

PROGRAMME



AI FOR EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY 2026

4TH EAC REGIONAL SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION CONFERENCE

Harnessing Artificial Intelligence for a Resilient, Inclusive
and Innovative East Africa

30 MARCH - 1 APRIL 2026

KIGALI CONVENTION CENTRE, RWANDA



The 4th EAC Regional Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Conference is jointly organised by the East African Science and Technology Commission (EASTECO) and the Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), in collaboration with a wide range of regional and global STI stakeholders. The Conference provides a strategic platform for harnessing Artificial Intelligence as a catalyst for a resilient, inclusive, and innovative East Africa. It seeks to foster coordinated regional action to address critical gaps in technical capacity, digital and AI infrastructure, investment in AI research and innovation, and the development of coherent governance and regulatory frameworks to support responsible and people-centred AI adoption across the region.



PROGRAMME

DAY 1: MONDAY 30TH MARCH 2026

08:00 – 09:00: Registration, Exhibition & Networking

09:00 – 11:00 CAT – Official Opening Session

Setting the stage for a Digitally Unified East African Community: AI as a Catalyst for the 7th EAC Development Strategy

Session Moderator: Dr. Fortunate Muyambi, Deputy Executive Secretary, EASTECO and Dr. Salome Guchu, Principal Innovation & Outreach officer, IUCEA.

Rapporteur: Dr. Louis Sibomana

Anthems: Rwanda National Anthem and EAC Anthem

Entertainment: Traditional Performance

Welcome Remarks:

- Prof. Idris Rai, Ag. Executive Secretary, IUCEA
- Dr. Sylvance Okoth, Executive Secretary, EASTECO
- Hon. Secretary General, East African Community
- Chair of The Council of Ministers EAC

Partner State Remarks:

Statements by Ministers responsible for ICT/STI: Republic of Burundi, Republic of Rwanda, Republic of Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of South Sudan, Democratic Republic of DRC and Federal Republic of Somalia

Partner Remarks:

- Dr. Tom Kariuki, Founding CEO, Science for Africa Foundation
- Louise Haxthausen, Director, UNESCO, Regional Office for Eastern Africa
- Norman Schraepel, GIZ Cluster-Coordinator Rwanda
- Barbara Barone, European Union Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania
- Hon. Prof. Gaspard Banyankimbona - Commissioner AU- ESTI
- H.E. Nardos Bekele-Thomas, CEO, AUDA-NEPAD

Official Opening Address: Guest of Honour: Hon. Paula Ingabire, Minister of ICT and Innovation, Rwanda

Photo Session

11:00 -11:30 CAT- Health Break / Exhibition Tour
11:30 - 12:30 CAT - Plenary Session 1

Theme: The Strategic Role of AI in East Africa's Development, Regional Transformation and Integration

Session Moderator: Jade Makory, Regional Digital Transformation and AI Advisor;

Rapporteur: Dr. Marie Chantal Cyulinyana.

Keynote Presentation:

“AI as a Cross-Cutting Driver of Resilient and Inclusive Growth in East Africa”

by Olivier Twagirayezu – Centre of Fourth Industrial Revolution-Rwanda

by Nakul Jain- CEO & Managing Director, Wadhvani AI Global

Panelists:

- Maria Namyalo, APET, AUDA-NEPAD
- Celina Lee, CEO, Zindi
- Suraj Juddoo, Senior Lecturer and AI Consultant, UNDP & Middlesex University

Discussion / Q&A

12:30 - 13:30 CAT - Plenary Session 2

Theme: AI Infrastructure, Research & Innovation Ecosystems in East Africa

Session Moderator: Sonia Bagumako, Regional AI Advisor;

Rapporteur: Prof. Charles Karuku Gachuri

Keynote Presentation:

“Building Regional AI Infrastructure and Research Capacity in Africa”

by Amine Idriss, Director of Economy Infrastructure and Trade, AUDA-NEPAD

Panelists:

