



**Nation Media Group**  
Media of Africa for Africa



# TOWARDS A POST-COVID AFRICA

STORIES. INSIGHTS. MOONSHOTS

## 2020

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Africa comprises 17% of the world population, but as of December 2020 it had 3.8% of the Covid-19 infections around the world. Many who predicted the worst underestimated the many advantages and strengths the continent had to fight the pandemic.





**H.E Uhuru Kenyatta**

*The President of the Republic of Kenya*

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**"The current situation is not one merely of crisis, but one, which has provoked nations to rethink and come up with new innovative ways of building our nations for our survival"**



## INSIGHTS FROM KUSI IDEAS HOST PRESIDENT

I sincerely acknowledge and welcome to Kenya my fellow Heads of State and Government and all other distinguished guests who have honoured our invitation, some of whom are, like me, attending virtually.

Allow me to also congratulate the Nation Media Group for conceiving and hosting, for the second year running, the Kusi Ideas Festival. I thank the County Government of Kisumu, under the leadership of Hon. Prof. Anyang Nyong'o, for hosting us.

As with almost every African country, Kenya's necessary responses to Covid-19 have ensured that the worst forecasts for public health did not come to pass. However, in implementing those public health measures, there has been a resultant slowdown in business and economic activities, which has in turn negatively impacted government revenues, thereby putting pressure on its overall fiscal position.

Across Africa, our response has been well-sequenced and multipronged, involving a public health response to contain the spread of the virus and minimise fatalities; together with the simultaneous adoption of an appropriate monetary policy response that has eased liquidity constraints and solvency risks. The continent has also come up with very innovative fiscal responses that have cushioned the economic impact of the pandemic and helped keep small and medium enterprises afloat.

With international supply-chains severely limited, our enterprises quickly adapted and began producing personal protective equipment and hospital equipment, for both local and export markets. This is a lesson that the current situation is not one merely of crisis, but one which has provoked nations to rethink and come up with new innovative ways of building our nations for our survival.

Fostering agility within our MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise) sector will be instrumental in our Build Back Better programmes. Regulatory barriers that prevent businesses from rapidly adapting to changing circumstances should be removed, and our enterprises should be encouraged to innovate.

At the government level, it is our obligation to lead our nations out of the crisis and into the land of opportunity. It must be borne in mind that there cannot be a global bounce back that leaves Africa behind. Our development partners and the international financial institutions should take a long-term view, and dispense with any short-term requirements or considerations that would only serve to slow down Africa's recovery.

As governments, it is necessary for us to consider responses that do not just seek to address direct and immediate impacts of Covid-19, but also those that result in wider sustaining of systems for the wellbeing of our people.

In that regard, my government has swiftly designed the post-Covid-19 Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS), that will help accelerate Kenya's economic recovery and the attainment of higher and sustained growth. The Covid-19 pandemic was bound to affect more seriously the vulnerable part of our populations.

Cognisant of this fact, my government moved fast and introduced several welfare measures to cushion the elderly Kenyans, the urban poor, and vulnerable persons and businesses in the economy.

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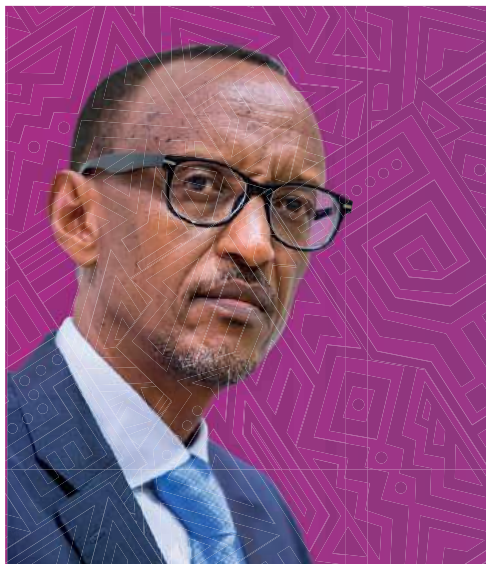
***At the government level, it is our obligation to lead our nations out of the crisis and into the land of opportunity.***

We introduced a 100% tax relief for persons earning a gross monthly income of up to Kshs. 24,000, reduced VAT to 14% from 16% and reduced income tax rate at both personal and corporate levels from 30% to 25%. Even as those short-term reliefs are set to lapse, my government is on course to introduce longer-lasting comprehensive measures to boost our economy and society, post-Covid-19.

With the lessons of the pandemic in mind, we shall focus on healthcare, promotion of the digital economy, FinTech, education, and manufacturing. I feel obliged to share with you an update on how member states of the Organisation of the African Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) are handling this pandemic. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the leadership of the OACPS has constantly shared experiences and strategies among members.

I am happy to report that the United Nations, the World Bank, the IMF, and other multilateral global agencies, including bilateral development partners, have responded affirmatively to our appeals for assistance. On behalf of the Organisation of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS), I express our heartfelt appreciation.

May I reiterate that there is so much that we can do as a continent towards achieving pan-Africanism; and to enforce our visibility on the world stage. I welcome the Kusi Festival's dialogue as an important vehicle for promoting pan-African ideas on innovations, recovery, and sustainability. I salute the huge spirit of innovation blowing across Africa, particularly that coming from our youth.



**H.E Paul Kagame**  
*The President of the Republic of Rwanda*

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**“Our people still want to travel easily across Africa and connect meaningfully with fellow Africans. We have to make this a reality by staying on track with the Africa Continental Free Trade Area”**



## H.E PAUL KAGAME SPEECH AT KUSI IDEAS FESTIVAL 2020

Congratulations to Nation Media Group for putting together this second edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival in these challenging circumstances. When we met in Kigali last year, no one could have predicted that we would be in the middle of a full-blown global pandemic today.

There has been a lot of speculation about why Africa is handling the Covid-19 pandemic better than expected, but what really matters is that the lessons we have learned and the solutions we have already applied will help us to recover together. Continued collaboration is key in order to emerge from this period in safety and prosperity.

First, Covid-19 notwithstanding, our people still want to travel easily across Africa and connect meaningfully with fellow Africans. We have to make this a reality by staying on track with the Africa Continental Free Trade Area, and everything else we have always aspired to do together.

Second, we will only get there if we harness the power of technology. In East Africa, we possess the natural talent to create innovative solutions that will generate wealth for our growing population. We must find new ways to invest in infrastructure, in our people, and in an enabling political and business environment and, finally, in Rwanda, we have learned that progress comes from ensuring participation and inclusivity. In the same way, the excellent ideas put forward by the talented people brought together by Kusi will make a difference.

I am delighted the Kusi Ideas Festival continues to be a stimulating and inspiring forum for our region. Please, count on Rwanda's support for this homegrown African initiative.



Dr. Wilfred D. Kiboro - Chairman, Nation Media Group, gives his opening remarks



# THE VIRUS AND THE RESILIENCE OF AFRICANS



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

The wide range of thoughtful African minds who spoke at the first Kusi Ideas Festival in Kigali in 2019 peered ahead into how the next 60 years would look like in Africa.

Though they didn't foresee the pandemic itself, they foresaw quite a few of the events that are already beginning to take shape.

Among other things, they foresaw a future where digital dependency increases and a lot more of our daily transactions shift to our mobile devices.

They warned us that if we didn't become better stewards of the environment, we could unleash diseases and climate-related phenomena. Both have happened! Covid-19, which is suspected to have jumped from an animal, is a classic example of our exploitation of nature; and this year East Africa saw the worst floods and destruction from its rivers and lakes in over 60 years.

Covid-19 has claimed many lives, but we hope the next year brings recovery and healing. The response to the Covid-19 pandemic in most countries in Africa has been spectacular. When the pandemic broke out, no African country had laboratories that could test for the virus. By February, 3 countries had set up testing labs, and today each country has the capacity.

It is our hope that with the lessons learnt, our governments will apply the same vigour and resources to deal with other existential threats and health challenges that claim thousands of lives every year on the continent.

“

**Amidst the pain of Covid-19, our response is telling us something wonderful about ourselves as Africans. For its part, the Nation Media Group, like numerous other media houses all over the world, went through its own trials during the pandemic. But we found it in us to keep faith in ourselves and in Africa. We accepted that our business model had been irreversibly disrupted and that the future was digital. This led to the launch of our digital platform - Nation.Africa. We are unashamedly and unapologetically pan-African.”**



# WE CAN BUILD A MORE PROSPEROUS AND RESILIENT AFRICAN FUTURE



**Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o**  
*Host Governor, County Government of Kisumu*

To be able to host guests from far and wide, physically and virtually, at a time when human interaction is severely limited by the necessity to keep safe from Covid-19, is a challenging responsibility. I welcome all our guests to this lakeside city, the gateway to the communities in East Africa whose lives are greatly influenced by our blue economy. We, the nations around Lake Victoria, are all members of the East African Community.

The community itself has had its fair share of problems in the past, even breaking up altogether in 1977. But like the proverbial owl of Minerva, the community shall rise again and fly high as a new African success story, saying goodbye to the dusk of our underdevelopment.

