs Authority, gives her views on vaccination on the continent, via Zoom

Speakers:

Dr. Sylvia Vito

Head, Africa Acceleration, Government Affairs & Market Access, AstraZeneca SSA & FSA

Dr. John Mark Bwanika

Director of Operations, Rocket Health Africa

Delese Mimi Darko

CEO, Ghana Food and Drugs Authority

Charles Abugre

Development Economist, former CEO of Savannah Accelerated Development Authority

Smriti Vidyarthi

Editor Current Affairs, NTV Kenya (Moderator)

Vaccination has emerged as a key component of the fight against Covid-19, but for Africa, the path to vaccine access has been rocky, riddled with supply chain problems and outright discrimination by richer countries, especially in Europe and North America. At the time when the second edition of Kusi Festival was happening in 2020, no country on the continent had received any vaccines. One year later, the continent has only managed to vaccinate 7-10% of its population.

The first challenge was in the supply and delivery of vaccine orders, said Dr. John Mark Bwanika on this panel exploring vaccination progress on the continent. “During the first days and weeks of vaccine rollout, the vaccines were not enough, so that notion [of insufficient supply] spread. Now, when there’s more than enough to go around, many people still do not have that information.”

Second, there was glaring vaccine injustice from wealthier countries. “When the pandemic began, Western countries stated that no one is safe until everyone is safe,” said Charles Abugre, a development economist and former CEO of Savannah Accelerated Development Authority. “They promised to donate 1.8 billion doses to developing countries. [They need to] fulfil that promise first; we can’t let world leaders get away with breaking promises. They need to be accountable, and not punish us when they do not fulfil their end of the bargain.”



Vito



Bwanika



Darko



Abugre

The third issue was misinformation about the vaccine. “We had to battle with a lot of misinformation on social media and the Western world, but now we are seeing a higher uptake of vaccines, so we believe we are on the right track,” said Delese Mimi Darko, CEO of the Ghana Food and Drugs Authority.

In this challenging context, AstraZeneca has taken the lead in vaccine manufacturing globally, and especially in lower income countries, where two-thirds of vaccines are from AstraZeneca. The vaccine has proven to be effective against emerging variants, including Omicron.

“As of today, there’s no evidence to indicate that the current variants are above the strength of the vaccine. As scientists, we are still collecting data to ensure that we are able to ascertain and educate the population that [the variants] can be managed. We are aggressively researching and learning. Viruses will always mutate, but we will always be a step ahead,” said Dr Sylvia Vito, Head, Africa Acceleration at AstraZeneca.

The continent, however, still relies heavily on vaccine donations, which is unsustainable. The panel urged respective governments and health authorities to work together in developing its own vaccines. “We have enough resources to do this... all around the world, a lot of the top scientists are African, we just need to pull our resources together,” said Darko.

“Our constraints are very basic – they are economic,” she continued. “We do not have the money to fund a lot of the things we want to do. We have the will and commitment, but very terrible infrastructure and wealth being accumulated only by a select few. We need to start by improving our infrastructure and investing in technology, then, we can talk about developing and distributing the vaccine.”

Vaccine justice suggests that every effort must be made to reduce the cost of vaccines, and ensure they are easily accessible. It also requires giving support to companies that are interested in creating a vaccine, especially those from less (economically) well-off countries. The media also needs to use its voice to hold everyone who is involved in vaccine production and distribution accountable, the panel heard.

However, there’s still the question of (mis)trust in governments, which may have created some vaccine hesitancy. “There are people who were quite suspicious about the motives of the vaccination drives, for example, with rumours that vaccines only had water instead of active ingredients,” explained Dr. Bwanika.

Overheard at Kusi

“

The reason Covid-19 is being talked about more than any other disease, is because it is affecting our businesses, infrastructure and development. From this, we need to realise that our health is our wealth.

”

~Delese Mimi Darko



The members of the vaccine panel pose for a picture at the end of their session

“Something we can borrow from a country like Rwanda is using trusted bodies like local organisations, church leaders, or even private entities like bars and entertainment spots to drive vaccine uptake. [We’ve seen that] the turnout is much higher when the person calling you to get vaccinated is someone you trust.”

Going forward, how important will it be to get a booster for Covid-19? “We can’t think of getting booster shots when we have only 10% of

the adult population having been vaccinated,” said Dr. Vito. “We need to work with governments to get to at least 40%, before we can talk about boosters. So, the question is, what do we do to ensure people are not looking at the vaccine as an optional thing.”

Overheard at Kusi

“

The whole Covid-19 pandemic has felt like building a plane while you’re already flying.”

”

~Dr. Sylvia Vito

DATA DIVE



**300
Million**

Doses Administered

Africa needs a minimum of 1.5 billion doses to cover just a percentage of where the Western countries are. So far, the continent has only administered about 300 million doses, purchased at \$10 a dose, which is extremely expensive for these economies.

Technology, Innovation and Creating the Next African Wins





Waiguru



Chinery-Hesse



Mbaka



Simons

Speakers:

H.E. Anne Mumbi Waiguru

Governor, Kirinyaga County, Kenya

Maureen Mbaka

Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs, Kenya

Herman Kojo Chinery-Hesse

Technology Entrepreneur and Founder of SoftTribe

Bright Simons

President, mPedigree

Anita Erskine

Founder, Anita Erskine Media & Boss Lady Inc. (Moderator)

In the past two decades, improvements in Africa's ICT sector have been largely driven by expanding mobile digital financial services: The region had nearly half of global mobile money accounts in 2018 and will see the fastest growth in mobile money through 2025. This panel explored the wins of the digital age for the continent, and the challenges that remain.