- Nicholas Mponimba, CEO, RENU Uganda
- Prof. Madara Ogot, CEO, UbuntuNet Alliance
- Cedric Meshie, Co-Founder, Neotex.ai
- Claude Migisha, Technology and Data Expert, Rwanda

13:30 - 14:30 CAT- Lunch Break, Exhibition and Poster Session

14:30 - 15:30 CAT- Plenary Session 3

Theme: Building a Skilled AI Workforce for the East African Community

Session Moderator: Brenda Nakazibwe, Team Leader Pathogen Economy, STI Secretariat-Office of the President;

Rapporteur: Dr. Japhet Niyobuhungiro.

Keynote Presentations:

“Empowering the Human Age: Building a Future Ready Workforce in Age of AI ”

by Ben Ruhinda, Senior Systems Officer, IUCEA

“University-led AI incubators for inclusive regional development”

by Jaume Fortuny, Senior Project Manager, OBREAL

Panelists:

- Dorothee Weyler, Director, Regional Office for Africa, DAAD
- Charles Wanyonyi, UNESCO, Education, Campus Africa
- Dr. Neema Mduma, Computer Scientist and Senior Lecturer, NM-AIST
- Dr. Houssein Ahmed Assowe, Director of the Mathematics and Numerical Research Centre, University of Djibouti

Discussion/ Q&A**15:30 - 17:00 CAT - Plenary Session 4**

Theme: Ethics and Responsible AI in the East African Community

Session Moderator: Hugue Ngandeu Ngatta, Head of Unit for Social and Human Science, UNESCO;

Rapporteur: Dr. Didacienne Mukanyiligira

Keynote Presentation:**“Human-Centred and Ethical AI for East Africa”**

by Bill Faruki, Founder & CEO, MindHyve.ai

Panelists:

- Prof. Damien Hanyurwimfura, Lead, Centre of Excellence for Internet of Things, University of Rwanda
- Paola Gálvez-Callirgos, AI Ethics & Technology Policy Expert, MPP University of Oxford
- Dr. Joyce Nakatumba-Nabende, Head of AI Lab, Makerere University
- Malcolm Kijirah (CELA), Government Affairs Manager, Kenya, Microsoft
- Teddy Nalubega, Founding Managing Director, Ubuntu Center for AI Governance and Innovation
- Karim Attoumani Mohamed, Expert, Digital Governance, Telecommunications Regulation & the Ethics of AI, Comoros

Discussion/ Q&A**17:00 - 18:00 END OF DAY ONE**

DAY 2: TUESDAY 31ST MARCH 2026

09:00 – 10:00 CAT- Plenary Session 5

Theme: The Role of Open Science and Diplomacy in Global and Regional AI Advancement

Session Moderator: Nicole Mulaku, Programme Officer, TCC Africa;

Rapporteur: Ms. Diana Umulisa

Keynote Presentation:

“Advancing Responsible AI Through Open Science and Science Diplomacy: Connecting Partner States for Inclusive Regional Innovation”

by Dr. Joy Owango, Executive Director, Training Centre in Communication (TCC Africa)

Panelists:

- Dr. Henry Waruhiu, Director Research and Management, ESAMI
- Dr. David Ngigi, Acting Director General, NACOSTI
- Christian Kohl, Director of Technology and Engineering, Public Library of Science, PLOS
- Nicole Mulaku, Programmes Officer Library and Consortia, TCC