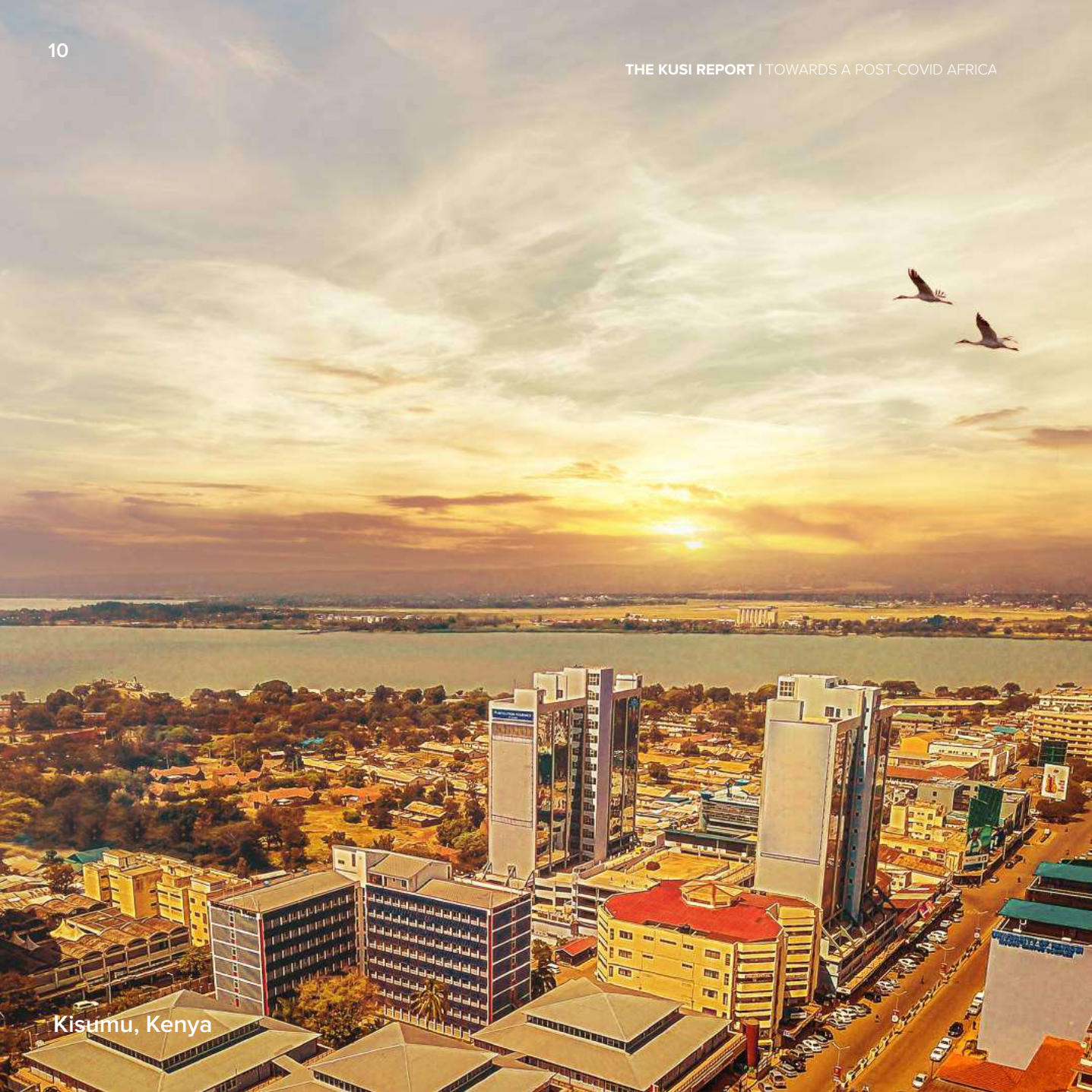
After all, before the modern technology of the steam ship was discovered, we had prosperous trade with Asia, travelling across the Indian Ocean in wind-driven sailing ships, hence the origin of the "Kusi Trade" from which this festival derives its name.

We would have achieved even more with this old technology had the slave trade not interrupted us.

Despite the pandemic, this festival is, therefore, held at a time when Africa is positive about her future, looking forward to our cities growing in a planned way as homes to productive people who can feed themselves and sustain good health for all. Giving our farmers all the support needed to feed our growing populations should be the strength of our economies and not their curse. Our youth, our women, and the elderly must surely find a place to feel at home in our societies because they will be politically, economically, and socially inclusive.

“

**Let us reflect on how we shall rise from the human tragedy that this pandemic has brought us, knowing that through the mutual social responsibility that has always been central to our communal lives, we can build an even more prosperous and resilient future in East Africa.”**



Kisumu, Kenya



# Festival in the Lakeside City of Kisumu

The second Kusi Ideas Festival was held in the Lake Victoria city of Kisumu. Located in Kisumu County, the city is Kenya's third largest -- and the second largest after the Ugandan capital Kampala -- in the Lake Victoria Basin. It is also the most important inland port in the region.

In 2006, the UN-Habitat designated Kisumu as the first UN "Millennium City" in the world. Kisumu port was founded in 1901 as the main inland terminal of the Uganda Railway named "Port Florence". The name Kisumu translates to a place of barter trade "sumo". Although in the last two decades of the 20th century it suffered decline, it has seen a significant rebound in the last 15 years with an influx of new businesses.

Kisumu port, in disuse since 1978, has just been refurbished by the national government, and exports of fuel to the East African hinterland have already taken place from there. Maritime transport across the lake to Uganda and Tanzania has resumed.

The Lakefront Development Corporation, an agency of the Kisumu County government, is building a 46-kilometre promenade on the north-western shore

of the lake to open it up for leisure, tourism and the hospitality industry. The century-old Meter Gauge railway line to the city is being revived for both passenger and freight transport from Nairobi through Nakuru, as it waits for the arrival of the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) from Naivasha.

In November 2021 Kisumu will host the Africities Summit. This will be the second time that Kenya hosts this coming together of leaders of cities and municipalities, and which will allow national governments to discuss how the African city of the future should and shall look like.

Easily the leading Kenyan cultural city outside Nairobi, Kisumu has in recent years attracted players in the film industry, with more and more movies. Its legendary Kit Mikayi rock formations were recently recognised as a Unesco World Heritage Site.

It is a city bubbling with change, telling a story not just of its own dynamic reawakening, but Kenya's as well. And it served as a fitting backdrop for the Kusi Ideas Festival, held amidst a destructive Covid-19 pandemic. It almost seemed to defy it.



# 01 THE AFRICAN EXEMPLARS:

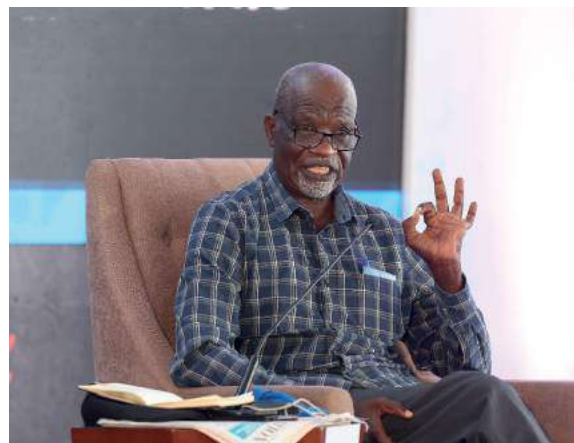
HOW AFRICAN RESILIENCE  
AND SMARTS WERE REVEALED  
BY THE PANDEMIC

COVID-19  
RT-qPCR kit  
for specific  
detection of  
SARS-CoV-2





Aman



Rogo

**“We’re not past Covid yet. It would be wrong for us to speak in the past tense; we’re still in the pre-pandemic phase in my opinion. Let us not pat ourselves on the back too early.”**

- Dr. Khama Rogo

### Speakers:

- > Hon. Dr. Rashid A. Aman
- > Dr. Sabin Nsanzimana
- > Dr. Khama Rogo
- > Dr. Shivon Byamukama
- > Edmond Nyabola (moderator)

The Festival’s opening panel explored the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Africa, noting that although the threat of the coronavirus was not yet conclusively over, the continent had fared better than most had predicted, partly owing to its experience dealing with disease outbreaks.

Dr. Rashid A. Aman, Chief Administrative Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Kenya, outlined the government of Kenya’s quick

response to the pandemic.

Most African countries – Kenya included – acted with speed to contain the pandemic, announcing movement restrictions and mask mandates even with just a handful of cases, unlike numerous Western nations that dithered.

“President Uhuru Kenyatta demonstrated exemplary leadership in a crisis,” said Dr. Aman. “The President set up a one-government, one-nation approach to the pandemic very early on, when the country had recorded its first few cases. This would end up forming the National Emergency Response Committee, which would then coordinate a nationwide response to the crisis.”

“We formed partnerships with the private sector and with philanthropies, seeking their views on the emergency response, and drawing on their ability to mobilise quickly, for example, in



Byamukama

manufacturing masks, sanitation stations and PPEs [Personal Protective Equipment].” Dr. Aman highlighted that the Kenyan government even repurposed impounded alcohol to manufacture much-needed sanitizer.

Across the border in Rwanda – and joining the Kusi conference on video link - Dr. Sabin Nsanzimana emphasized that Africa was managing the pandemic reasonably well, partly because the continent was already acquainted with disease outbreaks, including HIV/Aids, malaria, tuberculosis and Ebola. Dr. Nsanzimana is the Director-General of Rwanda Biomedical Centre.

“In that context being ready for Covid-19 was not new to Africans,” said Dr. Nsanzimana. “It was somehow a warm-up or preparation for what we didn’t know was to come.”

Also joining by video link from Rwanda was Dr. Shivon Byamukama, who outlined her company’s push to link patients with hospitals remotely and get consultations over the phone.



Nsanzimana

Dr. Byamukama is the Managing Director of Baby! Rwanda, a healthtech company.