Governments, too, have been keen to embrace technology, with Governor Anne Waiguru on this panel highlighting the country's Huduma Centres - a decentralised network of offices giving citizens access to various government services - as being powered by digital solutions.

"Huduma Centres have been extremely helpful with movement restrictions in place in Kenya. It would have been impossible to access government services in the capital city," said the Governor. In her own Kirinyaga County, she indicates that there is an app that connects farmers and buyers to each

other, so the negotiations and transactions are mostly made online, making things easier and of course preventing the spread of Covid-19.

In 2015, the Huduma Centres Initiative was the Overall Winner in 'Improving the Delivery of Public Services', awarded by the United Nations for a government initiative aimed at improving delivery of services to the public. Even so, the idea of Huduma Centres was difficult to get off the ground because of government red tape.

"Government approvals are difficult because there are so many people to deal with and so many people who need to approve an idea," said Waiguru, explaining that Huduma Centres were conceptualised as far back as 2002. "However, there were always hitches getting it off the ground. We were able to finally do it by creating a team of young, creative people, then going to the older folk for funding approval, advice and political backing. That's how we did it."



Panel of African experts discuss technology at the third edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival.

What does technology mean for Pan-Africanism? “For starters, Covid-19 pushed us to move faster in terms of development and innovation,” stated technology entrepreneur Herman Kojo Chinery-Hesse. “What we need to learn now is that we are equal to Western countries in terms of technology. We learnt in the same schools and use the same computers, so we need to be able to create our own tech spaces, and not spend billions of dollars a year to purchase software licences from them.”

Bright Simons shared the experience of his firm mPedigree, whose core innovation is a unique product identification marker that consumers use to determine product authenticity. “At mPedigree, we created a system where a client can find out from the manufacturer if what they have is an original product. This innovation is also a win for the manufacturer who does not want counterfeit products in their name in the market.”

Nigeria was the first country in the world to take on this verification service, and found great utility in verifying medicines and other pharmaceutical products. mPedigree now operates in 12 African countries.

Overheard at Kusi

“

We need to develop our own Pan-African e-commerce business, the likes of Amazon. We already have the ideas and the African market, so we really need to create and own these tech-spaces.”

~ Herman Kojo Chinery-Hesse

“I feel that the reason that mPedigree has not permeated the global market, despite being an innovation that is decades ahead [elsewhere], is because nothing an African does is considered worthwhile unless it’s made or approved by a white person,” said Simons. “We need to take advantage of the opportunities, innovations and amazing brains we have right now, celebrate them on our continent, and have them attract attention from outside.”

African youth are already drivers of innovation and technology, and are always willing to take on new things. The government can advance this by creating programmes for young people to learn digital skills.

Maureen Mbaka, the Chief Administrative Secretary at the Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs in Kenya, drew attention to a digital literacy programme implemented in schools, intended to teach children from a young age everything they need to know to manoeuvre in the digital era.

“In Kenya, there is also the Ajira Programme, that equips the youth with skills needed for online work. These are centres around the country that are equipped with computers and internet to ease access for learning these skills. Governments have to continue to support youth-friendly work,” said Mbaka.

Chinery-Hesse, Founder of SoftTribe, underscored the absolute need to deal with intellectual property rights, where there have been cases of corporate and public sector workers stealing ideas from the youth and selling them to richer companies or individuals abroad.

This coupled with the lack of support from the government can be demotivating for the youth to pursue their tech ideas.

The panel also stressed the need to incorporate rural areas in the technology conversation, since a large part of Africa is rural.

“It is not the easiest of tasks,” Waiguru admitted. “Most people in rural areas, for example, farmers, have their own traditional ways of doing things, so convincing them to change is an uphill task. What helped us in Kirinyaga County was that at the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, rural folk had to learn how to use technology to keep their businesses afloat. There were proper training sessions, and the formation of cooperatives that helped with the sales of farm products. Our mobile money service was also really helpful, since it enabled cashless payments,” said the governor.

How do we take the marginalised along with us in this brave new digital world?

“The aim is to ensure we do not create a bigger gap while on the quest for a fully tech Africa. We cannot continue on the path of inequity that is currently plaguing us,” said Chinery-Hesse. “We need to transform policies to support the already marginalised populations, and to not only use technology for small business, but to enable them to fully flourish just like their more privileged counterparts. We should also work to bring investors and the private sector on the ground and connect them to see the amazing things marginalised folk can do, and link them to funding and resources.”

DATA DIVE



39%
Of Africa’s Population
Use Internet.

According to the World Economic Forum, Africa’s digital economy could contribute nearly \$180 billion to the region’s growth by the mid-decade. Yet with only 39% of the population using the internet, Africa is currently the world’s least connected continent.

Open Borders, Connecting Africa and the Infrastructure Challenge





Prince Moses (right) moderates a panel discussing the challenges and opportunities in the development of Africa's infrastructure

Speakers:

Kwame Pianim

Economist and former Ghanaian Government Official

Foster Akugri

Founder, Hacklab Foundation

Silvester Kasuku

CEO, African Centre for Transport, Infrastructure and Regional Integration (ACTIRI)

Afua Gyamfua Owusu-Akyaw

President, Association of Ghana Importers (Ashanti Region)

Clare Akamanzi

CEO, Rwanda Development Board

Prince Moses Ofori-Atta

General Manager, Asaase Radio (Moderator)

Historically, African infrastructure systems - roads, railways, and telecommunications - were designed for extraction by colonial administrations, with these channels leading to metropolises and coastlines for export, and not for internal connectivity. This panel explored new possibilities for African infrastructure, the major funding gaps notwithstanding.