Discussion / Q&A

10:00 - 13:00 CAT Plenary Session 6: Side Events

AUDA-NEPAD and Science for Africa Foundation	EAC AI Alliance	Africa Research and Impact Network (ARIN)	East African Journal of Science, Technology and Innovation
<u>Advancing the AU Vision for Open Research in Africa</u> Session 1: Led Framing of Open Research-Led Framing of Open Research Session 2: Presentation: SFA Foundation Contribution Toward an Africa-Led Vision for Open Research Session 3: Presentation: SFA Foundation Science Computing and Data for Health. Session 4: Moderated High-Level Panel Discussion Session 5: Interactive Group Consultations Session 6: Synthesis &	<u>The First East African Digital Leaders Forum on Artificial Intelligence</u> Session1: Introduction and Opening Remarks Session II: Introduction to the EAC Digital Transformation Strategy Governance Structure, Overview of the Digital Leaders Forum (DLF) structure and composition; and the EAC AI Alliance Session III: Presentation of the Draft EAC Regional AI Strategy Q&A and stakeholder reflections Session IV: Regional Collaboration for Shared AI Infrastructure in East Africa Keynote presentation and	<u>Leveraging Responsible AI for Climate Resilience in Africa: Policy Readiness, Capacity Building, and Action Pathways</u> Session 1: Opening and Context Setting Overview of the Leveraging AI for Climate Resilience Solutions in Africa project Positioning the side event within the EAC STI Conference thematic agenda Session 2: Policy and Regulatory Readiness for AI and Climate Resilience Status of AI policies and regulatory frameworks for climate resilience in East Africa Session 3: Capacity Building for Responsible AI –	<u>EAJSTI Editorial Board to enhance, advance and disseminate scientific, technological and innovative knowledge that supports East African regional development</u> Opening Remarks Session 1: EAJSTI Progress Update: Presentation on the progress and achievements of the Journal since the last Annual General Meeting. Session 2: Policy Discussion and Strategic Direction: Consideration of key policy issues and strategic priorities for the Journal. Session 3: Editorial Board Work plan and Budget: Presentation and discussion

Identification of AU Led Next Steps Closing Remarks	discussion on regional AI infrastructure, data ecosystems, and research collaboration Session V: Moderated Discussion: Opportunities for Regional AI Collaboration Session VI: Discussion on concrete opportunities for regional collaboration on AI across the East African Community. Closing Remarks	Insights from Practice Presentation: Capacity needs of ECRs and policymakers in AI for climate resilience Session 4: Applied AI for Anticipatory Action and Humanitarian Resilience Session 5: Way Forward and Action Pathways Identification of priority actions for policy, capacity building, and collaboration, and Opportunities for regional partnerships and follow-up engagement	of the Editorial Board work plan and budget for the upcoming financial periods. Session 4: Inauguration of New Editorial Board Members & OJS Orientation: Introduction of new members and briefing on the operation of the Open Journal Systems (OJS). Any Other Business Way Forward and Closing Remarks
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13:00 - 14:00 CAT- Lunch Break, Exhibition and Poster Session

Working Health Break

14:00 - 17:00 CAT- Parallel Sessions 7: Paper Presentations

14:00-15:00 CAT	Parallel Session 1A: AI for Agriculture & Food Security Moderator: Prof. Esron Daniel Karimuribo Rapporteur: Prof. Charles Karuku Gachuiiri	Parallel Session 1B: AI for Health, wellbeing & Biomedical Innovation Moderator: Dr. Benson R. Kidenya Rapporteur: Prof Callixte Yadufashije	Parallel Session 1C: AI for Education, Skills development & Research Excellence Moderator: Mr Charles Wanyonyi Rapporteur: Everlyne Akoth Odero
(Each Presenter 10 Minutes then Q&A: 20 Minutes at the end of presentations)	Geoffrey Dan Odokonyero: Optimizing Seed Crop Selection for Variable Climates: An AI-Based Approach to Enhancing Agricultural Productivity using Vertical Farming Emmanuel Ndayisenga: An AI-Driven Solar Energy Monitoring System for Energy-Efficient Operation of Milk Storage Chillers Dr Paul O. Mireji: Computational annotations of antennal genes in tsetse flies Gladness Mwanga: Precision Livestock Farming (PLF) Technologies Evaluation for Smallholder Farming in Africa: A Case Study of Tanzania	Boniface Ntambara: Stroke Risk Prediction using Machine Learning Asifiwe Makawa: AI-driven Prediction Model for Cardiovascular Diseases Nabugewa Fiona: Development of a Machine Learning model for predicting and classifying risk factors associated with neonatal deaths at Rakai General Hospital Amos Okot: Predicting Mosquito Age and Species Using Mid-Infrared Spectroscopy and Artificial Intelligence for Rapid, Reagent-Free Malaria Surveillance Wilson OKAKA: Effectiveness of	Wilberforce Mfitundinda: Administrative Intelligence: Quantifying Drivers of AI Adoption for Efficiency in Ugandan Universities Anthony Marugu: Semantic-Driven Sign Motion Generation via Hierarchical Discrete Tokenization and Masked Transformers Simon Ngalomba : Transforming Research Governance through Artificial Intelligence: Opportunities and Challenges in Tanzanian Universities Dr Gastervas Geoffrey Rutwara Mugume: Leveraging Open Education Data and Artificial Intelligence for Data-Driven

