

**AFRICANADA**  
COMMERCE EXCHANGE  
INCREASING BUSINESS EXPONENTIALLY

**AfriCANADA**  
**ECONOMIC**  
SUMMIT 2026  
FIFA WORLD CUP EDITION

**THEME**  
Bridging Markets, Mobilizing Capital:  
Building an Inclusive  
Investment Future.

**CORE SUMMIT**  
March  
**26-27,**  
2026

**EXTENDED PROGRAMMING**  
June 11 - July 19,  
2026  
(FIFA World Cup 2026)

This special edition of the AfriCanada Economic Summit will integrate business and cultural programming within the context of FIFA World Cup 2026™

## AfriCanada Economic Summit 2026 – Agenda

Disclaimer: This agenda is subject to change and updates as required.

- **Land and Ancestral Acknowledgement: Dr. Rosemary Sadlier**

### Opening

- **Jackson O. Igbinosun**, President & CEO, AfriCanada Economic Summit Group

## Welcome Address

**Her Worship Olivia Chow**, Mayor of the City of Toronto

## Keynote Addresses

- **Hon. Judy A. Sgro**, Member of Parliament, Humber River – Black Creek; Chair, Standing Committee on International Trade, House of Commons, Parliament Hill, Ottawa, Canada
- **The Honourable Dr. Jean Augustine, PC, CM, OOnt**  
Distinguished Stateswoman and Champion of Equity and Inclusion  
Founding President, Jean Augustine Centre for Young Women’s Empowerment  
Former Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Status of Women), Government of Canada.
- **Dr. Farid Bensebaa**, Global Director, Canada–Africa Artificial Intelligence Consortium (CAAIC), Ottawa, Canada.

Plenary:

- ***Mr. Carlos Sousa – Senior International Advisor, Nigeria & Canada Business Network (NCBN)***
- ***Nissi Ekpot – Board Member, AfriCanada Economic Summit Group, Cape Town, South Africa***

## Remarks

- Sue Rauth, Director, Ontario Regional Office, Trade Commissioner Service (TCS)
- Hon. Dennis Vandi, Former Minister of Development and Finance, Sierra Leone; CEO, Dewaila Group
- Mr. David Katz, Board Chair, Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA)

## Presenters:

- Dr. Farid Bensebaa, Global Director, Canada–Africa Artificial Intelligence Consortium (CAAIC)
- Norman Musengimana, Business Development Manager, Startups and Entrepreneurship / Strategic Architect of Innovation Ecosystems, Founder and CEO – Kingston Economic Development Corporation, Prosfata Inc., Biz Skills Academy Inc.
- Franca Pomponio, Regional Business Officer, Outreach & Partnerships, Economic Development, Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario/Government of Canada.
- Clayton Kennedy, Mineral Exploration and Development Consultant, Mineral Development Branch, Ministry of Energy and Mines, Ontario Public Service
- Cheska Catilo, Trade Commissioner Services, Ontario.
- Uche Okugo, Economic Development & Innovation Strategist; Director, Brampton Economic Development, City of Brampton
- Nurudeen Elegbede, President, Nigerian Canadian Association of New Brunswick (NCANB); Chairperson, Nigerian Canadian Association of Council of Presidents (NCACP); CEO & Co-founder, BON Smiles Charity