To begin with, Clare Akamanzi, CEO of the Rwanda Development Board, pointed out that much can be done with limited resources, as the Rwandan experience has proved time and again. She said Rwanda invested greatly in public spending, from transport, electricity and a dry port during the pandemic, and also encouraged the private sector to get into the infrastructure space in order to bring in investments. The country also went to the market to raise money through treasury and government bonds, and was able to improve access to services from the funds raised.

"Rwanda had an economic recovery fund that started at US\$100 million then grew to US\$150 million. This money was set aside to help sectors that had been affected by the pandemic like the transport system, tourism, and the hotel industry, amongst others," said Akamanzi.



Owusu-Akyaw



Kasuku



Akugri



Pianim



Akamanzi

Rwanda in some ways is an outlier, as most other African countries face deeper challenges with investment and service delivery, affecting trade and productivity. Afua Gyamfua Owusu-Akyaw highlighted the urgent need to prioritise infrastructure development.

“When we talk about the link between trade and infrastructure, we are talking about having a bad or no road network connecting African countries, so it takes months to have goods delivered, when it could take days or just a few weeks. This has a ripple effect, affecting manufacturers, small business and even government in terms of revenue,” she said. Owusu-Akyaw is the President of the Association of Ghana Importers (Ashanti Region).

According to Silvester Kasuku, CEO of the African Centre for Transport, Infrastructure and Regional

Integration, divergent priorities for various countries could be a reason why collaborating on infrastructure across countries doesn't always bear fruit.

“Each country has its own ideas and future plans, so bringing these together with a united goal can be challenging. But we can start by looking at ideas that have already worked, such as the Kenya- Ethiopia highway,” said Kasuku. “We also need a synchronised regulatory system and concerted financing mechanisms that work across borders, whether we are borrowing these funds or generating them from our budgets.”

On his part, renowned Ghanaian economist Kwame Pianim, stated that starting at the grassroots level should be the first priority. “We need to give permits to small-scale traders too, and allow them to freely trade across borders.

Overheard at Kusi

“
The African Union’s agenda 2063 envisions an integrated continent that is politically united, based on the ideas of Pan Africanism and the visions of Africans re-uniting around a continental renaissance.”

~Prince Moses Ofori-Atta

DATA DIVE



2,100
Languages
In Africa

Africa is the world's most diverse continent, with 54 countries, over 2000 ethnicities and over 2,100 languages.

Corruption is also a big impediment, with the police collecting so much money in bribes and dragging small businesses to the ground. This greatly discourages trade, so this is something we need to eradicate as governments," said Pianim.

Kasuku echoed these sentiments, emphasising the importance of starting at home. "Put your money where your vision is and other people will see it, and eventually, will want to join in. We need to look at ways to finance projects with our own budgets instead of relying on foreign aid to release the financial grip Western countries have on us."

If we want a united Africa in terms of infrastructure, trade and development, we must look beyond borders and not continue to structure projects for narrow national benefit, but for continental use and growth, Kasuku reiterated.

For Foster Akugri, having an avenue to meet and exchange ideas with other African thought leaders and entrepreneurs will set the stage

for continental collaboration. "We need to continue in the footsteps of Nation Media Group, and have more meetings such as the Kusi Ideas Festival with Africans, for Africans and in Africa to discuss our growth possibilities."

On the financial front, having an Africa-based common currency, perhaps a cryptocurrency, could prove invaluable in trading across borders and reducing the dependence on external currencies. "Our intra-African trade can flourish if we have a digital currency circulating on the continent", said Pianim.

Ultimately, the panel agreed that Africa needs to realise its power. "We need to start walking into stores and picking our own products, not going for Western options first. We need to manufacture our own goods, have our own transport systems, and facilitate our own trade. We need to live, eat, play, learn and grow within ourselves." said Clare Akamanzi in closing.

DATA DIVE



\$360
Billion
Infrastructure Budget

By the year 2040, the AU has predicted that Africa would need an infrastructure budget of US\$360 billion.

Climate Change, Feeding a People and Ending Hunger





Satyapal

Speakers:

Prishani Satyapal

Founder and Chief Inspiration Officer,
Sustainability Truthing

Catherine Krobo Edusei

Founder, Eden Tree Limited

Hamza Hashim

Co-Founder & CEO, Capitol Foods

Parvin Ngala

Oxfam Regional Director, Horn East and Central Africa

Smriti Vidyarthi

Editor, Current Affairs NTV Kenya (Moderator)



Edusei

It takes just nine days for the average US citizen to emit more CO₂ than the average Kenyan does in 365 days. It's even shorter if you compare US emissions to other African countries - it takes five days for the US citizen to be comparable to the annual emissions of the average Tanzanian, four days compared to a Ugandan, and just one day relative to the average citizen of DR Congo.

And yet, there is a stark divide between who has caused climate change and who is suffering its effects - with Africa literally feeling the heat, and being hit hardest by the effects of a warming climate. How do we face the imminent climate threat of our day, and tackle the long-standing issues of food security?

"Africa contributes very little to greenhouse gas emissions but we are also cutting a lot of trees. We need to plant more trees, harness the sun's energy since it's more affordable, use it for our day to day needs and reduce our use of charcoal," said Catherine Krobo Edusei, Founder of Eden Tree Limited.

What issues are farmers facing when it comes to climate change? Edusei focused attention on small farmers' inability to, for instance, tap excess rain for irrigation, or having arable land that is not near a reliable water source. They need resources and investment to fix these simple challenges, he said.