	Charlynnne Jepkosge: A GEOAI-based smart seed zone recommender system for climate-resilient agriculture in East Africa	Science Journalism in Understanding Biomedical Health Innovation through AI-Propelled Digital Herbal Clinical Trials for Community Health in Uganda Gideon Luper Abako: Predictive Health Supply Chains in Low-connectivity Settings: An Offline-first AI Framework for Uganda	Institutional Governance in Uganda's Tertiary Education Sector Dr Florence Kamonjo: Artificial intelligence in academic practice: Patterns of use and student perceptions in Kenyan universities
15:00-16:00 CAT	Parallel Session 2D: AI for Climate Resilience, Environment & Natural Resources Moderator: Prof. Nzioka John Muthama Rapporteur: Dr. Pancras Ndokoye	Parallel Session 2E: AI for Industry, Service Delivery & Digital Economy Moderator: Prof. Joel S. Mtebe Rapporteur: Prof. Jude Lubega	Parallel Session 2F: AI for Education, Skills development & Research Excellence Moderator: Dr. Joshua K. Kibet Rapporteur: Prof. Thomas Olwal
	Jean Claude Hakizimana: Using Machine Learning and Satellite Data for Improving Flood Prediction in the Rusizi Basin Prof. Caroline Mulinya: Transforming Smallholder Resilience: An AI-Driven Framework for Climate-Smart Agriculture in Kakamega County, Kenya Richard Cartland: Analysis of AI driven flood forecast system in Uganda Mati Rita: Data-driven climate action: A geospatial AI tool for optimizing regional climate investments Senior Diop Ndeko Mubembe: Medicinal and nutritional floristic Potential of relict forests in Kaziba traditional landscape Eastern DR Congo: Identification Using Digital Network Platform and Database	Richard Kimera: Design and Validation of Trust-Weighted Machine Learning Models for Predicting Multi-Factor Authentication Adoption Using the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) Framework Dr Julius Niyongabo: Bearing fault detection and diagnosis based on an optimized densely connected convolutional network and an improved residual network Damaris Apondi Were: Implementation of QR Code Payments to Streamline Patient Billing at Avenue Hospital Kisumu Benon Omwenga Nyabuto: Development of a predictive model for determining temperature distribution in concrete slab using embedded sensors Richard Cartland: Intelligent Solar Monitoring System	Dr Fredrick Edward Kitoogo: A Low-Cost AI Onboarding Agent Suite for Tertiary Education Institutions in Africa Ndolo Daniel Mulinge: Bridging the Digital Divide: Evaluating ICT e-Readiness in Kenyan Higher Education Institutions Japheth Mandela ISABOKE: Democratizing Animation: AI-Driven Pipeline Optimization in Emerging Creative Markets Dr. Businge Phelix Mbabazi: Ethical AI Governance in Resource-Constrained Higher Education. A case of Kabale University framework Lawino Giovanna: Teacher Support and professional development Needs that influence Adoption of Artificial Intelligence in the Teaching process at public universities. A case of Teaching staff at Makerere University Business school Uganda