“Digital consultations went up 155% at the onset of the pandemic, and today we’re doing almost 3,000 consultations a day. This has really helped decongest healthcare facilities.”

For his part, Dr. Nsanzimana highlighted that the pandemic has been an accelerator for the broader adoption of new technologies, including the use of robotics, artificial intelligence, drones and digital health management systems.

“If we can connect these three dots – reliable science, good leadership, and community buy-in, then I believe we will weather this storm.”

A dissenting view was raised by Dr. Khama Rogo, who instead emphasized that Africa is not out of the woods yet – not by any means.

“We’re not past Covid yet. It would be wrong for us to speak in the past tense; we’re still in the pre-pandemic phase in my opinion. Let us not pat ourselves on the back too early.”

Dr. Rogo, the Founder, Centre for the Study of Adolescence, laid bare the misplaced priorities that many African countries had chosen – in particular, a focus on procuring expensive medical equipment such as ventilators and ICU beds, as opposed to preventative measures like masks, social distance and washing hands.

“The shame of Africa in the Covid story will be in procurement, because that’s where most of the money has been directed, and hence most of the corruption will emerge,” said Dr. Rogo. “What’s even worse is that the majority of this new equipment is unlikely to be used. Eight out of 10 of Covid patients in Kenya are receiving home-based care. Are we protecting the communities that are taking care of these patients?”

To fight Covid-19, you need to have a healthcare system that works for everyone, was this panel’s overall message. Cautious optimism should be the continent’s posture – we’re not over the bar yet, and must keep up the prevention measures.

155% ↑  
DIGITAL  
CONSULTATIONS

## DATA DIVE

Digital consultations in Rwanda powered by Babyl Rwanda went up 155% at the onset of the pandemic, and by Dec. 2020 were up to 3,000 consultations a day.



## OVERHEARD AT KUSI

**“The worst of what was predicted in Africa [with Covid-19] did not happen. Africa, by and large, has fared better than the rest of the world.”**

~ Dr. Wilfred Kiboro



# 02 SECURING GROWTH:

THE SHAPE OF THE  
POST-COVID AFRICAN ECONOMY







Kituyi



Akamanzi



Hlungwane

## Speakers:

- > Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi
- > Claire Akamanzi
- > Bohani Hlungwane
- > Wanjiru Gikonyo
- > Julians Amboko (moderator)

## DATA DIVE

Africa has experienced a 25-35% collapse in exports owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, for imports it's a 17-25% collapse.

EXPORTS  
25%-35% ↓

IMPORTS  
17%-25% ↓

This year has seen extensive economic disruptions owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, with several economies in Africa posting their lowest growth in over 30 years in 2020. But there were some surprises – several countries showed early signs of strong recovery, some saw surprising export booms in some sectors with some industries actually being crisis proof. This panel delved into these somewhat unexpected trends and signaled new ways and winners for economies. What has changed forever? And what might the future winning formulas be?

Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, former Director-General of UNCTAD first outlined the shock that the pandemic has been to African economies, and the global economy more broadly.

“Globally we’ve seen a 49% drop in foreign direct investment across the board in all sectors. Some subsectors

have probably been wiped off the map, never to return.”

The Covid-19 pandemic has also seen a rise in economic nationalism and reshoring of jobs in Western countries, as they try to boost their economies and output in an effort to recover from the pandemic. “This means that African countries have to reorient economic activity and embed recovery in their own economic strategy.”

Rwanda was cited in this panel as a country that has adopted a data-driven policy approach in pandemic management.

Claire Akamanzi, CEO of Rwanda Development Board, highlighted how the Rwandan government – headed by President Paul Kagame – organized fortnightly cabinet meetings to coordinate decision-making, adjusting and learning.

For his part, Bohani Hlungwane,



Wanjiru Gikonyo & Dr. Rashid Aman at the Kusi Ideas Festival in Kisumu

#### PHARMACEUTICAL IMPORTS

95%



#### FOOD IMPORTS

85%



## DATA DIVE

95% of pharmaceuticals used in Africa are imported from outside the continent, the same goes for 85% of food, making the continent very vulnerable to international disruptions in trade.

Group Head of Sales for Trade and Working Capital at Absa Group, indicated that although certain sectors like aviation and tourism have been hard hit by the pandemic, others experienced growth.

“We’ve seen growth in agriculture, healthcare and telecommunications in several economies this year. There’s an opportunity here for localising supply chains and boosting the manufacturing sector.”

Hlungwane emphasized the imperative for good research that helps us understand the specific sectors that contribute to Africa’s growth agenda, and more agile ways to respond to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the backbone of many African economies. “There’s very little understanding of the risk profiles of SMEs, and this is something that is sorely needed,” said Mr Hlungwane.

Unfortunately, the informal sector – which is shorthand for a very broad range of enterprises – is “often treated as a social domicile of people and not as an engine for growth,” said Dr. Kituyi. “Policies are often about control, not facilitation. Government attitudes need to change – we should see the informal sector as a productive engine, and not as a target for harassment, control and extortion.”

Another complication is the squeezed fiscal space that countries like Kenya have to contend with, owing to an extensive borrowing spree for mega infrastructure projects. Now, the consequences are catching up,

at a time when the need for productive growth is higher than ever. Even before the pandemic's outbreak, Kenya's debt to GDP ratio was at a worrying 63%, and 40% of public revenue was going to service debt, a situation that Dr. Kituyi emphasized was not sustainable.

Wanjiru Gikonyo, Founding Trustee and National Coordinator of The Institute for Social Accountability (TISA), cast a hard light against what she termed as "infrastructure fundamentalism."

"We need to bring 'development' closer to the people, in such a way that puts money in people's pockets and improves livelihoods. We need to invest in sectors that employ people, such as agriculture – the gains there are palpable to real lives." said Gikonyo.



(L-R) Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Smriti Vidyarthi & Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o enjoy a light moment at the festival



Dr Azim Lakhani of Aga Khan Development Network gives remarks on behalf of the network



Traditional dancers entertain the delegates during the tea break





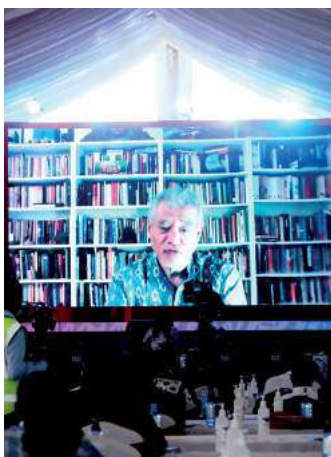
# 03 COVID-19 AND THE CASE FOR NEW WAYS:

URBANIZATION, TECHNOLOGY  
AND LEADERSHIP





Munyampenda



Kwame



Thigo

## Speakers:

- > **Nathalie Munyampenda**
- > **Prof. Jomo Kwame**
- > **Philip Thigo**
- > **Joseph Warungu (moderator)**

The Covid-19 pandemic overturned what was considered “normal”, illustrating the limits of the way we live, work and travel – but also unleashing a wave of innovation to help battle the disease and ultimately to reshape life as we know it. Panelists in this session explored the new paths and ways of doing what is needed to adapt for the future.

Nathalie Munyampenda, CEO of Kepler and formerly Managing Director of the Next Einstein Forum (NEF) opened the discussion with an invitation to imagine a “new normal”.

“The pandemic has had an immense impact on numerous systems and processes. In Rwanda – and elsewhere – it has accelerated digitizing of government services, for example birth certificates and national identity cards. We’ve collected a lot of personal data from people during this crisis, what we need to do is get systems to talk to each other,” said Munyampenda.

Although arguing that it was too soon to talk of a “new normal”, Prof. Jomo Kwame, joining via video link from Malaysia, said that the crisis allows us an opportunity to break with old systems. In particular, it could prompt African countries to look to the East for solutions.

“Too many African countries are looking to the West [for guidance on the pandemic] but I think they should look towards the East. A country like Laos, though poor, has managed the pandemic well.”

A lot of what people say and think about Africa is being challenged, spotlighting the



need to rethink jobs and the future of work.

“We have to skill, reskill and upskill faster,” said Thigo. “Some jobs have disappeared and are not coming back, but new jobs have also emerged...young people are looking for decent jobs, and we must rethink pathways for the future of work.”

Thigo emphasized that (mostly) young people are already existing, transacting, mobilising and finding solutions for themselves in virtual spaces without tethering themselves to physical nation-states. How can we create participatory and meaningful agile governance for this demographic that makes up the majority of the population?

Munyampenda offered a radical solution that begins with a complete overhaul of higher education. “There should be shorter courses and alternate pathways to work, which would entail re-evaluating the value of a degree, for example, versus its price. Personally when I’m hiring, I don’t focus on whether a person has a degree. As a continent, we’re not skilling people in accordance with our ambitions by having these rigid mindsets,” said Munyampenda.

Prof. Kwame echoed these sentiments,

arguing for moving away from credentialism and more into an emphasis on lifelong learning.

When the majority of the population is young, we have the imperative to bend our systems to address them, concluded Thigo. “It’s no longer an issue of political will, but more of political choice. This is an instant, *Uber*, *Airbnb* generation...we don’t have to pass the burden of history to them – and for Africa this means the burden of lack of opportunity.”

The alternative is to have more of what happened in 2009 in Tunisia, or in 2020 in Nigeria, with widespread social unrest, protests and discord, mostly driven by disaffected youth. We need to follow these young ones into this brave new world.