Small farmers also struggle to find markets for their goods, and are frequently discouraged by logistical problems and low prices for their produce.



Hashim

“We must ensure that there is meaningful change by seeing the human dignity that is lost in poverty. We also need to have one voice in agreeing on what would help the situation on the ground. How can we harvest rain, increase the frequency of crop rotations and variety, and deal with changing weather patterns?” posed Prishani Satyapal, Founder and Chief Inspiration Officer at Sustainability Truthing. “We can also change the locations where we are planting our produce, following weather patterns and adjusting to the change.”

Hamza Hashim, Co-Founder and CEO, Capitol Foods, Sierra Leone, also emphasized the importance of prioritising the needs of grassroots level farmers. “We need more community based policies, that do not focus on Western countries or the policymakers, but the small person on the ground. There is a need to connect them to leaders in order to have more voices in decision making.”

Climate change is a justice issue, the panel heard, and the most marginalised are those most in need of protection. For many marginalised communities, the imminent threat is one of desertification and extreme weather, including flooding. Governments need to have clear mechanisms, including national, regional and continental policies on how to cater to them.

Climate change is also a security issue. Increasing temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, droughts, and floods have disrupted livelihoods and forced migration in several African countries. Climate change contributes to farmer-herder and even wildlife competition over



Ngala

DATA DIVE



4%

**Greenhouse Gases
Produced by Africa**

Africa contributes about 4% to global greenhouse gases, in contrast to 23% in China, 19% in the US, and 13% in the European Union.

land and water. Elites take advantage of climate-related disruptions by exploiting marginalised groups, as do armed groups seeking to recruit the youth.

To manage these challenges, the continent’s small farmers and pastoral communities need to be prioritised by governments, the panel proposed. Careful planning of agricultural policies can work to improve food security, which remains an issue on the continent.

Story Telling, Creative Industries and the Promise of Africa

07





Left to Right; Joseph Warungu, Matthew Rugamba, Petina Gappah, Livingstone Etse Satekla (Stonebwoy) and Mutuma Mathiu. Dilman Dila joined in virtually via video link.

Speakers:

Dilman Dila

Filmmaker & Writer

Matthew Rugamba

Founder and Creative Director, House of Tayo

Mutuma Mathiu

Editor-in-Chief, Nation Media Group PLC

Petina Gappah

Writer

Stonebwoy (Livingstone Etse Satekla)

Musician

Joseph Warungu

Consulting Editor, NTV Kenya (Moderator)

In recent years, we have had amazing collaborations amongst African creatives and artists; exhibitions are getting bigger, and our films are on global screens. So who is telling our story, how are they being told, and who is reaping the profits? This panel explored African storytelling in the creative arts, and how these can work to bring the promise of Africa to life.

“Our storytelling has come from far because tech has become cheaper, and social media is doing the work of sharing our creativity,” said Dilman Dila, Ugandan filmmaker and writer. “Yet, we still do not have a global African film that has been entirely produced in Africa. A lot of funding for these films comes from Western countries, and the social platforms we share them on also do not belong to us.”

For Matthew ‘Tayo’ Rugamba, fashion is a way of telling our stories authentically. His brand ‘House of Tayo’ was created out of the desire to find a unique way to showcase African sophistication, style and flavour through contemporary, locally-made clothing and accessories.

“How you dress communicates a lot about what you feel, where you are from, and your beliefs. We use fashion as a personal expression, and a means of communication. In Rwanda, during government meetings, it is now a law that speakers have to wear something

‘Made in Rwanda’, and this has greatly changed people’s perception of our attire,” said Rugamba.

Another challenge is that a lot of our experiences as Africans are deemed to lack authenticity unless they are confirmed by external authorities, said Mutuma Mathiu, Editor-in-Chief of Nation Media Group PLC.

“We are not reporting our stories. International agencies and publishing houses are taking our stories and telling them in their own warped way, and for their benefit, so we often do not get to authenticate our stories for a global audience,” argued Mathiu.

So how then, do we tell our stories? “Well, you just tell it,” stated Stonebwoy, simply. “Before they [external people] come to tell stories of poverty, hunger and suffering, we need to persevere and tell our own stories the minute we get the idea and the chance.”

“Africa feeds the world - with food, art, and everything else. They should not get to twist our realities,” he reiterated.

Petina Gappah emphasised the role of women in our storytelling, from a human perspective, from a historical point of view, and in centering ourselves in our own stories.

“There is an assertion of the African female voice on the world stage. And we are not just telling domestic stories, but also stories of our continent from different perspectives,” she said.

“The world right now is looking for authenticity. A big challenge we have is the lack of access in our own countries, access that white people get comfortably. We can no longer be replaced in our own stories by people that are not Africans.”

Rugamba reminded us that there is also a negative perception around artists in Africa. We need to start early, from kindergarten, showing that art is a viable career and it is not a lesser option than white collar jobs.

Reiterating a topic that was spoken about in a previous panel, Stonebwoy said that collaborations are what will make our art travel across borders. It is important to work with other artists, while ensuring we still own our art.

African media has a big role to play in broadcasting our work to fellow Africans, emphasised Mathiu. “We are our own audience. We need to tell our stories first, before we broadcast other people’s stories. They do not prioritise our films or music, and make it hard for our work to get on the global stage. If they need us to prove ourselves time and time again, denying us funding while at it, misrepresenting us, then we should not prioritise their work.”

