



ITU Regional Development Forum for Africa (RDF-AFR) 2026

Universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity for an inclusive and sustainable digital future

**25-26 May 2026
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe**

Event website: <http://itu.int/go/RDF-AFR-26>

OUTCOME REPORT

1. Introduction

The Regional Development Forum for Africa (RDF-AFR) 2026, was organized by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in cooperation with the Africa Telecommunications Union (ATU) and hosted by the Government of Zimbabwe from 25 to 26 May 2026. The Forum was officially inaugurated by Hon. Tatenda Annastacia Mavetera, Minister of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services of the Republic of Zimbabwe. It was held back-to-back with the 2nd African Preparatory Meeting (APM) for ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 (PP-26), which followed on 27 to 29 May 2026. In keeping with practice, the RDF-AFR was chaired by Dr. Gift Kallisto Machengete, Director General, POTRAZ having been appointed in consultation with the Host Country.

Held under the theme “*Universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity for an inclusive and sustainable digital future*,” RDF-AFR 2026 brought together around 300 participants representing 36 Member States, Regional Organizations, UN specialized agencies, Sector Members, Academia and other stakeholders from across Africa and beyond to deliberate on the new Regional Initiatives adopted at the 2025 World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25), with the aim of matching Member States’ needs with the value propositions from stakeholders committed to supporting digital development across the region and beyond.

The Forum comprised five main sessions: Infrastructure Development for Universal Meaningful Connectivity; State of Digital Development and Trends – Challenges and Opportunities; Financing Regional Initiatives; Partner2Connect Matchmaking Roundtable 1; and Partner2Connect Matchmaking Roundtable 2. These were further complemented by dedicated segments on special announcements and partnership initiatives, reflecting Africa’s priorities in digital infrastructure, financing, digital transformation, and partnerships.

2. Opening Segment and Appointment of the RDF-AFR Chair

The opening ceremony brought together high-level representatives from government, regional organizations, and ITU. Opening and welcome remarks were delivered by Ministers and senior officials from Zimbabwe, ATU, and ITU, underscoring the importance of regional collaboration to accelerate digital transformation across Africa.

The opening ceremony featured remarks delivered by:

- Hon. Richard Moyo, Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Zimbabwe
- Dr Gift Kallisto Machengete, Director General, Postal and Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Zimbabwe (POTRAZ)
- Mr John Omo, Secretary General, African Telecommunications Union (ATU)
- Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau
- Hon. Tatenda Mavetera, Minister, Ministry of ICT, Postal and Courier Services, Zimbabwe

Session 1: Infrastructure Development for Universal Meaningful Connectivity

Session 1 focused on accelerating the development of resilient and inclusive digital infrastructure to achieve universal meaningful connectivity. Participants explored innovative financing models, policy frameworks, and partnership approaches to support infrastructure expansion and sustainability.



The session was moderated by Ms Halima Letamo, the representative of ITU Area Office for Southern Africa, and the panellists included:

- Hon. Mondli Gungubele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Communications and Digital Technologies, South Africa
- Ms Helen Vosloo, Executive, Economics and Market Development, Communications and Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN), Namibia
- Ms Helen Kyeyune, Lead, Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Amazon
- Mr Laurent Ferrali, Senior Director, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)
- Mr Timothy Adi Ashong, Director General, Pan-African Satellite Communication Organization (RASCOM), Côte d'Ivoire

Discussions focused on investment models, enabling policy environments, and partnerships to accelerate infrastructure development and implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and African Union's Agenda 2063, and relevant regional and sub-regional digital frameworks and strategies.

The session highlighted the role of regional initiatives in scaling infrastructure investment and deployment, the need for enabling regulatory frameworks to attract investment, and emerging connectivity solutions, that can complement existing infrastructure and accelerate the deployment of infrastructure to reach those that remain outside coverage and do not yet benefit from meaningful connectivity. The meeting noted that advancing universal connectivity requires a multifaceted approach anchored in policy dialogue, adaptive consumer protection and harmonised regulatory practices. Participants underscored the importance of strengthening Africa's digital sovereignty, including by enhancing regional capacity, resilience, and participation in the development and management of critical digital infrastructure. They also underscored the importance of strengthened collaboration between governments and the private sector to help reduce the cost of connectivity, recognizing that affordability remains essential to ensuring that digital services are accessible to all, particularly underserved and marginalized communities. Participants emphasized further the need for Africa to take measures that enable its active participation in the space economy, not only as a market but also as a provider of solutions aligned with the continent's development priorities. They also encouraged countries to promote infrastructure sharing, where feasible, as a mean to reduce operational costs, improve efficiency, and enhance transparency. Special emphasis was given to infrastructure sharing and regional integration, leveraging digital infrastructure and enhancing inclusion through targeted connectivity in unserved and underserved areas for socio-economic development, and strengthening the role of regulators in fostering investment-friendly environments.