### OVERHEARD AT KUSI

**“Do we really need elections every five years? If you think of the investments that go into holding elections, how can we better design governance systems that are more meaningful, inclusive and responsive – and remove corruption from the root of elections in Africa?”**

~ Nathalie Munyampenda



# 04 FROM THE ASHES:

VIRTUAL FASHION  
SHOWS, CONCERTS AND  
AFRICAN STORYTELLING



## Speakers:

- > Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor
- > William Nanjero
- > Silas Babaluku
- > Maureen Mbaka
- > Dann Mwangi (moderator)

The Covid-19 pandemic hit the creative sector hard, but in true African fashion, the continent's artists found a way to make beauty from ashes: an African designer was the first to do a virtual fashion show during the global lockdown; African creatives collaborated across borders to create poetry, music, film and art that made the difficult

times easier to bear. This panel explored the lessons of 2020 from the vantage point of creatives, and how they stepped up under very difficult circumstances.

Kenya's popular afro-pop band, Sauti Sol, perhaps personifies the curveball that the pandemic wrought on artists across the continent – and the hard repivoting that was the result.

"It has been quite humbling to restructure especially because 2020 was slated to be a major breakthrough year for Sauti Sol," said William Nanjero, the General Manager of Sauti Sol's record company, Sol Generation Records. Right at the beginning of the year, the band released 'Suzanna', the first single off their new album, Midnight Train. The momentum was starting to build, then the pandemic hit.

"We had to cancel our Kenyan and





Owuor



Nanjero



Mbaka



Babaluku

international tours, which hit hard not just for the band, but also for the huge support infrastructure that goes into supporting a major musical act – including makeup artists, dancers, choreographers, stylists and nutritionists,” said Nanjero.

“We quickly had to adapt. Quite soon into the pandemic we shot and launched a docu-reality series focusing on the lives and creative processes of the artists at Sol Generation. We also had been procrastinating on creating tech infrastructure for our music experiences, and the pandemic forced us to accelerate this.”

Nanjero highlighted that when the Midnight Train album launch was forced to move online, the event still attracted more than 153,000 unique viewers, and the launch video would quickly garner over 250,000 hits.

Author Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor also spoke of how her diary was all scheduled out in 2020, and then everything changed. But she saw it as a blessing in disguise, especially as it created an unexpected opportunity for introspection.

“In some ways it was perfect for us who don’t always want to go out and meet people – instead we had a moment to go within and create new ideas, new language and new reflections on what it means to be human, and what another’s humanity means to me,” said Owuor.

“I suspect there has been an uptick in book sales but perhaps bookshops would have the data. It’s been an interesting time, and I can’t say it’s been all bad,” she said.

For his part, Silas Babaluku – joining on video link from Kampala, Uganda – underscored that out of necessity the pandemic brought on a sharp learning curve for artists. “We’ve had to think of

new ideas and ways to collaborate and create content. Many artists are struggling, and it’s been particularly challenging with [Uganda’s] current political season and the upcoming election,” he said, referring to the general election slated for early 2021.

Young people can rise up to the challenge but in order for this to happen, there needs to be sustained, cross-generational mentorship, he said.

Maureen Mbaka, Chief Administrative Secretary in Kenya’s Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs highlighted how the government was working to provide an ecosystem for digitally connected young people to thrive.

“We’ve created the Ajira Digital Program to enable young people to earn from digital and digitally-enabled online jobs,” she said. “We’re also looking at having constituency-level innovation hubs across the country.”



## OVERHEARD AT KUSI

**“I hope Kusi is the place where we can eradicate the nonsense of ‘Kenyans don’t read’ once and for all. It’s a fallacy that doesn’t reflect our reality.”**

~ Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor



# 05 DIGGING THE AFRICAN ECONOMY OUT OF THE CRISIS



## Speakers:

- > Matsi Modise
- > John Kitui
- > Prof. Kivutha Kibwana
- > Isaac Kwaku Fokuo Jr.
- > Julians Amboko (moderator)

**1%**  
OF THE WORLD

### DATA DIVE

1% of the world owned 82% of the wealth generated in 2017, according to a 2017 Oxfam report.

Governments, businesses, and civil society invested financial resources, stimulus packages, and humanitarian goods to protect society and economies during the pandemic. This panel explored the hard part that comes next. What needs to be done to engineer a recovery?

Africa, even pre-pandemic, suffered from a shortage of capital, and Covid-19 exacerbated this, said Matsi Modise, founder and CEO of Furaha Afrika Holdings.

“To make matters worse, regulations that govern intellectual property are very difficult and complicated to navigate, and not attractive for capital.

We need to get more localized interest in investment and perhaps the government and private sector can co-invest in order to crowd in capital,” said Modise, in comments kicking off the session.

Echoing these sentiments was Isaac Kwaku Fokuo Jr., who indicated that though Greenfield Investment Projects in Africa have dropped precipitously in 2020, this still presents its own unique opportunity to boost local investor confidence.

“The start-up ecosystem on the continent is immature, but some of these [ideas] need to be tested with investors who are closer to us, who

understand our nuances, within our own context. Unless we invest in ourselves, no one is going to invest in us.”

Fokuo, founder of Botho Emerging Markets Group, identified high net-worth Africans including Aliko Dangote, Strive Masiyiwa and Tony Elumelu as individuals who are leading this intra-African investment, that should be encouraged even more for the continent to get the kind of context-specific investment that it needs.

For his part, Oxfam Country Director John Kitui pointed out that focusing on GDP growth as a stand-alone measure of development was misplaced.

“GDP growth is inherently unequal,” said Kitui. “It’s basically an average of the wealth produced by rich people and then shared, at least on Excel, with everyone else. When we focus on growth we miss the big picture.” Excel doesn’t translate into real life.

The extractives industry is colonized by multinational corporations. One of the ways African economies can begin to do this is to focus more seriously on value addition of their raw materials, and decolonising extractives industries.

This is not a new idea, but one that is increasingly urgent in a world where African people, particularly its youth, are demanding safety, dignity, opportunity, and decent work. “China has prospered because they have domesticated their value chains and export finished products.” added Kitui.

In support was Modise, who indicated the need for a “triple bottom line”, wherein companies commit to focusing as much on social and environmental concerns as they do on profits. In essence, the triple bottom line is a

focus on people, profits and the planet.

“In a few years, we should ask ourselves if we used this crisis to propel our countries into economic growth and social prosperity,” she said; it would be a shame if we didn’t.

Closing out the session was Prof. Kivutha Kibwana, Governor of Makueni County, joining by video link. He spoke of local/ devolved units of administration being the key to grassroots development, with the power and potential to effect real change in people’s lives. But even ten years after the passage of a new constitution with concretized devolution in Kenya, the national government was still lukewarm towards counties.



#### OVERHEARD AT KUSI

**“The global economic system is rigged against the African... As long as we continue to play by their rules, we lose. Prosperity comes when we play by our own rules.”**

~ John Kitui





# 06 THE VACCINE RACE:

AFRICA SHOULD  
NOT BE LEFT BEHIND



Kyobutungi



Ngong



Mihigo

## Speakers:

- > **Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi**
- > **Lolem B. Ngong**
- > **Richard Mihigo**
- > **Smriti Vidyarthi (moderator)**

By December 2020, there were more than 50 Covid-19 vaccine candidates in trials – a remarkable testament to the depth and reach of global collaboration against a disease that only emerged a year prior. Three candidates in particular have been identified as most promising, and have already received regulatory approval for administration in several countries – that is the Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca vaccines against Covid-19.

But Africa seems to have been left out of the vaccine race, and most African countries will have to depend on COVAX, a collaboration between Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and the WHO, as the only viable lifeline by which their citizens will get access to Covid-19 vaccines. COVAX's primary aim is to ensure safe and equitable access to the vaccines, especially ensuring that ability to pay will not be the barrier to getting vaccinated against Sars-Cov-2.

"Global solidarity is very important so that price is not a barrier to access," said Richard Mihigo, Coordinator, Immunization & Vaccines Development Programme of the WHO Regional Office for Africa, speaking from Brazzaville, Congo. "With each individual vaccine costing \$20 and needing two shots, to be honest no country in Africa can raise this for the population needed without diverting funds from other departments into healthcare."

300,000  
VACCINATED



## DATA DIVE

An Ebola outbreak in northeastern DR Congo was declared over in June 2020 when 300,000 people were vaccinated against the disease, many of them in very remote areas. The public health campaign was deemed a success.

Already, \$2.1bn has been raised for COVAX against a goal of \$2bn, reflecting the urgency of support that was able to rally funders behind this cause. The best-case scenario is that vaccines will begin to be deployed in Africa by March 2021.

There are worries that weak healthcare systems and inefficient logistics chains could imperil the delivery of vaccines to African populations.

“Many countries are not ready for the vaccination drive, in terms of processes and supporting systems, including cold chains. But we can get ready – recent Ebola outbreaks have shown that it is possible to deliver with the right levels of focus and coordination. In the next 2-3 months, all the preparations should be in place in the region,” said Mihigo.

Another thorny issue revolves around making the decision on who should be vaccinated first. “Those most at-risk should be vaccinated first, such as healthcare workers and the elderly, and then go down the list by risk,” suggested Lolem B. Ngong, Chief of Staff of Amref Health Africa.

“Most important is that communities should be involved. People should not wake up and see some directive in the newspapers – communication is key. We don’t need to create new ways of organizing, as community health

networks already exist. It is just a question of leveraging them,” said Ngong.

For her part, Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi, Executive Director of the African Population and Health Research Center stressed this point even further. “We’ve seen the rise of anti-vaxxer groups that have grown to the point where they are no longer a fringe movement,” said Kyobutungi. “The need for public health information campaigns is so crucial in this pandemic.”