Overheard at Kusi

“

Authenticity is realising that there are as many stories as there are Africans. When we tell these stories, we need to view ourselves as the audience, and other places as a market. There needs to be a shift in how we view ourselves.

~ Petina Gappah

”



Overheard at Kusi

“ I do not want to get to the top alone. ”

~Stonebwoy

KUSI MOONSHOOTS

Policy ideas worth sharing

“Let us invent the Africa we want for tomorrow, here - We have the intellectual capacity to do it. What we need is the will to actualise it and enable Africa to take its place in the international community.”

*Dr. Wilfred D. Kiboro,
Chairman Nation Media Group PLC*



African Travel

The *Africa Visa Openness Report 2020* findings show that African citizens still need visas to travel to 46 per cent of other countries on the continent, while only 28 per cent can get visas on arrival. The continent must address critical tourism competitiveness drivers, with visa openness being top on our agenda.

*Dr. Peter M. Mathuki, Secretary General,
East African Community*



Value Chains

The AfCFTA secretariat, in collaboration with the MasterCard Foundation has developed an AfCFTA private sector strategy focusing on priority value chains with the potential to contribute over USD 11bn in production and USD 5bn annually in intra Africa trade.

*H.E. Wamkele Mene, Secretary
General, AfCFTA*



Human Capital

By 2040, Africa will have a larger workforce than China and India. By 2050, half of the world's population will live in Africa. If one is serious about entrepreneurship and building a brand, some of the biggest opportunities are in Africa.

*Akwasi Agyeman, Chief Executive
Officer, Ghana Tourism Authority*



African Infrastructure

With USD 100m needed to improve infrastructure on the continent, the public private partnerships (PPP) law, that supports getting more private investment into infrastructure, has been touted as one of the ways Africa could use to modernize its infrastructure.

*Clare Akamanzi, Chief Executive
Officer, Rwanda Development Board*



Climate Change

With the massive deforestation happening in West and Central Africa, building permits must now demand that we include green areas in our development as opposed to having concrete cities.

*Catherine Krobo-Edusei, Founder
Eden Tree Ltd*



Storytelling

We need to shift how we see ourselves before addressing how other people should see us. We need to tell stories for ourselves and ensure that our own people are consuming our products-be it stories, music or fashion.

Stonebwuoy

READ OUTS

The East African Special Report



The AfCFTA market comes with many opportunities; Consumers will have limitless choice of quality products at an affordable price. This is due to the fact that AfCFTA aims to eliminate import duties on products that are produced within Africa and thus satisfy the rules of origin. It will also define standards that shall apply to those products in order to ensure quality.

*Prudence Sebahizi is the Chief Technical Adviser on AfCFTA
From "AfCFTA on track to lift 100 million Africans out of poverty by 2035"*



The pandemic is an inflection point in a shift towards a new, more localized global economic geography with shorter, greener and more regional value chains, greater digitalisation and a lighter global production footprint. Under the AfCFTA, the continent can develop and strengthen regional value chains and offer countries an opportunity to use regional advantages to boost competitiveness, diversify product supply, and export products with higher value added, helping cushion Africa from future economic shocks.

*Rebeca Grynspan is the UNCTAD Secretary-General
From "New opportunities for accelerating pan-African trade"*



The African Union has taken steps to make open skies a reality through the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) created to expedite the full implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision. Once operationalised, greater African connectivity will reduce air travel time and costs, catalyzing intra-continental trade and tourism growth.

*Dr Peter M. Mathuki is the Secretary General, East African Community
From "Africa must redefine its tourism as it sets post-Covid recovery strategy"*



We do not want to participate in Kusi simply to share ideas; we want to put these ideas into practice by changing the lives of our people through capital investment. As it were, our post-Covid-19 economic recovery programme is based on focusing our efforts on creating more wealth through capital investment and expanding opportunities for productive employment in the agriculture, manufacturing, and service sectors.

*Prof Peter Anyang' Nyong'o is the Governor, Kisumu County
From "We can still make up for lost time, missed opportunities"*



For the e-commerce industry, it is not necessarily the lack of political will to promote it that is the concern. Countries such as Rwanda, Senegal, and Kenya have taken various measures to promote e-commerce platforms among consumers, especially during the pandemic, and as of 2019, the continent had 631 online marketplaces managing 1,900 websites in 58 countries and territories, according to the African Development Bank.

*Isaac Kwaku Fokuo is the Founder of Botho Emerging Markets Group
From "Africa can bridge digital divide if it scales innovations in e-commerce and agritech"*



The time has come for Africa to tell its own stories, stories that birth transformation. Stories of young Afrilleniials who are taking the world by storm with African-born startup ventures in the fintech, cleantech, and healthcare spaces, from Nigeria to Kenya, Rwanda to Ethiopia, with \$2.4 billion deployed in 2020 alone, according to a Briter Bridges report. This is a leap from \$638 million in 2016. Stories that explain why everyone is queueing to play a part and be present in Africa with the dawn of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the excitement of reaching 1.35billion human beings with a collective GDP of \$5.3 trillion in the next four years, and the youngest and fastest urbanizing population on the planet must be owned!

*Fatima Alimohamed is the CEO of African Brand Warrior
From "We are a unique brand; let's not sell ourselves short"*



The Igad infrastructure master plan indicates numerous missing links in roads, rail, ICT, water transport, and power transmission lines. It also has numerous unexploited and underdeveloped energy sources, many of which are green, renewable and sustainable. The plan has highlighted the short term priority projects – 61 in transport, 9 in energy, 14 in ICT, and 5 trans-boundary waterways. These projects need to be implemented by 2024, three years from today, at a cost of \$34 billion.