Key takeaways for resilient infrastructure to ensure connectivity for all:

- Access to connectivity and energy should be addressed together to reduce costs, ensure sustainability, and maximize socio-economic benefits.
- Countries should explore and deploy a mix of technologies, leveraging their respective strengths to bridge connectivity gaps and expand access.
- There is a need to further promote holistic and coordinated approaches that consider diverse technologies and institutional efforts in a coherent and mutually reinforcing manner.
- Countries should encourage infrastructure sharing where possible to substantially reduce operational costs, increase efficiency and promote transparency.
- The Forum recognized that strengthening Africa's digital sovereignty requires continued efforts to build regional capacity, resilience, and engagement in critical digital infrastructure, alongside the promotion of a multilingual Internet and universal acceptance.
- Whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches can address last-mile connectivity challenges to reach all communities.
- The Forum underscored the importance of enabling Africa's meaningful participation in the space economy, including as a provider of solutions aligned with the continent's development priorities.

Participants were encouraged to explore and make use of two new tools that have been made available by ITU to support broadband and last-mile connectivity planning and the implementation of digital development strategies: the Connectivity Planning Platform (CPP) and the Global Economic Model and Study Tool.

3. Session 2: State of Digital Development and Trends - Challenges and Opportunities

Session 2 provided an overview of the current state of digital development in Africa, highlighting both progress and persistent structural challenges. Participants noted that Africa's digital transformation is advancing, supported by growing mobile broadband coverage, a dynamic youth population, and expanding innovation



ecosystems. However, a significant usage gap remains; while over 82% of the population is covered by mobile broadband, only 36% use the Internet.

The session was moderated by Mr Mayamiko Nkoloma, Director General of Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA). To set the context for the discussion, Dr Emmanuel Manasseh, Director of the ITU Regional Office for Africa, provided an overview of the current state of digital development and emerging trends in Africa.

Session panellists included:

- Dr Beullah Chirume, Permanent Secretary for Hon. Tatenda Mavetera, Minister, Ministry of Information, Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services, Zimbabwe
- Mr John Omo, Secretary General, African Telecommunications Union
- Ms Liza Zouabi-Niedermeier, Executive: Group Pricing Compliance and Regulatory Economics, Telkom
- Mr. Mothibi Ramusi, Chairperson, Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA)
- Rev. Ing. Edmund Yirenkyi Fianko, Director General, National Communications Authority (NCA) of Ghana
- Mr William Baraza, Director and CEO - African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute (AFRALTI)

The session highlighted Africa's digital progress while noting persistent challenges, including high connectivity costs, limited device affordability, rural-urban access disparities, insufficient digital skills, fragmented regulatory environments, cybersecurity risks, weak data protection frameworks, and infrastructure constraints, including unreliable electricity and the continued need to address connectivity and energy in a more integrated manner. Discussions underscored the importance of coordinated policy action, increased investment, and strengthened capacity development in addressing these challenges. Particular attention was given to closing the usage gap while continuing to expand infrastructure coverage. Participants further highlighted the need to strengthen regulatory harmonization across the continent and to advance cybersecurity and trust frameworks. Capacity development and digital skills were recognized as key enablers of digital service adoption, stronger innovation ecosystems, and enhanced private sector participation.

The panel expressed strong regional commitment for inclusive digital transformation and reaffirmed a shared vision for universal and meaningful connectivity as the foundation for sustainable digital development and inclusion.

Participants highlighted the importance of strengthening African ownership of digital transformation, noting that partnerships should contribute to local capacity development, support digital sovereignty, foster local industry, and promote long-term sustainability.