Kyobutungi outlined that although COVAX’s initial goal is to deliver vaccines to 20% of the population, ultimately 60-70% of the population needs to get vaccinated in order to achieve herd immunity and break the chain of transmission.

She also spoke of the need for African governments to invest in homegrown research. “It takes about 20 years of investment in R&D [research and development], that is, investing in people, physical infrastructure and knowledge, to be able to develop a vaccine. How many of our countries are doing that? Perhaps the mistrust and conspiracy theories against vaccines would not be as bad if our people knew that these were our home-grown technologies developed by our own scientists.”

## AIMS OF COVAX

- Deliver vaccine doses for at least 20% of countries' populations
- Ensure a diverse and actively managed portfolio of vaccines
- Deliver vaccines as soon as they are available
- End the acute phase of the pandemic
- Rebuild economies









# 07 COVID-19 AND THE NEW URBANISATION REALITIES:

CHALLENGES FOR  
AFRICITIES 2021





Nyong'o



Sharif



Ntonjira



Otieno

## Speakers:

- > Elizabeth (Lizz) Ntonjira

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- > Maimunah Mohd Sharif

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- > Louis Otieno

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- > Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o

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- > Edmond Nyabola (moderator)

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In 2021, the Africities Summit comes to Kenya's lakeside city of Kisumu. The pandemic has basically written a fresh set of rules for how to organise African urban spaces for future safety and health. Which of those will work best? This panel explored possibilities for what the future of urban management could look like.

The Covid-19 pandemic hit at the heart of urban planning and management, said Governor of Kisumu, Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o. "We will have to rethink and restructure several aspects of urban planning, including the use of urban space, how we manage urban transport and commerce, our policies towards integrated neighbourhoods and urban agriculture, as well as green spaces and

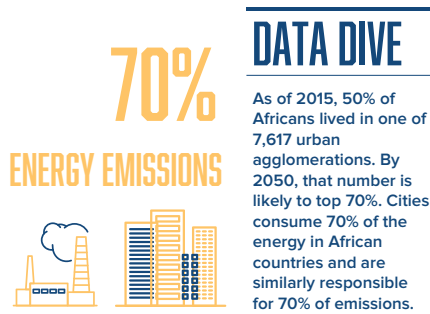
recreation," said Nyong'o. "All this, really, is on the table and can be rethought."

Nyong'o cautioned against what he termed as 'Mumbai Flu', which is a failure in urban planning where major transport infrastructure is conceptualized long after the city itself has come up and begun to sprawl, making it that much more difficult to execute and leaving a city choked with traffic and congestion with no real solutions.

"Local governments are key in providing healthcare and livelihoods on the ground," said Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat. "Cities and towns have been at the frontline of the global response against the Covid-19 pandemic... we must come up with workable policies to learn and relearn planning and management of our cities."

Lizz Ntonjira highlighted the need for a pandemic response that is grounded in people's lived realities. For so many in urban Africa, that reality is one of overcrowding and lack of sanitation, complicating the fight against Covid-19, which requires social distance and washing of hands.

"In this pandemic, we've been urging people to keep a 1.5m distance from each other when many urban Africans reside in settlements where this is not feasible," said Ntonjira, Global



Communications Director for Amref Health Africa. “Families are having to make the decision between buying masks and sanitizers or buying food...these are tough choices that we need to be sensitive to, while still working towards the recognition of access to water as a basic human right.”

She highlighted that Africans are very innovative even in difficult circumstances, for example Fidel Makatia, a 23-year-old engineering student at Kenyatta University who has developed a ventilator that has already attained the KEBS certificate of calibration.

Louis Otieno, Non-Executive Director of Nation Media Group drew a connection between the movement restrictions brought about by the pandemic, and a concomitant rise in e-commerce, a trend that is likely to continue.

“Technology is an enabler of this. I think that ultimately we will end up with a kind of hybrid socialization being established as a result of this pandemic, where people will still meet physically but will also have many aspects of distanced or remote socialization,” mused Otieno.

He also underscored the need for the uptake, use, and repurposing of ‘excess capacity’ on the continent, for example, boda bodas are idle at town centres all day, while local women have to walk to

markets with their produce as early as 3:00am.

“We have to change from seeing boda bodas as primarily being for the purpose of movement of people to movement of people and goods,” he stressed. “What would be required here is a tech solution, for the rider to see that there’s a woman a few kilometres away who has produce to transport and sell.”

For his part, Prof. Nyong’o reminded Kusi attendees that Africa has long been urban, and so can rise to the current challenges.

“Urban centres were already existing and growing in Africa before being disrupted by colonialism, for example Timbuktu, Kano and Mombasa. Now it is for us to recapture and restrengthen our cities.”



### OVERHEARD AT KUSI

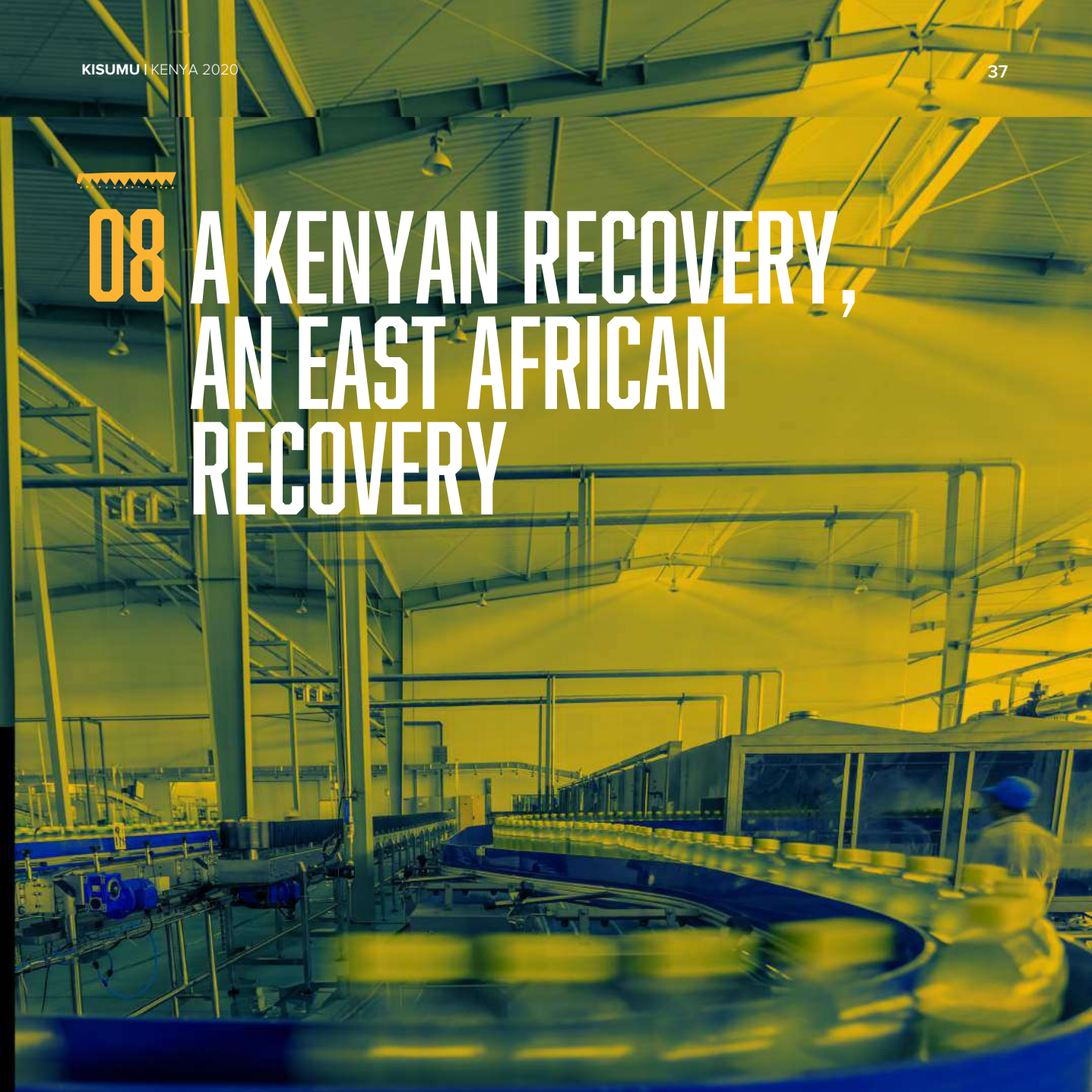
**“I don’t know who told Africans that in order to trade you must go and stand by a road. It’s disorganized and dangerous; people can and will actually go to a market. Let’s have business complexes that people go to instead of roadside trading.”**

~ Anyang’ Nyong’o



08

# A KENYAN RECOVERY, AN EAST AFRICAN RECOVERY





Machuki



Raval



Woldemariam

## Speakers:

- > Hosea Machuki
- > Narendra Raval
- > Esayas Woldemariam
- > Julians Amboko (moderator)

Sections of the Kenyan economy are showing a modest recovery at the end of 2020 after a very difficult year, and regional cross-border business is picking up. Can East Africa still emerge to be the best-performing economic bloc in Africa as had been projected before the pandemic?

Hosea Machuki, CEO, Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya, brought insights from the fresh produce sector that indicates that there were bright spots in a tough year.

"As producers we negotiated duty-free, quota-

free entry of Kenyan fresh produce exports to the UK market in the wake of Brexit and we got it; we're happy about that, as we work to meet all the phytosanitary standards for as many international markets as possible," said Machuki. "We were hard hit by a sharp rise in the cost of air freight between March and September 2020, but interestingly this has actually been a decent year for fresh produce exports."