Raila Odinga, former Kenyan Prime Minister, is the AU High Representative for Infrastructure Development

From "A fund dedicated to infrastructure will put continent on growth track"



One of the major factors affecting agricultural productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa has been land degradation due to poor management and soil erosion. Land restoration by adopting soil and water conservation practices accompanied by innovations that bring short-term benefits in terms of fodder, fuelwood, water, and other resources would increase the tree cover, minimise erosion and improve watershed functions. In the context of climate change, there is need for integrated watershed management that may include technological, social, policy and institutional interventions for land restoration while increasing productivity of water, nutrients, and labour for food security and environmental services.

Dr. Tilahun Amede is Head of Resilience, Climate and Soil Fertility at the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa

From "Water management and technology can stave off worst effects of climate change"



Tech enables small players who seek to disrupt large players by serving niche audiences better than the big guys do. Often, they win by getting very close to specific customer segments. The formula of these successful start-ups has been to build or reinforce communities and allow them to evolve to their own benefit. That's true at all sizes, of course.

Oliver August is the Chief Technology and Innovation Officer at Nation Media Group

From "Targeting specialist markets can be big winner"

An Africa of Endless Possibilities



The overarching message of the Kusi Ideas Festival was unequivocal - the future of Africa is bright and full of endless possibilities. The continent is already rich in resources, culture and ideas; it is up to us to transform these resources into prosperity for the continent. We must source our own products, use our own labour, capitalise on our own ideas and manufacture our own products. We can be self-sufficient.

The reality is that the Covid-19 pandemic came and disrupted existing structures, exposing our soft underbelly, but it also made clear that we no longer have the luxury of time. This was the undercurrent driving much of the sentiment of the Festival - that we cannot risk another blow hitting us, and that even in this context we still have many long-standing issues, from climate change, homelessness, hunger and political tensions.

In addition, none of the great ideas shared at the Festival will be possible if we do not come together

as a continent to do the work. A single country cannot prosper alone, we need to open our borders, work with other nations in order to build infrastructure and encourage trade, invest in technology, and promote our artists and creatives to tell our stories. The dream goes even further, into having one common language for our continent, one common currency, one common passport, removing travel barriers like visa requirements for fellow Africans, and all the barriers that discourage cross-country trade.

Finally, just like the southeasterly winds that seafarers depended upon for thousands of years driving those trade, cultural and linguistic exchanges all across the eastern African coast, our commitment to change in Africa should be as reliable as those winds, bringing in fresh energy, understanding and strategic leadership in every season.

*Stephen Gitagama
Group Chief Executive Officer
Nation Media Group PLC.*

Appreciation to Kusi Ideas Festival Speakers

Name	Designation and Organization
H.E. Nana Akufo Addo	President of the Republic of Ghana
H.E. Paul Kagame	President of the Republic of Rwanda
H.E. Yoweri Museveni	President of the Republic of Uganda
Rebeca Grynspan	Secretary General, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
Dr. Peter Mathuki	Secretary General, East African Community
H.E. Anne Mumbi Waiguru	Governor, County Government of Kirinyaga, Kenya
Maureen Mbaka	Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs, Kenya
Yofi Grant	CEO, Ghana Investment Promotion Centre
Akwasi Agyeman	CEO, Ghana Tourism Authority
Prof. Wangui wa Goro	Academic Translator, Writer, Poet & Cultural Cultivator
Jake Obeng-Bediako	Ghana Youth Ambassador for Diaspora Affairs
Katra Sambili	Founder and Executive Director, My Early Bird Africa
Dr. Sylvia Vito	Head, Africa Acceleration, Government Affairs & Market Access, Astrazeneca SSA & FSA
Dr. John Mark Bwanika	Director of Operations, Rocket Health Africa
Delese Mimi Darko	CEO, Ghana Food and Drugs Authority
Charles Abugre	Development Economist, Former CEO of Savannah Accelerated Development Authority

Appreciation to Kusi Ideas Festival Speakers

Name	Designation and Organization
Herman Kojo Chinery-Hesse	Technology entrepreneur and founder of SoftTribe
Bright Simons	President, mPedigree
Kwame Pianim	Economist and former Ghanaian Government official
Foster Akugri	Founder, Hacklab Foundation
Silvester Kasuku	CEO, African Centre for Transport, Infrastructure and Regional Integration (ACTIRI)
Afua Gyamfua Owusu Akyaw	President, Association of Ghana Importers (Ashanti Region)
Clare Akamanzi	CEO, Rwanda Development Board
Prishani Satyapal	Founder and Chief Inspiration Officer, Sustainability Truthing
Catherine Krobo Edusei	Founder, Eden Tree Limited
Hamza Hashim	Co-Founder & CEO, Capitol Foods
Parvin Ngala	Oxfam Regional Director, Horn East and Central Africa
Dilman Dila	Filmmaker & Writer
Matthew Rugamba	Founder and Creative Director, House of Tayo
Mutuma Mathiu	Editor-in-Chief, Nation Media Group PLC
Petina Gappah	Writer
Stonebwoy (Livingstone Etse Satekla)	Musician