Key takeaways in support of accelerating universal connectivity and sustainable digital transformation:

- The WTDC-25 outcomes were recognized as an important guiding framework to support implementation by Member States and facilitate regular reporting on progress achieved.
- Participants underscored the importance of moving from commitments to implementation and of sharing regular updates on scalable solutions that respond to African contexts, systems, and languages.
- With regard to AI and emerging technologies, participants emphasized the importance of ensuring Africa's meaningful participation in their development and deployment, so that African priorities, values, cultures, and languages are reflected by design.
- Participants highlighted the value of strengthening a coordinated African voice on digital development and advancing home-grown solutions that contribute to resilient and inclusive local digital ecosystems.
- Greater alignment of initiatives and resources was identified as essential to accelerating national digital transformation and supporting the achievement of regional and global development goals.
- Participants further noted that advancing universal connectivity requires a multifaceted approach, anchored in policy dialogue, adaptive consumer protection, and harmonized regulatory practices, with increased attention to meaningful connectivity, affordability, digital skills, usage, and uptake.

4. Session 3: Building upon the outcomes of the WTDC and UN processes towards the results and impact-oriented regional actions in Africa (Financing Regional Initiatives)

Session 3 examined how to translate the outcomes of WTDC-25 into impact-oriented tangible, financed, and measurable regional and national actions and projects. The discussion focused on the implementation of projects aligned with the five Regional Initiatives for Africa and the mobilization of financial and institutional resources to support them.

The moderator of the session was Dr Christine Sund, Senior Advisor, ITU Regional Office for Africa, and the session panellists included:



- Dr Beullah Chirume, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information, Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services, Zimbabwe
- Mr Dominic Ooko, Deputy Director, Revenue Assurance and Financial Reporting, Communications Authority of Kenya
- Mr Aliyu Yusuf Aboki, Executive Secretary, WATRA
- Mr Brian Mwansa, Acting Executive Secretary, CRASA
- Ms Bernice Edande Otye, Permanent Secretary, ARTAC
- Dr Zhicheng Qu, Chief Standardization Director for ITU Affairs, ZTE Corporation
- Mr Koffi Fabrice Djossou, Senior Expert in Charge of Innovation, West African Development Bank (BOAD)

The meeting noted the importance of collaboration between the government and private sector to reduce costs of connectivity, emphasising that when the cost of connectivity remains high, digital services become inaccessible, particularly to marginalised groups. Unpredictability and regulatory uncertainty keep the cost of investment in infrastructure and digital development high. Policy and regulatory harmonization and regional/sub-regional collaboration are means to de-risk digital development and infrastructure projects, and a selling point for investors and operators.

Financing and partnerships should support the broader digital ecosystem, including infrastructure, skills, applications, and usage. Investments should also contribute to inclusive growth, job creation, entrepreneurship, and wider socio-economic outcomes.

Key takeaways on investment and financing to support the design and implementation of projects under the Regional Initiatives

- Member States and partners are encouraged to develop a pipeline of digital development projects that can be further refined with the support of development banks and other relevant institutions. Multi-country projects should be promoted where appropriate to enable impact at scale.
- Efforts should be made to strengthen the preparation of bankable projects, recognizing that the availability of financing must be complemented by clear governance arrangements, measurable outcomes, and appropriate risk assessments.
- Infrastructure investment should be supported through innovative financing approaches, including blended finance, public-private partnerships, regional infrastructure models, and infrastructure-sharing mechanisms.
- Harmonized, predictable, and investment-friendly regulatory frameworks should be strengthened to attract private sector investment, scale infrastructure deployment, and support cross-border and continental connectivity.
- Member States are encouraged to consider appropriate mechanisms to mobilize Universal Service Funds in support of national projects aimed at reaching unserved and underserved areas and populations.
- Projects should articulate clear and measurable outcomes to strengthen investor confidence and facilitate informed investment decisions.

Member States were encouraged to explore the digitalization of commerce within the continent, and the formalization of a trade agreement. Harmonization of customs regulation, including the adoption of unified investment policies, and establishment of the standard intellectual property protections were highlighted as critical to support this.

5. Session 4: Partner2Connect Matchmaking Roundtable 1

Session 4 provided a platform for Partner2Connect (P2C) matchmaking, bringing together countries, development partners, private sector actors, and regional and international organizations to speak to P2C pledges for the Africa region. The discussions focused on aligning country and regional needs with stakeholder commitments to accelerate digital development. The session illustrated how P2C serves as an effective mechanism to match country-defined priorities with partner expertise, resources, and scalable solutions, ultimately accelerating the implementation of the regional initiatives across Africa.

The session was preceded by two presentations: *Learning from Asia Pacific on Smart Islands and Smart Villages*, presented by Dr Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, ITU, and *Regional Initiatives Accelerator*, presented by Mr Mohammed Ba, Head of Digital Innovation, ITU.