		Godfrey Kibalya: MAVIC: Multi-Agent Pipeline for Critical Infrastructure Monitoring Through Crowd-Sourced Multimodal Data	Lucian Ngeze: Artificial Intelligence as a Catalyst for Pedagogical Transformation in Higher Education: Case of Academic Staff of the Inter-University Council of East African Member Institutions
16:00-17:00 CAT	Parallel Session 3G: AI for Agriculture & Food Security Moderator: Dr. Margaret Nyawira Lukuyu Rapporteur: Prof. Jaffu Othniel Chilongola	Parallel Session 3H: Innovation & Commercialization of AI Solutions in Agriculture Moderator: Prof. Abdi T. Abdalla Rapporteur: Everlyne Akoth Otero	Parallel Session 3I: AI for Health, Wellbeing & Biomedical Innovation Moderator: Dr Kijakazi Obed Mashoto Rapporteur: Prof. François Niyonzima Niyongabo
	Alice Ndikumwenayo: AI-Powered Smart Nursery for Elite Coffee Seedling Production: A Hybrid Edge-Cloud Architecture for Agricultural Transformation in Burundi Nakaima Amina: Market Price Prediction Model for Agricultural Products Using Time Series Analysis: A Context of Coffee in Low Resource Environments Rehema Salum Abdallah: Machine Learning Approach for Predicting Rice Production in Tanzania by Integrating Economic and Environmental Factors Dr Casiana Blasius Lwiwa: AI-Enhanced Climate Monitoring to Optimize Insulated Solar Box Cooker Using Thermal Energy Storage Materials Samuel Kamau: Improving City Resilience with AI-Assisted Adaptive Zoning	Harriet Ratemo: Ground Truth to Digital Intelligence: ML-Powered Soil Monitoring for Food-Secure East Africa Tinah Manduna Mutabazi: AI-Driven UAV and Deep Learning for Climate-Resilient Coffee Farming in Uganda Brown Gwambene: Leveraging AI to Enhance Market Access and Real-Time Farmer Advisory Services for Agricultural Productivity and Food Security in the East African Community Dr Rapheal Wangalwa: AI reveals how climate change is shrinking optimal land for staple crops and escalating food security risks in Uganda	Solomon Piwun BME: CaviScope: AI-Community-Centric Innovation for Expanding Access to Early Cervical Cancer Screening in Uganda Samuel James Kibanga: Uganda Cancer Care Super App (UCCA): An AI Enabled Digital Cancer Care Ecosystem for improved treatment Access and Continuity Solimo Rajab: A human-in-the-loop explainable ensemble machine learning framework for adaptive and trust-aware severe malaria prediction Japhari Muna Mbaru: Few-Shot Sign Language Recognition Using CLIP's Contrastive Multimodal Framework for Healthcare Aymar AKILIMALI: Leveraging Machine Learning for Enhanced Spatiotemporal Forecasting of Malaria Mortality in Children Under Five in the Democratic Republic of Congo

17:30 CAT – SNACK & END OF DAY TWO

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY 1ST APRIL 2026

09:00 – 11:00 CAT - Plenary Session 8

Women and Youth Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Keynote Presentation:

**"Supporting Youth and Women AI Innovators and Entrepreneurs
(Finance, Incubation & Policy)"**

by Dr. James Mwangi, Group Managing Director and CEO, Equity Group Holdings

Moderator: Dr. Fortunate Muyambi; **Rapporteur:** Mr. Jean Louis Niragire

Women and Youth-led Innovations and Entrepreneurship Pitches & Demonstrations

16 Entrepreneurs across 8 Partner States

(5 minutes each)

10:00 - 11:00 CAT - Parallel Session A	10:00 - 11:00 CAT - Parallel Session B
UNESCO Capacity building for policy makers	Strengthening Africa's Voice in Global AI Governance - African Advanced Level Telecommunications Institute (AFRALTI) and British Council