Appreciation to Kusi Ideas Festival Organising Committee

Name	Designation
Dr. Wilfred D. Kiboro	Chairman, Nation Media Group PLC.
Dennis Aluanga	Director, Nation Media Group PLC.
Wangethi Mwangi	Director, Nation Media Group PLC.
Stephen Gitagama	Group Chief Executive Officer, Nation Media Group PLC.
Richard Tobiko	Group Finance Director, Nation Media Group PLC.
Mutuma Mathiu	Editor-in-Chief, Nation Media Group PLC.
Clifford Machoka	Head of External Affairs, Nation Media Group PLC.
Charles Onyango-Obbo	Kusi Consultant; Journalist; Former Editor of Mail and Guardian Africa
Monicah Ndung'u	Head of Broadcasting & Executive Director - Transformation, Nation Media Group PLC.
Mercy Kimani	Head of IT, Nation Media Group PLC.
Joseph Warungu	Former Managing Editor, NTV, Nation Media Group PLC.
Dorine Ogolo	Procurement Manager, Nation Media Group PLC.
Symon Bargurei	Former Commercial Manager, Nation Media Group PLC.
Jackson Mutinda	Managing Editor, The EastAfrican, Nation Media Group PLC.
Hosea Kimani	Finance Manager, Nation Media Group PLC.
Kinya Gitonga	Corporate Affairs Manager, Nation Media Group PLC.
Rodah Mumbo	Events Business Development Manager, Nation Media Group PLC.
Naomy Ikenye	Events Coordinator, Nation Media Group PLC.
Julius Muli	Brand Assistant, Nation Media Group PLC.
Veronica Ndung'u	Digital Marketing Executive, Nation Media Group PLC.
Arnold Magenyi	Production Director, NTV, Nation Media Group PLC.
Mable Achieng	Producer, NTV, Nation Media Group PLC.
Georgina Kaaria	Former Procurement Officer, Nation Media Group PLC.

Kusi Ideas Festival Moderators



Julians Amboko
Business Editor,
NTV Kenya

Moderator



Smriti Vidyarthi
Editor, Current Affairs
NTV Kenya

Moderator



Joseph Warungu
Consulting Editor,
NTV Kenya

Moderator



Dentaa Amoateng, MBE
President & CEO
GUBA Enterprise

Moderator



Anita Erskine
Executive Producer,
Anita Erskine Media and
Bosslady Inc.

Moderator



Prince Moses Ofori-Atta
General Manager,
Asaase Radio

Moderator

Rapporteurs



Christine Mungai
Rapporteur



Makena Ngito
Rapporteur

Thank You to Our Partners



PLATFORM
CAPITAL



About Nation Media Group



Nation Media Group's dream began 62 years ago when the world and, indeed, Africa was going through a great transition. From the challenges of the Cold War to independence across the continent, the wind of change was blowing across the world. It was during this time of political turbulence, struggle for independence, promise, and Pan-Africanism that the Nation was born, on March 20, 1960.

From a small newspaper company, with only one title, Taifa, a Swahili publication, we have grown to become the largest multimedia house in East and Central Africa with operations in print, broadcast and digital media all of which attract and serve unparalleled audiences across the continent and the world.

NMG was founded by His Highness the Aga Khan on the bedrock of a set of core values whose central theme was to promote independent voices, diversity and freedom of expression as enshrined in our editorial policy.

Another critical element in these values - and the purpose for our establishment – was, and continues to be, a mission to be a trusted partner of African democracies, a champion of the ordinary person, a supportive voice for the rule of law and respect for human rights, and a strong advocate of free market economies. This mission has remained unchanged and has been renewed over the years. As we seek to positively influence society, we shall continue to be guided and to stand by the values of truth, independence, fairness, balance and accuracy.

We remain steadfast in the conviction of our goal to fundamentally improve the quality of people's lives and to contribute to a sustainable world through our business. We will stay at the forefront, identifying the many issues critical to social transformation such as education, the environment and health, and highlighting solutions to their achievement. We will work with our stakeholders, customers, shareholders, supporters and the communities we serve to pursue a win-win growth strategy by going further together.

NMG's pursuit of its mission is driven by its deep conviction that ideas are central to human development. This was the essential purpose of creating the Kusi Ideas Festival. As a company, we endeavour to deliver good quality journalism – as we have demonstrated over the past 62 years. This has indeed served as the foundation of our philosophy of serving the continent as we position ourselves as the Media of Africa for Africa.

Thank you for joining us for the third edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival.



HOW AFRICA TRANSFORMS AFTER THE VIRUS



KUSI 2021 STORY

“The story of Covid-19 in Africa is not about how many people die of it, but rather how many thousands survive. At Nation Media Group, we take this story very seriously because it underscores the fact that Africa telling her own story is a strategic imperative with far-reaching consequences on our survival. Let us therefore purpose to leave this festival with a commitment to do what we need to do as individuals or collectively to take charge of our own narrative.”