The moderator of the session was Ms Tahiry Rakotoheriniaina, Head, ITU Area Office for Central Africa and Madagascar, and the panellist included:

- Mr Michel Tchonang Linze, Coordinator of the Central Africa Internet Governance Forum
- Ms Gaso Grace Pascal, Generation Connect Youth Envoy Representative, South Sudan



- Dr. Stella Erebor, Head, Internal Audit Department, NCC (Nigeria)
- Ms Helene Vosloo, Head of Economics and Market Development, CRAN, Namibia
- Ms Hilda Mutseyekwa, Head of Division, POTRAZ, Zimbabwe
- Ms Ana Priscila Pedro Francisco, Head of Department of Studies, Development and Statistics, INCM, Mozambique
- Mr Andrew Nyirenda, Director of Economic Regulations, Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA)
- Mr Yaovi Atohoun, Stakeholder Engagement and Operations Director for Africa, ICANN
- Mr Khumbuzo Nkunika, Assistant Director, Communication Policy Development, Ministry of Technology and Science, Zambia
- Eng. Victor Kweka, Spectrum Manager, TCRA, Tanzania

The matchmaking process demonstrated the value of multi-stakeholder collaboration, with initiatives such as ICANN's work on Universal Acceptance, Lenovo EMEA's programme on device reuse, digital skills development, the community partnerships, ZTE's AI-enabled infrastructure solutions directly addressing gaps in access, affordability, and technological readiness. Lenovo's contribution illustrated how private sector engagement can support sustainable connectivity through refurbished devices, local capacity building, and ecosystem partnerships, thereby complementing national efforts and extending digital inclusion to underserved communities.

Contributions from governments and regulators, such as those from Namibia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Zambia and Malawi, highlighted ongoing national efforts and investment opportunities, particularly in universal service, emergency telecommunication, resilient infrastructure, digital trust and child online protection, AI, education, and digital transformation strategies. 11 contributions were considered. Details can be found in **Annex 2**.

The exchanges underscored that capacity building, enabling policy frameworks, and cross-sector collaboration remain critical enablers. The Generation Connect Youth Envoy also shared insights into the youth-led webinar on 'Advancing digital Inclusion through Youth-Led ICT Solutions in South Sudan' in support of Regional Initiative 3, stressing that youth initiatives are playing a key role in designing and implementing scalable solutions for sustainable impact.

The Regional Partner2Connect Matchmaking Roundtable sessions allowed participants to match countries' and regional needs with stakeholders' interests to support digital development in Africa.

6. Session 5: Partner2Connect Matchmaking Roundtable 2

Session 5 provided a platform for Partner2Connect (P2C) matchmaking, focused on country and regional needs to accelerate digital development. The aim was to catalyze impactful initiatives to accelerate the region's digital agenda, driving inclusive and impactful capacity-development efforts to support digital transformation and regional growth.

The session was moderated by Mr Ali Drissa Badiel, Head of the ITU Area Office for Western Africa.

A presentation on **Partner2Connect** was delivered by Mr Marco Obiso, Chief of the Digital Networks Society Department, ITU.

The session panellists included:

- Hon. Mark-Alexandre Doumba, Minister, Ministère de l'Économie numérique, de la Digitalisation et de l'Innovation, Gabon
- Hon. Samuel Nartey George, Minister, Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, Ghana
- Mr. Harold Msusa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Digitalization, Malawi
- Dr. Imaja Itulelo Matiyabu, Director a.i., International Affairs, ARPTC, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Ms Fleur Assoumou Bessou, Chair of TDAG
- Mr Kakou Stanislas Kanvoli, Director of Legal Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Digital Transition and Innovation, Côte d'Ivoire.

Participants highlighted the value of Partner2Connect as a structured matchmaking mechanism for translating commitments into concrete projects, scaling successful initiatives and partnerships across Africa, and supporting implementation through innovative financing and capacity development. They reaffirmed the importance of regional cooperation in addressing cross-border challenges, including infrastructure gaps, regulatory fragmentation, and financing constraints, and recognized multi-stakeholder collaboration as a key driver of scalable impact. Particular emphasis was placed on strengthening coordination among stakeholders and fostering sustainable, high-impact partnerships over the long term.



Partners pledges and sustained commitments on the ground are important enablers of universal and meaningful connectivity and sustainable digital transformation. In this regard, EUTELSAT, having already connected 1 million people to the Internet in Sub-Saharan Africa, announced an extension of its pledge to connect an additional 2 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa through resilient satellite connectivity by 2030. The announcement, made during the Global Symposium for Regulators held in Ankara from 12 to 15 May 2026, was highlighted as a concrete example of partner action that could inspire similar commitments from other stakeholders.