Esayas Woldemariam, Deputy CEO and Chief Commercial Officer for Ethiopian Airlines underscored that countries have had to balance their Covid-19 restrictions against their economic interests. "Countries should not be overreacting in their Covid-19 measures at the expense of other economic struggles of their people," advised Woldemariam.

"For us in aviation, African airlines have not been faring well, even pre-Covid. Still, I believe that with good interventions, 2021 can be a recovery year."

800,000

METRIC TONS OF MANGOES  
PRODUCED PER YEAR

## DATA DIVE

Kenya produces 800,000 metric tons of mangoes a year; just 2% is exported. Elimination of post-harvest losses in fruits alone could raise domestic horticulture revenue by 17%.

155,000

JOBS WOULD BE  
CREATED IF JUST  
12 COUNTRIES INCREASED  
CONNECTIVITY

\$1.3 BILLION

ANNUAL GDP GENERATED

## DATA DIVE

Aviation has the potential to make a significant contribution to economic growth and development in Africa. An IATA survey suggests that, an extra 155,000 jobs would be created if just 12 African countries increased connectivity and approximately US\$1.3 billion in annual GDP generated in those countries.

He indicated further that three-quarters of airline traffic on and into the continent is conducted by big foreign airlines, "leaving African airlines to fight for the remaining quarter. Instead of scrambling for the quarter, I think we should realize that there is three-quarters to take advantage of. We don't need to see each other as competitors but as collaborators...we really need open skies in Africa, and so come back vibrant post-Covid."

Responding to the panel was Dr. Kituyi, who indicated that a 21st century industrial policy is sorely needed for Africa. "We also need to sustain peace and security, as well as targeted resources to SMEs, a reduction of loading levies and taxes, and more attention to the little things like reliable electricity, water and well-maintained roads," said Dr. Kituyi.

Electricity was also a sticking point for Narendra Raval, CEO of Devki Steel Mills, one of the largest steel producers in Kenya. "Our problem is energy. The cost of production is too high," said Raval.

Still, these are not insurmountable challenges in the eyes of Dr. Kituyi. "We can reduce the cost of electricity and also retire dirty energy like diesel-powered generators," urged Dr. Kituyi. "I believe that making our exports competitive is within reach."





# 09 BLUE ECONOMY

INTRA EAST AFRICAN TRADE,  
AND THE NEW OPPORTUNITIES  
ON LAKE VICTORIA





## Speakers:

- > Dr. Ally-Said Matano
- > Abhishek Sharma
- > Tejal Dodhia
- > Dr. Kevit Desai
- > Joseph Warungu (moderator)

At one point in 2020 as traffic jams of trucks nearly 90-km long formed at the borders, the case for using Lake Victoria and its ports as a transport corridor couldn't be more obvious. This panel focused its attention on the wider blue economy of the region, and the critical importance of not just Lake Victoria, but River Nile, and the Indian Ocean waters for the region.

In 2018, Kenya hosted its very first Blue

Economy conference, exploring how innovation and growth in the coastal, marine and maritime sector could deliver food, energy and transport, among other products and services, and serve as a foundation for sustainable development in the region.

The Lake Victoria basin is a key linchpin in this strategy, said Dr. Ally-Said Matano, and could serve as a model for hydro-diplomacy and eco-diplomacy. Kisumu could also be the epicentre of regional integration.

"The Basin is home to 40 million people, and apart from Kisumu includes big cities like Kampala, Entebbe, Jinja, Mwanza and Bukoba. In effect, the future of these cities is the future of the Lake, and vice versa," stressed Dr. Matano.

However, the lake – and its surrounding population – is at the risk of suffering from the negative effects of climate change. "If we have extreme droughts or extreme floods, this will

## DATA DIVE

Lake Victoria is the second-largest freshwater lake in the world, and the largest freshwater lake in Africa. It's a shallow lake, just up to 40m deep, compared to Lake Tanganyika for example, which reaches 1,200m deep. Still, the volume of the lake is extensive, between 2,700 and 3,000km<sup>3</sup>. That translates to 3 quadrillion (3,000,000,000,000,000) litres of water.



present serious challenges to the livelihoods of all these people.”

Investing in the blue economy would not just improve livelihoods; it would also take the pressure off existing road networks.

“Road-based transport corridors in the region have very high levels of carbon emissions and are expensive to maintain. The solution is to revive railways and waterways as the primary long-haul network, and only use roads for last-mile connectivity. This would also help reduce oil imports and so improve on fiscal balances of regional economies,” said Abhishek Sharma, Senior Director of Transport, Trademark East Africa.

Apart from transportation, agriculture is another key sector that could benefit from blue economy investment. Cotton, for example, is a crop that was once a significant feature of the Kenyan economy, until it was allowed to decline through mismanagement of the sector.

“Cotton used to be grown over such a wide area of the country – Makueni, Kitui, Yatta, Lamu, Homa Bay and Siaya. There was a time when Kenya had 52 textile factories,” said Tejal Dodhia, CEO of Thika Cloth Mills. “Now we have just three, but I’m still encouraged that the uniformed services such as the police are buying the textiles for their uniforms from local cloth mills.”

Dodhia lamented the flooding of the local market with cheap second-hand clothing imports, which

has made it difficult for local manufacturers like Thika Cloth Mills to compete.

“We’ve been fighting hard against duty remission on fabrics because we wouldn’t be able to compete.”

Still, Dodhia is optimistic that all is not lost for the country’s textile sector, a sentiment shared in a broader sense by Dr. Matano who extended his upbeat prognosis to the entire lake region.

“The Lake Victoria economic zone has an economic potential of \$50 billion that has not yet been exploited,” said Dr. Matano. “To change this would take a change in ‘hardware’: political and citizen goodwill; ‘software’ in the form of sound policies, and ‘hardware’ in terms of serious investment in infrastructure.”

## DATA DIVE

### LAKE VICTORIA INFLOW

80%



80% of the water in Lake Victoria is from rainfall, just 20% is from the inflow of rivers – making the lake water levels particularly susceptible to changes in rainfall patterns.

### LAKE VICTORIA OUTFLOW

76%



76% of the lake’s water outflow is through evaporation, and the remaining 24% leaving the lake through the White Nile at Jinja – the lake’s only river outlet.

# THE VIRUS AND THE RESILIENCE OF AFRICANS



**Stephen Gitagama**

*Group Chief Executive Officer, Nation Media Group*

Since its inception, the Kusi Ideas Festival, first held in Rwanda, has without a doubt succeeded in capturing the African imagination as a platform of innovative ideas and partnerships that can define and inform policies for sustainable development in the 21st century. In considering the second

“

**If one major thing comes out this conference, let it be a resolve that we shall use our ingenuity to ensure that next time, that doesn't happen.”**

edition of the festival, the challenge for Nation Media Group (NMG) was to build on the tremendous momentum, hopes and prospects for change generated in Kigali, against the backdrop of Covid-19, which adversely disrupted life as we know it.

As we continue to confront the Covid-19 pandemic, a “once in a century” “black swan” event, experts predict that the global economy will lose \$12 trillion or more by the end of 2021. African economies, such as Nigeria and Ghana, have already shrunk to the lowest levels ever in the last 40 years, with South Africa hitting 100-year lows.

It is within this context that we organized the second edition of the festival: to act as a conduit for the best insights and innovations from across the continent. This ideas transaction market sought to look at the impact of the pandemic across industries and generate ideas that will propel the continent to overcome the crisis. It looked at experiences that are transferable; actions to be avoided; how to foolproof the future against the kind of ravages that have been visited by Covid-19 and draw a picture of what a post-Covid Africa might look like. The Kusi Ideas Festival, through the virtual conference and related reporting, also

sought to act as a record on Africa in the midst of a pandemic.

It was enlightening to listen to the speakers from across the continent as they explored Africa's resilience through the pandemic and discussed how to rebuild better societies, more inclusive economies, and universal healthcare systems post Covid-19.

On behalf of the Nation Media Group, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to each individual who made it to the festival - we understand how deep everyone had to dig to be here in person, or virtually.

I salute the Board of Directors of Nation Media Group for the courage to greenlight this event in such uncertain times, and our team who worked through extreme odds to make the festival a success. We appreciate all our partners, and particularly the County Government of Kisumu, led by H.E. Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o, who have been with us from inception to actualization.

We would also like to thank H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya and H.E. Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, in a very special way, for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate in the festival.



# KUSI MOONSHOTS

Policy Ideas Worth Trying



01

## VACCINES

Some of the Covid-19 vaccines in development need a cold chain to remain viable. We could repurpose some of the underutilized refrigeration capacity that exists for fish or milk, and use it for preserving the vaccines. Kisumu could emerge as Kenya's Covid-19 vaccination headquarters, owing to cold storage facilities that would otherwise be used for fish.

Dr. Khama Rogo



02

## MARSHALL PLAN

Africa needs a post-Covid Marshall Plan, as was the case in Europe at the end of World War II, helping the continent recover from the devastation of war. In our case, we would need a Marshall Plan that recognizes SMEs and the informal sector, digital gaps, inequality and responsibilities to the environment.

Philip Thigo



03

## SECURITY

South Korea has deemed its K-pop stars as soft power national security assets, allowing them to defer mandatory military service and produce pop hits as national duty. Today, BTS, one of the top K-pop bands brings in \$5bn to the South Korean economy, and South Korean cultural exports including in film, television and fashion have gone global. African countries should look at being intentional with cultural assets in the same way, creating a space for art as 'national duty'.