- Ishmael Mansaray, CEO, Sancorp SL, Sierra Leone
- Othman Kamara, Lecturer, International Commerce, International Relations and Languages, University of Sierra Leone (USL)
- Byron A. Martin, Producer, Byron A. Martin Productions, Ontario, Canada
- Mariline Gheda, President of Triton Event, Founder of Halton Fashion Show, Co-founder, Toronto Fashion Show
- Samir Yassin, Senior Program & Policy Advisor, Immigration, Refugees, Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Mabinty Agnes Sia Kuyateh, Founder & CEO, Mas-Ish General Merchandise, Sierra Leone
- Aminata Mansaray, CEO, Freetown Television Network, Sierra Leone
- Frank Koroma, CEO, Borat Africa, Sierra Leone
- Ramy Bassily, P.Eng., CFAA, Regional Director & OEM Sales Leader (Middle East, Africa, Europe & APAC), Mircom Group of Companies, Vaughan, ON, Canada (*awaiting final confirmation*)
- Jean Barrett, Manager, Community Microfinance Program, Alterna Savings
- Latanya Monteith-Housen, Regional Manager, Black Community Business Development, Metro West; Women in Enterprise Banker (WE Banker)
- Dr. Muthana Zouri, Dean, Pilon School of Business, Sheridan College; Toronto Metropolitan University.
- Dan Herman, PhD, Strategic Advisor, Northguide; Lecturer, University of Toronto
- Ishmael Mansaray, Founder and CEO, Sancorps SL LTD, Freetown, Sierra Leone. (Country Partner)
- Leon Wasser, P.Eng., MBA, Director, Business Development, Mann Engineering
- Stephen Sutherland, President & CEO, Trellis Transit Technologies Inc., Canada.

Summit Highpoint: Official Launch of the Canada–Africa Artificial Intelligence Consortium (CAAIC) — led by Dr. Farid Bensebaa, Global Director, CAAIC. The launch will unveil the \$50 million Africa-Pedia Sovereign AI Infrastructure Fund, anchored on Canadian-designed sovereign digital and AI governance frameworks, aimed at advancing trusted, inclusive, and scalable AI infrastructure across Africa in partnership with Canada.

### **Summit 2026 Sessions:**

#### **1. African Project Recruitment & Engagement**

The AfriCanada Economic Summit Group is actively recruiting and onboarding African projects aligned with the Summit's 12 thematic priority areas for structured engagement with Canadian institutions, industry groups, and government stakeholders.

This process is designed to facilitate practical partnerships, investment readiness, and policy-relevant dialogue, with a strong emphasis on advancing bankable, scalable, and impact-driven initiatives.

#### **2. Launch of the Canada–Africa Artificial Intelligence Consortium (CAAIC)**

Dr. Farid Bensebaa, CEO & Founder, ABBCARI Inc. (Ottawa, Canada)

The Canada–Africa Artificial Intelligence Consortium (CAAIC) will be officially launched during the AfriCanada Economic Summit in March 2026. CAAIC will serve as a collaborative

platform to advance AI innovation, capacity building, ethical deployment, and cross-border cooperation between Canada and Africa, supporting both public- and private-sector applications.

### **3. Physical AI and Sustainable Bioproducts for Forest Sector Retooling**

**Prof. Fred Schwartz**

- Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University, Toronto, ON
- Accelerator LTG, Campbell's Ba, (Qc)

The Canadian Forest industry's reliance on single-product commodities exposes it to global market volatility. This work proposes a systemic "retooling" to a decentralized, high-value biorefinery model integrating mass timber, biomass energy, and specialty pulps for textiles, biochemicals, and insulation. A proprietary generalized physical AI (gPAI) platform optimizes production and supply chains, supporting economic value retention within local and Indigenous communities and enhancing industrial resilience.

**4. Topic:** Market entry and expert advisory services for foreign entrepreneurs and companies seeking to establish or expand operations in Canada and North America.

**Gary W. Jarosz** – Board Chair & Interim General Manager, Synergy Lab Inc., Canada

Gary W. Jarosz is an experienced board chair and certified ICD.D director with over twenty years of governance leadership across for-profit and not-for-profit boards. He brings extensive ESG risk management expertise and is a recognized leader in driving diversity, equity, and inclusion on boards through skills assessments, evaluations, and succession planning.