Dr. Wilfred D. Kiboro - Chairman, Nation Media Group PLC



1,080

Delegates attended physically



17,000

Delegates attended virtually



72

Countries which participated



401

Cities from which people participated



34

Speakers from across the globe

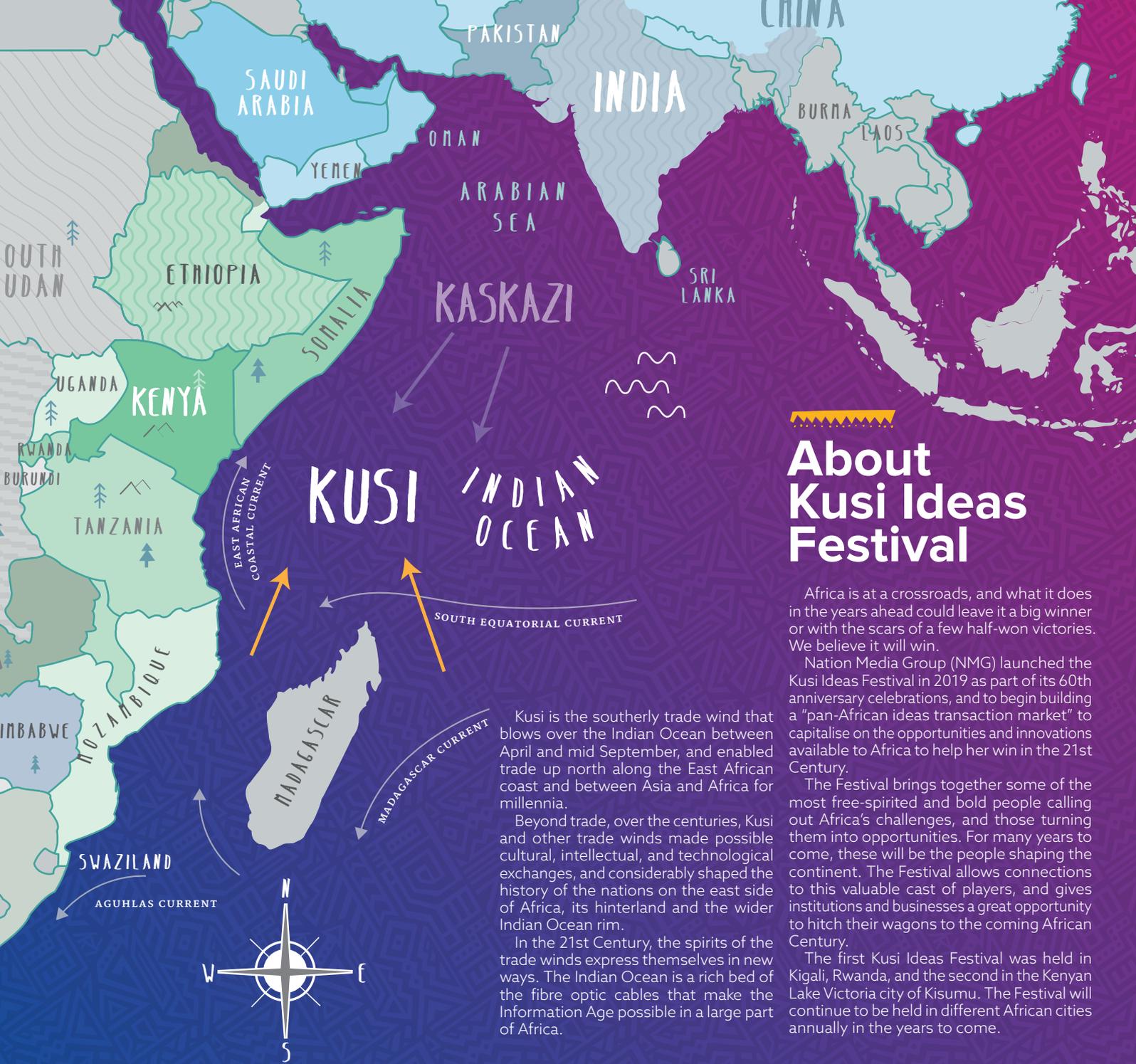


Over **200M**

Impressions on social media

Ghana • Nigeria • Kenya • South Africa • United States • Rwanda • Uganda • Germany • Canada • France • Finland • United Kingdom • Netherlands • Saudi Arabia
Ireland • Tanzania • United Arab Emirates • Sierra Leone • Switzerland • Ethiopia • Japan • India • Indonesia • Portugal • Ivory Coast • South Korea • Belgium • Qatar
Somalia • Bahrain • Croatia • Denmark • Sweden • Zimbabwe • Australia • Austria • Bangladesh • Burundi • Czechia • Gambia • Mali • Mauritius • Poland • South Sudan
Thailand • Barbados • Botswana • Bulgaria • Burkina Faso • Cameroon • China • Colombia • Congo Republic • Djibouti • DR Congo • Eswatini • Israel • Italy • Jordan
Kazakhstan • Kuwait • Lebanon • Malaysia • Mexico • Namibia • New Zealand • Oman • Pakistan • Russia • Singapore • Spain • Togo





About Kusi Ideas Festival

Africa is at a crossroads, and what it does in the years ahead could leave it a big winner or with the scars of a few half-won victories. We believe it will win.

Nation Media Group (NMG) launched the Kusi Ideas Festival in 2019 as part of its 60th anniversary celebrations, and to begin building a “pan-African ideas transaction market” to capitalise on the opportunities and innovations available to Africa to help her win in the 21st Century.

The Festival brings together some of the most free-spirited and bold people calling out Africa’s challenges, and those turning them into opportunities. For many years to come, these will be the people shaping the continent. The Festival allows connections to this valuable cast of players, and gives institutions and businesses a great opportunity to hitch their wagons to the coming African Century.

The first Kusi Ideas Festival was held in Kigali, Rwanda, and the second in the Kenyan Lake Victoria city of Kisumu. The Festival will continue to be held in different African cities annually in the years to come.

Kusi is the southerly trade wind that blows over the Indian Ocean between April and mid September, and enabled trade up north along the East African coast and between Asia and Africa for millennia.

Beyond trade, over the centuries, Kusi and other trade winds made possible cultural, intellectual, and technological exchanges, and considerably shaped the history of the nations on the east side of Africa, its hinterland and the wider Indian Ocean rim.

In the 21st Century, the spirits of the trade winds express themselves in new ways. The Indian Ocean is a rich bed of the fibre optic cables that make the Information Age possible in a large part of Africa.



Nation Media Group
Media of Africa for Africa

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