The United States provided an update on its 2026 Partner2Connect pledge, through which the U.S. National Telecommunications and Information Administration is partnering with the non-profit U.S. Telecommunications Training Institute (USTTI) to deliver satellite connectivity training for developing countries, in alignment with the African Regional Initiative 1.

Translating pledges into measurable impact at scale requires clear national priorities, well-defined investment plans, and sustained engagement with multilateral and bilateral partners in support of government-led digital development objectives. Strong monitoring and accountability frameworks are also essential to track project implementation, assess progress against agreed objectives, and ensure tangible impact on the ground.

Key messages on collaboration and partnerships to support the transition from commitments to implementation and impact

- Participants underscored the importance of collaboration and partnerships in translating commitments into implementation and measurable impact.
- Regional cooperation was recognized as an important means of supporting national efforts, particularly where coordinated regional and sub-regional action can help mobilize resources and partners.
- Regional bodies, including WATRA, CRASA, ARTAC, and EACO, were highlighted as useful platforms for advancing regional implementation of global commitments, supporting harmonization, and facilitating joint actions, programmes, and projects.
- Greater impact can be achieved through joint programming, coordinated country-level project preparation, and sustained engagement with development banks and private investors.
- Partner2Connect was noted as a structured matchmaking mechanism that can align country-defined needs with partner commitments, expertise, and resources, thereby helping translate pledges into concrete projects and scalable, high-impact collaborations.
- Tools made available through the Regional Initiatives Accelerator were recognized as useful resources to support the translation of regional priorities into tangible, financed, and measurable impact.
- For private sector engagement, the importance of working with local partners was emphasized, recognizing their knowledge of local contexts and markets and their role in combining technology, experience, and implementation capacity to support scalable deployment.

7. Special Announcements

The Forum included special announcements on the Regional National Emergency Telecommunication Plans (NETP) Models for Western Africa and Southern Africa, as well as on the ITU-ATU-ICANN partnership for regional technical collaboration to strengthen digital infrastructure in Africa.

Regional NETP Models for Western Africa and Southern Africa: A special announcement was made on the launch of the NETP models for Western Africa and Southern Africa. The models set out strategic frameworks for the effective use of ICT across the disaster management cycle, with a focus on strengthening preparedness, response, and resilience. The NETP models identify priority areas for action, including enhancing regional and international cooperation, reducing vulnerabilities, strengthening the resilience of telecommunication infrastructure, and advancing robust early warning systems across the region. The Western Africa model builds on the existing framework developed for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries. SADC countries are now progressing towards regional implementation. Participants were further informed that work is currently underway to develop a similar model for Central Africa. Such models support countries in strengthening their preparedness and response capacities by establishing comprehensive and forward-looking frameworks for emergency telecommunications across all phases of disaster risk management.

ITU-ATU-ICANN partnership on regional technical collaboration to strengthen digital infrastructure in Africa: Strengthening digital infrastructure is at the core of our efforts to achieve universal and meaningful connectivity and sustainable digital transformation in Africa. As part of our collaboration to implement the new African Regional Initiatives and as part of the Coalition for Digital Africa that ICANN curates, we are working closely with governments and partners to go beyond basic connectivity and reinforce the core Internet infrastructure that underpins digital transformation. ITU, ATU and ICANN, invited Member States during a joint webinar in February to express their interest in developing country-level projects aligned with national priorities



and the regional initiatives. During the RDF the partners announced that technical meetings between the teams have followed, and expressions of interest have been received from Senegal, Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Côte d'Ivoire, as well as through regional bodies including the Economic Community of Central African States, representing 11 countries, and the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation, representing 18 countries. The partners encouraged additional countries to engage actively in this work.

These announcements reflect increasing regional cooperation and the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in advancing digital transformation.

8. Presentation of the draft 2026 RDF-AFR report by the Chair

In support of advancing impact-oriented regional action in Africa, RDF-AFR Chair Dr Gift Kallisto Machengete presented the key takeaways, observations, and highlights reflected in the draft 2026 RDF-AFR report.

The Chair informed participants that the draft report would be made available on the RDF-AFR website by 18:00 on Wednesday.

Participants were invited to share any comments on the draft report with the ITU Regional Office for Africa at itu-ro-africa@itu.int by 15 June 2026.