Currently, he serves as Board Chair and Interim General Manager for Synergy Lab Inc., providing market entry and expert advisory services for foreign entrepreneurs and companies seeking to establish or expand operations in Canada and North America. With over thirty years of experience in ICT, electronics, and manufacturing industries, Gary has successfully led teams in both Fortune 100 and startup environments, securing complex technology-based projects across manufacturing, financial services, retail, healthcare, telecommunications, and cleantech sectors.

### **5. Canada Energy Alliance for Africa**

**Leon Wasser, MBA, P.Eng.**

**Vice-Chair, Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA)**

**Director, Business Development | Mann Engineering**

The Canada Energy Alliance for Africa will be formally inaugurated at the 2026 Summit, establishing a cooperation framework to advance energy transition, infrastructure development, investment, and technology exchange between Canada and African markets.

Overview: A structured platform to accelerate sustainable energy solutions and cross-border collaboration between Canada and Africa, aligned with the World Bank's Mission 300 and supported by the African Development Bank.

Objective: Expand electricity access to 300 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa by 2030  
Focus Areas: Technology deployment • Regulatory harmonization • Local capacity development  
Strategic Approach: Deploy Canadian clean energy technologies—including energy storage systems, smart grids, and renewable infrastructure—to address energy poverty, strengthen grid resilience, and overcome infrastructure limitations.

## **6. Agri-Food, Food Security & One Health Innovation (Africa–Canada)**

**Anchor:** To Be Confirmed – Leading Canadian University Partnership

This thematic advances Africa–Canada collaboration in modern agriculture, food security, public health, and agri-food innovation, anchored by partnerships with leading Canadian universities and research ecosystems.

**Key focus areas include:**

- University-to-university collaboration
- Food safety and public health
- Seed breeding, seed banks, and soil health
- Climate-resilient farming and sustainable fertilization
- Livestock, veterinary health, dairy processing, and value addition
- Adoption of a One Health framework integrating human, animal, and environmental health

Thematic activities promote applied research-to-industry problem-solving, NGO–government–industry collaboration, agricultural modernization, and AI-enabled agriculture, including precision farming, data-driven decision-making, and yield optimization.

## **7. Creative Industries, Film & Cultural Exchange (Africa–Canada)**

**Anchor:** Byron A. Martin, President, Byron A. Martin Productions (Canada)

This thematic advances Africa–Canada collaboration in film, television, documentary production, and the broader creative industries, with a strong emphasis on Canada–Africa co-production opportunities.

**Core elements include:**

- Content development and co-production frameworks
- Financing models and distribution strategies
- Publicity, marketing, and professional exchange programs

The co-production mechanism will convene Canadian and African creatives, industry unions, professional associations, and training institutions to strengthen cross-border understanding of production environments, regulatory frameworks, and market access, while supporting sustainable creative industry ecosystems.

## **8. Mining, Critical Minerals & ESG Governance (Canada–Africa)**

**Anchor:** Clayton Kennedy, Mineral Exploration & Development Consultant, Mineral Development Branch, Ministry of Energy and Mines, Ontario Public Service

This thematic advances Canada–Africa cooperation in mining, mineral exploration, metals, and critical minerals, with a focus on investment readiness, policy alignment, and responsible

resource development across the full mining value chain—from exploration to closure.

**Key focus areas include:**

- Regulatory and policy frameworks
- Investment protection instruments (including FIPAs)
- Security, risk mitigation, and institutional governance
- Geoscience data access, licensing, royalties, and ESG compliance

Engagement will leverage Canada’s mining ecosystem in alignment with responsible mining practices and critical minerals supply chains.

**9. Venture & Project Financing: Mobilizing Private, Sovereign & Institutional Capital**

**Anchor Organization:** David Canimac Management Services Limited – Fractional Business Consulting Services

David Ralph Mackereth, CA, CPA

This thematic focuses on mobilizing private, sovereign, and institutional capital to support Africa–Canada trade, investment, and infrastructure projects.