## CUTTING OUT THE MIDDLEMAN

More than 100 trucks pass through Busia or Malaba border points every day from Uganda on their way back to the Coast empty. We can repurpose that empty truck space and cut out the middleman in farm produce transportation across the whole of western Kenya and eastern Uganda, by auctioning space in the trucks.



## ABOLITION OF GDP

Getting countries to abolish GDP growth as a measure of development, and instead adopt a measure that captures social welfare, economic prosperity, and environmental health.



## Readouts from “The EastAfrican” special report “The New Normal” December 5 – 11, 2020



**T**he future of Africa's socio-economic development will be shaped by how well it prepares to prevent, protect against, control, and provide a public health response to current and future pandemics, epidemics, or outbreaks.

Africa remains the continent with the lowest universal health coverage, with only 43% of its population achieving effective coverage of health services.

Africa must [also] realise that emergence and reemergence of diseases is closely linked to climate change, which is causing displacement of people and encroachment of wild lands.

*- Dr Githinji Gitahi is the Group CEO Amref Health Africa and Co-Chair UHC 2030.*

*From “Pandemic preparedness: My 21st century task for leaders in Africa”*



**T**he Covid-19 pandemic hit an Africa that was already structurally fragile and vulnerable. Lockdown measures had a harsh impact due to the informal nature of the continent's economies.

The management of African economies post-Covid-19 must go beyond sporadic interventions and stimulus packages such as those seen during the pandemic. It must engage with smart market shaping. It should go beyond fixing market failures to shaping market motives and behaviour.

*- Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni is the Professor and Chairman of Epistemologies of the Global South, University of Bareuth, Germany.*

*From “Political leaders’ role in a caring post-Covid economy”*



**A**lready, Oxfam has cautioned that rich countries, representing 13% of the global population, have claimed half of all the Covid-19 vaccine doses that will be made available. This means that many African countries may have to wait until 2022 to get sufficient vaccines for their populations.

The Covid-19 death rate in Africa has been lower than Europe and the Americas, with the bulk of reported cases and deaths (75%) concentrated in five countries, namely South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Tunisia.

Lack of access and inadequate health systems have shaped the narrative in Africa regarding epidemics, from HIV to H5N1 influenza and now Covid-19. Africans have perished while awaiting donor/development support to purchase needed supplies for diagnosis and treatment.

*- Grace Mercy Osewe is the Senior Public Health Specialist and Managing Director, MDA Health Consulting Limited.*

From "Africa needs a robust vaccine pipeline to avoid being relegated to back of queue"



**L**ong traffic jams at border posts across the continent, especially at the beginning of the pandemic, were the poster child of the non-tariff barriers that continue to hamper trade in Africa. These boundaries are the primary reason for the high cost of doing business in Africa and are the cause of low intra-African trade, investment, economic integration, and poverty.

Covid-19 has also introduced a new economic paradigm, with digital technology taking the lead to ease the safe flow of goods across borders. If the pandemic persists late into 2021, some of the new digital technologies introduced to facilitate safe crossborder movement could become permanent fixtures across the continent and indeed other parts of the world.

It is not all gloom and doom. New transport corridors such as the Northern Corridor, the Southern Corridor, and the Western African Corridor are taking shape and have helped to lower the cost of doing business.

*- Ambassador Erastus Mwencha is the former Secretary-General of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa and former Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission. He is the current chairman of TradeMark East Africa.*

From "Technology shatters restrictive colonial boundaries Trade corridors"



**W**hat if we envisioned a “moonshot” for Africa that promises to bridge the digital divide and get millions of people online for the first time, knowing that when people are better connected, we can better manage the pandemic and become better prepared for our collective future?

There are examples from around the world about how we can leverage mobile data and technology, even for those getting online for the first time, to better manage the pandemic and prepare for a post-Covid future. First, using national portals, emergency SMS services, social media, and devoted pandemic response apps, governments can spread timely and correct information about out- break statistics, travel restrictions, guidance on protection from the virus, and government responses to the pandemic.

Investing in digital skills and local content creation in the next 10 years alone will require \$18 billion. Governments, telecommunication companies, private sector actors, international organisations, and civil society need to move out of their silos to co-create and invest in a digitally resilient, more interconnected post-Covid future for Africa.

*- Isaac Kwaku Fokuo, Jr. is the Founder and Principal of Botho Emerging Markets Group.  
From “We’ve unique opportunity to bridge digital divide and change our lives”*



**T**he quick responses by most African countries meant that they were able to avoid the large-scale loss of life seen elsewhere. But strong leadership needs good science. For Africa, this means that research for treatments and vaccines for Covid-19 must take place here, led by African scientists and tailored to this specific context.

There are a number of reasons for this. Populations have different genetic backgrounds, and they are exposed to different infections such as HIV and malaria. We need to know if future vaccines will be safe and effective in our populations.

Another reason for more research on the continent is that it can help drive policy. We need large, well-conducted, randomised clinical trials in Africa to support policy change for treatments.

Lastly, African countries need to be active in the research arena to ensure that they are not last in the queue for life-saving treatments and vaccines.

*- Dr Monique Wasunna is the Director, Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative, Africa Regional Office, and Researcher, Kenya Medical Research Institute.*

*From “Strong leadership fought Covid: next step is research”*





**N**o one was prepared for Covid-19 and its catastrophic effect on the global economy. It goes without saying that this pandemic was bound to hit African economies hard.

The weaknesses of Africa's fiscal systems have been amplified. The systems were already under pressure due to constrained taxation bases and policies, and granted, the pandemic has had a devastating effect on the fragile African economies, but the outlook does not need to be completely dire. In order to move forward, we need to learn from it and change.

One [of our] outstanding weakness is African markets' reliance on imported goods (and services). This was illustrated by the dire shortage of masks and other medical and safety resources in the initial stages of the outbreak.

The pandemic had taught us that it is time to get serious about efforts such as the IntraAfrican Trade Agreement, which aims to bolster continental trade and development across all sectors, including manufacturing and distribution. The emphasis should be on allowing domestic production capabilities to take root. Africa will rise from this battle, and with the potential to be stronger than ever before.

*- Njuguna Ndung'u is the AERC Executive Director, former Governor, Central Bank of Kenya.*

From "Africa can turn the negative impacts of illness into a chance to build and strengthen itself"



**C**ovid-19 has worsened problems both for the world and Africa. Sixty per cent of Africa's population is below the age of 25, which makes it the youngest continent, with a median age of 19. Young people are the continent's biggest resource, but they have been bruised by the pandemic in more ways than one. Many schools, colleges, and universities simply do not have the infrastructure needed for remote learning. An estimated 89% of learners in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to household computers with another 82% lacking internet access. In some places learning has stopped completely.

In addition, chronic poverty means many people do not have the necessary devices to successfully navigate an on-line classroom, let alone connect to online education.

Africa [also] has some of the most expensive internet costs around the world, making many online webinars and classes for young people practically inaccessible. About 600 million people in Africa still don't have access to electricity, yet reliable and affordable power is an important component for young people who must now work or study from home.

As we journey towards a post-Covid-19 Africa, it is critical that millions of young Africans are supported with the skills, knowledge, and resources they need to recover from the hard blows of the pandemic. This will also build a strong foundation for all of us as we face future crises.

*- Passy Amayo Ogolla is Programme Manager at the Society for International Development in East Africa.*

From "Creativity, innovation, and resilience; that is the answer of African youth to Covid-19"



**A**frica's response preceded the reporting of cases by many weeks. Countries instituted checks at ports of entry, started tracking travellers from high-risk countries and public education campaigns as early as late January/early February.

Most African countries had already established Ebola national task forces; a few in East Africa were still doing Ebola surveillance, so it was easy to repurpose their disease surveillance systems. In Sierra Leone, which was ravaged by the Ebola virus, declared a state of emergency even before the first case of Covid-19 was reported in the country. Several countries banned large gatherings and closed schools before even the first case was detected.

Africa CDC and WHO have also been instrumental in quickly developing tools and protocols that countries could use to make choices on the most suitable interventions based on the stage of the outbreak in each country.

One key feature of the response of Africa is the strength of regional institutions like Africa CDC and WHO Africa – the coordinated approach and the fact that African countries actually took their advice.

While it might be true [Africa has been spared the brunt of the virus due to reasons that include a larger youth population, regular exposure to other infectious diseases, and even genetics], such assumptions are also grounded in the belief that Africans have no agency and things happen to us because of factors outside our control. There have been several other hypotheses floated around, including the hot weather, BCG vaccination, and cross-immunity from other coronaviruses. There are many factors that could explain why Africa has been spared the worst of the pandemic. For now, I want to go with the agency and ingenuity of Africans – it's what has brought us this far and it is what will see us through the worst of this pandemic.