9. Closing Segment

The closing ceremony featured remarks from ITU, ATU, and the Government of Zimbabwe, reaffirming their shared commitment to advancing Africa's digital development agenda.

At the outset of the closing segment, the BDT Director presented a certificate of appreciation to the RDF-AFR Chair, Dr Gift Kallisto Machengete, in recognition of his leadership and contribution to the success of the Forum.

Closing remarks were subsequently delivered by:

- Dr Gift Kallisto Machengete, Director General, POTRAZ
- Mr John Omo, Secretary General, African Telecommunications Union
- Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau
- Hon. Dingumuzi Phuti, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services, Zimbabwe

Participants expressed their sincere appreciation to the Government of Zimbabwe, ITU, ATU, and all partners and stakeholders for their valuable contributions to the successful organization and outcomes of RDF-AFR 2026.

10. Final Conclusions

RDF-AFR 2026 reaffirmed the shared commitment of African stakeholders to advancing universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity as a foundation for inclusive and sustainable digital transformation.

Key conclusions included:

- Persistent digital divides across the continent call for coordinated policy action, increased investment, and strengthened capacity development.
- Greater alignment of initiatives and resources is essential to overcoming fragmentation, accelerating national digital transformation, and supporting the achievement of regional and global development goals.
- Regional cooperation remains essential to addressing shared challenges and advancing common priorities.
- The implementation of WTDC outcomes and Regional Initiatives should be accelerated, with Member States encouraged to report regularly on progress achieved.
- Partnerships, including those facilitated through the Partner2Connect platform, remain critical to mobilizing resources, attracting investment, and advancing bankable digital development projects that respond to Member States' needs and are supported by partners' technical expertise and resources.
- Continued attention should be placed on translating strategies and commitments into measurable impact.

The Forum emphasized that Africa's digital transformation should remain people-centred, inclusive, and aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, drawing on innovation, partnerships, and regional solidarity. It further recognized the importance of leveraging Africa's youth dividend by engaging young people as key contributors and collaborators in designing and implementing scalable solutions for the benefit of all, across the continent.



Annex 1: Final RDF-AFR 2026 Programme

Annex 2: List of contributions submitted to the ITU Regional Development Forum for Africa

The contributions are listed according to the order in which they were received.

They are also posted on the website [here](#).

**Annex 1:** Final RDF-AFR 2026 Programme

ITU Regional Development Forum for Africa (RDF-AFR) 2026

*Universal, meaningful, and affordable connectivity for
an inclusive and sustainable digital future*

**25-26 May 2026
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe**

Event website: <http://itu.int/go/RDF-AFR-26>

RDF-AFR 2026 is organized by the International Telecommunication Union in cooperation with the Africa Telecommunications Union (ATU) and hosted by the Government of Zimbabwe.

The Forum is held back-to-back with the 2nd African Preparatory Meeting (APM) for ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2026 (PP-26) on 27-29 May 2026

PROGRAMME

Monday, 25 May 2026

08:30 - 09:00	Networking Coffee
09:00 - 10:30	Session 1: Infrastructure Development for Universal Meaningful Connectivity This session is a high-level discussion to explore strategies to accelerate investment and development of digital infrastructure to advance universal and meaningful connectivity in Africa. Speakers will share insights and engage with the audience on innovative solutions, financing models, and policy frameworks, and the role of their respective organisations in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the African Union's Agenda 2063 through inclusive and sustainable digital transformation. Moderator: Ms Halima Letamo, Head, ITU Area Office for Southern Africa Panellists: – Hon. Mondli Gungubele, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Communications and Digital Technologies, South Africa – Ms Helen Vosloo, Executive, Economics and Market Development, Communications and Regulatory Authority of Namibia (CRAN), Namibia – Ms Helen Kyeyune, Lead, Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, Amazon – Mr Laurent Ferrali, Senior Director, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) – Mr Timothy Adi Ashong, Director General, Pan-African Satellite Communication Organization (RASCOM), Côte d'Ivoire
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break

**11:00 – 12:00****Opening ceremony**

- Hon. Richard Moyo, Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Matabeleland North Province
- Dr Gift Kallisto Machengete, Director General, POTRAZ
- Mr John Omo, Secretary General, African Telecommunications Union (ATU)
- Dr. Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau
- Hon. Tatenda Mavetera, Minister, Ministry of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services, Zimbabwe

Appointment of the Chair of the ITU Regional Development Forum for Africa

12:00 – 13:00**Session 2: State of Digital Development and Trends: Challenges and Opportunities**

Africa's digital transformation holds significant promise for socio-economic progress. Enhanced mobile broadband coverage, a youthful population, and growing innovation are driving change across the continent. However, major challenges persist; although more than 82% of Africans are covered by mobile broadband, only 36% use the internet, the lowest rate worldwide. High connectivity costs, rural-urban disparities, limited digital skills, device affordability issues, fragmented regulations, cybersecurity threats, weak data protection, and insufficient electricity continue to prevent many people from fully benefiting from digital technologies.