11:00 - 11:30 CAT – Coffee / Tea Break

11:30 - 12:30 CAT- Plenary Session 9

Theme: Powering AI with East African Data, Local Content and Languages

Moderator: Robin Miller, Axum; **Rapporteur:** Mr. Benjamin Nabaana

Keynote Presentation:

**"Unlocking Growth Through Data and Language Technologies:
Building AI Systems that reflect East Africa"**

by Mr. David Gonahasa, Team Lead 4IR Minister of Science, Technology, and Innovation under the Office of the President - Uganda

Panelists:

- Dr. Caroline Asiimwe, Executive Secretary, East Africa Kiswahili Commission
- Hezekiel Gikambi Peter, Language Technologist, AI and Media Linguist, Kenyatta University
- Dennis Kevogo, Group Chief Data Strategist, Jubilee Holdings Limited
- Ngugi Peter Karema, CEO, PromptBI

Discussion / Q&A

12:30 - 13:30 CAT- Plenary Session 10

Theme: Young Innovators at the Forefront of Africa's AI Transformation

Moderator: Jocelyne Mukamisha, Digital Transformation Center, Rwanda

Rapporteur: Dr. Pancras Ndokoye

Keynote Presentation:

"From Talent to Transformation: Empowering Young Innovators to Lead Africa's AI Future"

by: Barbara Glover, Programme Officer, AUDA-NEPAD

Panelists

- Alix Mahoro - Digital Umuganda
- Aline Nicole
- Sarah Moses
- Ulrich Njodzeka
- TUYIZERE Emmanuel
- David Masoperh

13:30 - 14:30 CAT- Lunch Break, Exhibition and Poster Session

14:30 - 17:00 CAT- Plenary Session 11: Ministerial Session (Panel Discussion)

Ministerial Dialogue: Strengthen Leadership and Policy Coordination for Responsible AI Adoption and Regional Competitiveness in the EAC

Session Moderator: Hon. Andrea Ariik Malueth, DSG EAC.

Rapporteur: Dr. Offoro N. Kimambo

Keynote Presentation:

"Strengthen Leadership and Policy Coordination for Responsible AI Adoption and Regional Competitiveness in the EAC"

by Dr. Monica Musenero Masanza, Minister of Science, Technology, and Innovation
under the Office of the President - Uganda

Feedback / Responses from Partner States Ministers how to strengthen Leadership and Policy Coordination for Responsible AI Adoption and Regional Competitiveness in the EAC.

- Minister - Democratic Republic of DRC
- Minister - Federal Republic of Somalia
- Minister - Republic of Burundi,
- Minister- Republic of Kenya
- Minister - Republic of Rwanda,
- Minister - Republic of South Sudan,
- Minister - Republic of Uganda,
- Minister - United Republic of Tanzania,

Presentation of Ministerial Resolutions Implementation from the 3rd Science, Technology and Innovation Conference-2024

- Dr. Sylvance Okoth - Executive Secretary, EASTECO

Presentation of Consolidated Thematic recommendations from the Plenary Sessions by Rapporteur General-Conference Communiqué

Awards Ceremony for Innovation and Entrepreneurship Challenges

Announcement of AI4EAC Challenge Winners

**Launch: EAC Regional Space Science and Technology Strategy and
EAC Regional Strategy for Innovation in the Informal Sector
- Industrial Clusters**

Ministerial Dialogue & Endorsement of Resolutions

Adoption of Kigali Declaration on AI for East Africa

17:00 - 17:30 CAT- Closing Remarks

- Prof. Idris Rai, Ag. Executive Secretary, IUCEA
- Dr. Sylvance Okoth, Executive Secretary, EASTECO
- Secretary General, EAC
- Hon. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs: Dr. Usta Kaitezi, Republic of Rwanda

17:30 CAT- END OF THE CONFERENCE



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