**Key areas include:**

- Project structuring and investment readiness
- Blended finance solutions and risk mitigation
- Public–private partnerships
- Engagement with financial institutions, development banks, institutional investors, and sovereign entities

Thematic activities will advance bankable projects, sustainable cross-border capital flows, and capacity building in financial management and innovative financing mechanisms.

**10. Safeguards Against Fraud and Scams**

**Lead:** Kat Follis, Investor Engagement Specialist, Ontario Securities Commission – Investor Office

This thematic provides regulatory clarity and investor education on investment advice, compliance, and investor protection frameworks relevant to investment activities.

**11. Education, Skills Training & Inclusive Rural Economic Empowerment**

**Anchor:** Norman Musengimana, Architect of Social Entrepreneurship & Innovation | Global Ecosystem Builder

This thematic is grounded in the belief that social entrepreneurship and innovation are key drivers of inclusive prosperity. It advances human capital development, workforce training, and emerging skills aligned with evolving labour-market needs across Africa and Canada.

**Focus areas include:**

- Education-to-employment pathways
- Skills portability and international mobility frameworks

- TVET, digital skills, and green skills
- Entrepreneurship education and inclusive rural economic development

Drawing on over two decades of ecosystem-building experience, this thematic bridges policy, practice, and lived experience to support scalable social enterprises, community resilience, and sustainable livelihoods—positioning entrepreneurship as a vehicle for human dignity, resilience, and long-term growth.

## **12. Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade**

**Topic:** *Fostering Mutually Beneficial Partnerships: Insights from the Committee’s Study on Canada-Africa Engagement (Awaiting final Confirmation)*

### **Overview:**

This session examines Canada’s engagement in Africa through the mandate of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, with a focus on advancing mutually beneficial partnerships between Canada and African countries. Guided by the Committee’s recent study and its 21 recommendations, the discussion will explore how Canada can strengthen trade, investment, diplomatic relations, and development cooperation across the continent. Emphasis will be placed on the Committee’s mandate to assess Canada’s foreign policy tools, economic engagement strategies, and institutional coordination, while identifying practical pathways to address challenges and unlock emerging opportunities. Participants will gain insights into how the Committee’s findings can inform more coherent, strategic, and impactful Canada–Africa collaboration across government, industry, and civil society.

## **13. Women in Nation-Building: The Policy Imperative of Economic and Financial Inclusion**

**Presenter:** Meseret Haileyesus (Mesi)

*Economic Security Futurist | Founder & Executive Director, Canadian Center for Women’s Empowerment (CCFWE)*

**Co-Founder, International Coalition Against Economic Abuse (ICAEA)**

This session examines the critical role of women as drivers of nation-building through economic participation, financial inclusion, and policy-responsive systems. It will explore how inclusive public policy, regulatory frameworks, and targeted financial instruments can unlock women’s productive potential, strengthen household and national economies, and accelerate sustainable development outcomes.

The discussion will focus on the intersection of gender-responsive economic policy, access to finance, entrepreneurship support, workforce participation, and asset ownership, highlighting how systemic barriers—such as limited access to credit, capital markets, land, and formal financial systems—continue to constrain women’s contributions to economic growth. Panelists will analyze best practices and policy innovations from Canada, Africa, and global contexts that have successfully expanded women’s access to financial services, government procurement opportunities, skills development, and leadership pipelines.

The session will also address the role of governments, financial institutions, development agencies, and the private sector in designing inclusive financial ecosystems—including grants, loans, guarantees, venture funding, and social finance tools—that enable women-led enterprises to start, scale, and compete globally. Emphasis will be placed on aligning policy with measurable outcomes, data-driven decision-making, and accountability mechanisms that ensure inclusion translates into real economic impact.

Ultimately, this conversation positions women’s economic and financial inclusion not as a social add-on, but as a core nation-building strategy, essential to resilience, innovation, productivity, and long-term prosperity.

**Media Partners**

- Vanguard News, Nigeria
- Freetown Television Network, Sierra Leone
- PlainTruth Newspaper, Sierra Leone