Addressing these challenges will require coordinated investment, supportive policy and regulation, and large-scale digital skills training. In this session, speakers will share their experiences in tackling these structural gaps that continue to hinder balanced and inclusive digital progress across the region.

Moderator: Mr Mayamiko Nkoloma, Director General, Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA)

Presentation and setting the scene: Dr Emmanuel Manasseh, Director, ITU Regional Office for Africa

Panellists:

- Dr. Beullah Chirume. Permanent Secretary, for Hon. Tatenda Mavetera, Minister, Ministry of Information, Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services, Zimbabwe
- Mr John Omo, Secretary General, African Telecommunications Union
- Ms Liza Zouabi-Niedermeier, Executive, Group Pricing Compliance and Regulatory Economics, Telkom
- Mr Mothibi Ramusi, Chairperson, Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA)
- Rev. Ing. Edmund Yirenkyi Fianko, Director General, National Communications Authority (NCA) of Ghana
- Mr William Baraza, Director and CEO – African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute (AFRALTI)

13:00 – 13:15**Special Announcements**

NETP Model for Western Africa

NETP Model for Southern Africa

13:15 – 14:30

Group Photo and Lunch Break

14:30 – 16:00**Session 3: Building upon the outcomes of the WTDC and UN processes towards the results and impact-oriented regional actions in Africa (Financing Regional Initiatives)**

Member States at the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC-25) held in Baku, Azerbaijan, adopted five regional initiatives for Africa. This session will address actions carried out in the region by different stakeholders and how these relate to the outcomes of WTDC-25. The session will offer an opportunity to discuss



ITU's role in the UN system and its contribution at the regional and country levels to foster digital development, focusing on the joint programming collaboration as a framework for local resource mobilisation to facilitate financing of Regional Initiatives.

Moderator: Dr Christine Sund, Senior Advisor, ITU Regional Office for Africa

Panellists:

- Dr Beullah Chirume, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information, Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services, Zimbabwe
- Mr Dominic Ooko, Deputy Director, Revenue Assurance and Financial Reporting, Communications Authority of Kenya
- Dr Aliyu Yusuf Aboki, Executive Secretary, WATRA
- Ms Bernice Edande Otye, Permanent Secretary, ARTAC
- Mr Brian Mwansa, Acting Executive Secretary, CRASA
- Dr Zhicheng Qu, Chief Standardization Director for ITU Affairs, ZTE Corporation
- Mr Koffi Fabrice Djossou, Senior Expert in Charge of Innovation, West African Development Bank (BOAD)

16:00 - 16:30

Special Announcements

ITU-ATU-ICANN partnership on regional technical collaboration for strengthened digital infrastructure in Africa

16:30 - 17:00

Coffee Break

Networking dinner

Tuesday, 26 May 2026

08:30 - 09:00

Networking Coffee

09:00 - 10:30

Session 4: Partner2Connect Matchmaking Roundtable 1

This session will serve as a matchmaking platform for P2C pledges and RI for the Africa region. The five regional initiatives on Africa adopted during WTDC-25 focus on themes relevant to resilient digital infrastructure, artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital applications and funding mechanisms. This session will explore strategies through which these regional initiatives will be jointly implemented focusing on priorities which shaped these initiatives and received contributions.