*- Catherine Kyobutungi is the Executive Director, Africa Population and Health Research Centre. Branch Manager-Rwanda, Nation Media Group PLC.*



## Appreciation to Kusi Ideas Festival Speakers

Name	Title
<b>H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta</b>	President of the Republic of Kenya
<b>H.E. Paul Kagame</b>	President of the Republic of Rwanda
<b>Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o</b>	Governor, County Government Kisumu, Kenya
<b>Dr. Wilfred Kiboro</b>	Chairman, Nation Media Group PLC
<b>Abhishek Sharma</b>	Senior Director of Transport, Trademark East Africa
<b>Ally-Said Matano</b>	Executive Secretary of the East African Community- Lake Victoria Basin Commission
<b>Dr. Azim Lakhani</b>	Diplomatic representative of Aga Khan Network, Kenya
<b>Bohani Hlungwane</b>	Group Head of Sales for Trade and Working Capital at Absa Group
<b>Dr. Catherine Kyobutungi</b>	Executive Director of the African Population and Health Research Center
<b>Claire Akamanzi</b>	CEO of Rwanda Development Board
<b>Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi</b>	Secretary - General of UNCTAD
<b>Hon. Dr. Rashid A. Aman</b>	Chief Administrative Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Kenya
<b>Elizabeth (Lizz) Ntonjira</b>	Global Communications Director for Amref Health Africa.
<b>Esayas Woldemariam</b>	Deputy CEO and Chief Commercial Officer for Ethiopian Airlines
<b>Hosea Machuki</b>	CEO, Fresh Produce Exporters Association of Kenya
<b>Isaac Kwaku Fokuo Jr.</b>	Founder and Principal, Botho Emerging Markets Group
<b>John Kitui</b>	Country Director, Oxfam in Kenya
<b>Prof. Jomo Kwame</b>	Senior Research Adviser at the Khazanah Research Institute
<b>Dr. Kevit Desai</b>	Principal Secretary in the State Department of East Africa Community in the Ministry of East Africa Community and Regional Development



## Appreciation to Kusi Ideas Festival Speakers

Name	Title
Dr. Khama Rogo	Founder, Centre for the Study of Adolescence
Prof. Kivutha Kibwana	Governor of Makueni County
Lolem B. Ngong	Chief of Staff of Amref Health Africa
Louis Otieno	Non-Executive Director of Nation Media Group
Maimunah Mohd Sharif	Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat
Maureen Mbaka	Chief Administrative Secretary in Kenya's Ministry of ICT, Innovation and Youth Affairs
Matsi Modise	Founder and CEO of Furaha Afrika Holdings
Nathalie Munyampenda	CEO of Kepler and formerly Managing Director of the Next Einstein Forum (NEF)
Narendra Raval	CEO of Devki Steel Mills
Philip Thigo	Senior Director for Africa for the Thunderbird School for Global Management
Richard Mihigo	Coordinator, Immunization & Vaccines Development Programme of the WHO Regional Office for Africa
Dr. Sabin Nzanzimana	Director - General of Rwanda Biomedical Centre
Dr. Shivon Byamukama	Managing Director of Babyl Rwanda
Silas Babaluku	Ugandan Rapper, Musician, Producer, Community Youth Activist and Social Entrepreneur
Tejal Dodhia	Managing Director of Thika Cloth Mills
Wanjiru Gikonyo	Founding Trustee and National Coordinator of The Institute for Social Accountability (TISA)
William Nanjero	General Manager of Sol Generation Records
Yvonne Adhiambo Owuor	Author - Dust & The Dragonfly Sea





## Kusi Ideas Festival Organising Committee

Name	Title
Dr. Wilfred 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	Group Editorial Director, Nation Media Group PLC.
Clifford Machoka	Head of External Affairs and Marketing, Nation Media Group PLC.
Charles Onyango-Obbo	Kusi Consultant; Journalist: Former Editor of Mail and Guardian Africa
Monicah Ndung'u	Head of Broadcasting, Nation Media Group PLC.
Symon Bargurei	Commercial Manager, Nation Media Group PLC.
Mercy Kimani	Service Support Manager, Nation Media Group PLC.
Mercelline Maroma	Former Production Manager, Nation Media Group PLC.
Rodah Mumbo	Events Business Development Manager, Nation Media Group PLC.
Kinya Gitonga	Corporate Affairs Manager, Nation Media Group PLC.
Washington Gikunju	Head of News, Nation Media Group PLC.
Hosea Kimani	Finance Manager, Nation Media Group PLC.
Bernadette Namata	Branch Manager-Rwanda, Nation Media Group PLC.
Naomy Ikenye	Events Coordinator, Nation Media Group PLC.
Julius Muli	Brand Assistant, Nation Media Group PLC.



## Kusi Ideas Festival Moderators



**Edmond Nyabola**  
Editor, Planning and Research, NTV



**Christine Mungai**  
Rapporteur



**Smriti Vidyarthi**  
Senior News Anchor and Special Assignments  
Editor, NTV



**Dann Mwangi**  
Innovation and Training Editor, NTV



**Julians Amboko**  
Business Editor, NTV



**Joseph Warungu**  
Managing Editor, NTV



# ABOUT NATION MEDIA GROUP





**Nation Media Group's dream began 61 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 61 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 second edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival.**





# Thank You to Our Partners

		
		
		
 <i>Film Kenya...Capture Africa!</i>		



## KUSI 2020 STORY

The second edition of the Kusi Ideas Festival was held in the face of a global pandemic. Even with the setbacks, Africans resilience and ingenuity to find homegrown solutions shone through. The conference was a testament to the great ideas and resolutions that are born when the continent comes together.



**14,000**

Delegates tuned into  
the conference virtually



**230**

Delegates  
attended the  
physical event



**44**

Countries



**31**

Speakers from  
10 countries



**460m**

Impressions on  
Social media

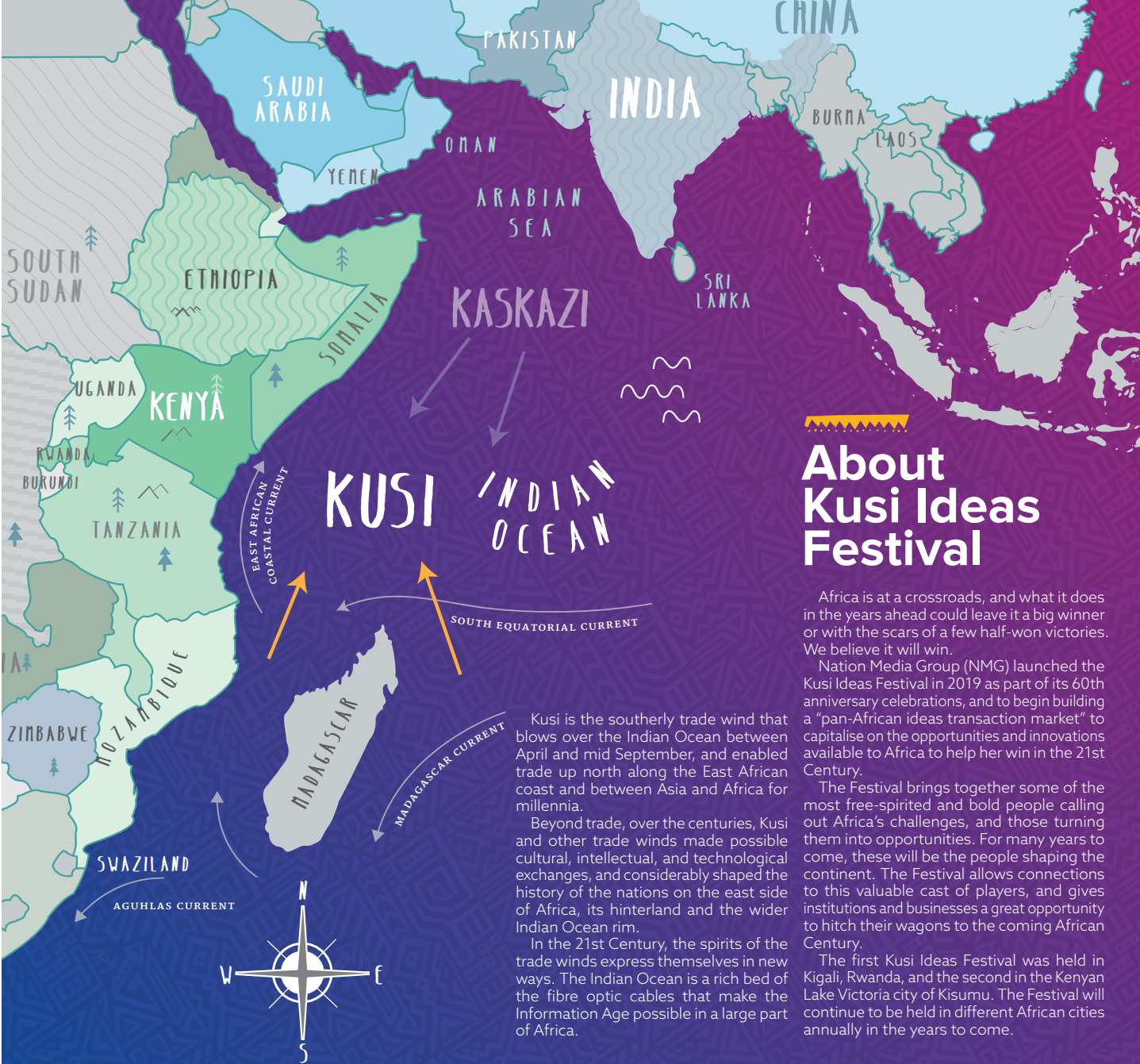


**83**

Cities



Kenya • Rwanda • United States • Uganda • France • Netherlands • Tanzania • Ghana • Ethiopia • Australia • United  
Arab Emirates • United Kingdom • Finland • South Africa • Canada • India • Malaysia • Somalia • South Korea •  
Switzerland • Algeria • Austria • Germany • Israel • Japan • Djibouti • Egypt • Hong Kong • Niger • Pakistan • Poland  
Saudi Arabia • Sierra Leone • Singapore • Sweden



## 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

Securing Growth:  
The Shape of  
a Post-Covid  
African Economy



**Nation Media Group**  
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