Moderator: Ms Tahiry Rakotoheriniaina, Head, ITU Area Office for Central Africa and Madagascar

Presentation: Learning from Asia-Pacific on Smart Islands and Smart Villages. Dr Atsuko Okuda, Regional Director for Asia and the Pacific, ITU

Presentation: Regional Initiatives accelerator, Mr Mohammed Ba, Head of Digital Innovation, ITU

Presentations

- Mr Michel Tchonang Linze, Coordinator of the Central Africa IGF
- Ms Gaso Grace Pascal, Generation Connect Youth Envoy Representative, South Sudan
- Dr. Stella Erebor, Head, Internal Audit Department, NCC, Nigeria
- Ms Helene Vosloo, Head of Economics and Market Development, CRAN, Namibia
- Ms Hilda Mutseyekwa, Head of Division, POTRAZ, Zimbabwe
- Ms Ana Priscila Pedro Francisco, Head of Department of Studies, Development and Statistics, INCM, Mozambique
- Mr Andrew Nyirenda, Director of Economic Regulations, Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority (MACRA), Malawi
- Mr Yaovi Atohoun, Stakeholder Engagement and Operations Director for Africa, ICANN



- Mr Khumbuzo Nkunika, Assistant Director, Communication Policy Development, Ministry of Technology and Science, Zambia
- Eng. Victor Kweka, Spectrum Manager, TCRA, Tanzania

10:30 - 11:00

Coffee Break

11:00 - 12:30**Session 5: Partner2Connect Matchmaking Roundtable 2**

This session will serve as a matchmaking platform for P2C pledges and RI for the Africa region. The session will highlight innovative approaches to building sustainable, high-value partnerships that unlock transformative opportunities. It will focus on catalysing impactful initiatives to accelerate the region's digital agenda, driving inclusive and impactful capacity-development efforts to support digital transformation and regional growth.

Moderator: Mr Ali Drissa Badiel, Head, ITU Area Office for Western Africa

Presentation on Partner2Connect, Mr Marco Obiso, Chief, Networks Society Department, Telecommunications Development Bureau, ITU

Presentations

- Hon. Mark-Alexandre Doumba, Minister, Ministère de l'Économie numérique, de la Digitalisation et de l'Innovation, Gabon
- Hon. Samuel Nartey George, Minister, Ministry of Communication, Digital Technology and Innovations, Ghana
- Mr. Harold Msusa, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Digitalization, Malawi
- Dr. Imaja Itulelo Matiyabu, Director a.i. International Affairs, ARPTC, Democratic Republic of Congo
- Ms Fleur Assoumou Bessou, Chair of TDAG
- Mr Kakou Stanislas Kanvoli, Director of Legal Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Digital Transition and Innovation, Côte d'Ivoire

Interactive discussions with stakeholders.

12:30 - 13:00**Presentation of the draft 2026 RDF-AFR report by the Chair****13:00 - 14:00****Closing ceremony**

- Dr Gift Kallisto Machengete, Director General, POTRAZ
- Mr John Omo, Secretary General, African Telecommunications Union (ATU)
- Dr Cosmas Luckyson Zavazava, Director, ITU Telecommunication Development Bureau
- Hon. Dingumuzi Phuti, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Information Communication Technology, Postal and Courier Services, Zimbabwe

END OF RDF-AFR 2026

**Annex 2:** List of contributions submitted to the ITU Regional Development Forum for Africa

The contributions are listed according to the order in which they were received.

They are also posted on the website [here](#).

Title	Organization
Digital Pathfinders: ZTE's Commitment to an Intelligent and Inclusive Digital Future for Africa Download contribution	ZTE Corporation, Zimbabwe
Strengthening Digital Inclusion in Africa Through Device Reuse, Skills Development, and Community Partnerships Download contribution	Lenovo, EMEA
Strengthening National Cybersecurity Resilience through AI-Driven Capacity Building and Infrastructure Protection (2026-2029) Download contribution	General Authority for Communications and Informatics (GACI), Libya
Advancing Universal Acceptance for a Multilingual Internet The ICANN-ITU-ATU Collaboration through the Coalition for Digital Africa Download contribution	Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)
Connect a School and ICT Curriculum Review Initiative Download contribution	Malawi Communications Regulatory Authority, Malawi
Universal Access for Socio-Economic Development Download contribution	Communications Regulatory Authority of Namibia
National Emergency Telecommunications Plan and Child Online Protection and Girls in ICT Download contribution	Ministry of Technology and Science, Zambia
Advancing AI, Innovation, Cybersecurity, and Universal Connectivity Download contribution	Postal and Telecommunication Regulatory authority of Zimbabwe
Advancing Digital Inclusion through Youth-Led ICT Solutions in South Sudan Download contribution	Generation Connect Youth Envoy, South Sudan
De la Connectivité à la Souveraineté Numérique : Bâtir un écosystème de confiance en Afrique centrale Download contribution	FGI Afrique Centrale
Internet for All by 2030 Download contribution	Mozambique Communications Regulatory Authority - INCM, Mozambique