



**YOUTH
CONNEKT
AFRICA**

2026

YouthConnekt Africa Summit

25-27 November 2026

Kigali Rwanda

YouthConnekt Africa Summit

A Platform for Transformation

The Evolution

Launched in 2017 to establish direct dialogue between young African leaders and policymakers, the YouthConnekt Africa Summit has become the continent's premier intergenerational platform. For nearly a decade, this unique space for direct democracy has successfully bridged the gap between youth aspirations and policy action.

The Challenge

However, the landscape has fundamentally shifted. Today, youth-focused conferences have proliferated into look-alike formats, while a more demanding generation of young Africans is rightly questioning whether these events lead to real impact. Concurrently, profound global disorder has emerged, threatening the economic stability, employment, and futures of young Africans.

The Pivot

The upcoming Summit in Kigali marks a deliberate paradigm shift from dialogue to systemic transformation. While 360-degree youth-led dialogue remains our DNA, today's turmoil requires a broader coalition. Policymakers and development actors are indispensable, but they do not hold all the answers. This Summit will integrate the private sector and public institutions into a new architecture designed to:

- **Dismantle Systemic Barriers:** Identify and break down the visible and invisible economic and social obstacles hindering youth emancipation.
- **Forge an Action Consensus:** Convene the exact political, technical, and financial stakeholders capable of altering realities on the ground.
- **Mobilize Private Resources:** Secure concrete commitments for youth training, pro-youth policies, and employment.

Our Value

With a massive pan-African network, direct institutional access to 39 Member States, a deep physical presence, and a bold, youth-led team, YouthConnekt Africa is uniquely positioned to lead this evolution. We invite our partners across the public, private, and development sectors to join us in turning this Summit into a definitive platform for continental transformation.



YCA Summit 2026

Context & Rationale

A rapidly shifting landscape

The socio-economic landscape shaping the futures of African youth is no longer defined by regional isolation, but by a profound, systemic disruption of the global status quo. We are witnessing the confluence of three massive global shocks that fundamentally alter the rules of development:

- **The Retreat from Globalization:** The long-standing consensus on free trade is giving way to a new era of fragmentation, regionalization, and economic protectionism. For Africa, this shift disrupts established export pathways and complicates integration into traditional global value chains.
- **Technological Disruption and Labor Displacement:** While rapid digital and technological advancements promise to unlock unprecedented productivity, they simultaneously introduce severe risks of labor destruction. In a continent reliant on labor-intensive growth, automation and artificial intelligence threaten to displace millions of entry-level jobs before they can even be created.
- **Geopolitical Instability and Economic Pressures:** Escalating geopolitical tensions are fracturing international supply chains, triggering persistent inflationary pressures, and driving up the cost of living. These shocks directly repress job opportunities, strain national budgets, and heighten risks of political and social instability.

The Cost to African Youth

African young men and women stand to pay the highest price for this global turmoil. The compounding weight of these crises manifests on the ground as worsening living conditions, diminished social mobility, and highly repressed economic opportunities.

The Imperative for YouthConnekt Africa

With the rise of youth-focused forums, there is a growing risk of repetition and limited impact. To maintain our leadership and maximize our impact, YouthConnekt Africa proactively responds to the realities of this new global paradigm while remaining deeply relevant to the everyday needs of Africa's young people.

We cannot confront an increasingly fractured, automated, and inflationary world with static frameworks. This does not mean a repudiation of high-level dialogue: direct, intergenerational exchange with top policymakers is part of our DNA and remains a powerful asset. However, in this new era, dialogue can no longer be the end in itself. It must serve as a strategic means to a much greater end.

The upcoming YCA Summit has been deliberately designed to meet this exact historical moment: elevating our traditional convening power to anchor a strategic, multi-stakeholder coalition. By turning high-level dialogue into a launchpad for real action, we hope to secure the political backing, technical expertise, and financial investments needed to help African youth navigate and lead through this global shift.

Shaping the Generational Mission.

Africa stands at a defining moment in its history, shaped by the strength, scale, and potential of its young generations. With over 532 million people aged 15-35, the continent hosts the largest and fastest growing youth population in the world, a trend set to continue well into 2070s.

This moment is marked by profound and accelerating transformations: shifting global economic trends and geopolitical dynamics; mounting pressure on environmental resources; rapid technological change driven by artificial intelligence; and the resurgence of war, conflict, and insecurity. These realities place Africa's youth at the center of attention, both as those most affected and as those best positioned to shape solutions.

Now more than ever, it is timely to reflect on the words of Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of Earth* (1961).

The question for Africa's youth is therefore not whether they will shape the future, but how they will define and carry this mission forward.

Hence the theme, ***"Shaping the Generational Mission"*** is a call to action for a generation to rise, engage, and define its legacy. Discovering this generational mission is neither simple nor linear. It raises fundamental questions: What should this mission look like? How should it be fulfilled? Which commitments must be made to ensure it is not missed?

The YouthConnekt Africa Summit 2026 is designed as a response to this "relative obscurity," providing a platform to connect, exchange, and collectively deliberate on a shared path forward. It affirms that, despite the complexity of today's challenges, a new trajectory can be defined by young Africans, for themselves and future generations.



"Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfil it, or betray it"

Frantz Fanon
Psychoanalyst and Social Philosopher

"We cannot accept that another generation of young Africans will not have the tools to reach their full potential."

H.E Paul Kagame
President of the Republic of Rwanda



Through intergenerational dialogues, panel discussions, policy roundtables, hackathons, workshops, and cultural performances, the Summit will foster deep reflection on effective pathways for youth integration to build and advance a shared generational mission.

Policy Objectives

The Summit seeks to deliver the following outcomes:

- 1. Co-create and adopt a Continental Youth Generational Mission** with clear value proposition, defined priorities and accountability mechanisms, jointly endorsed by youth, governments, private sector, and development partners to address structural barriers to youth development, participation, and empowerment.
- 2. Operationalize a continental multi-stakeholder platform** that enables coordinated youth development initiatives for strategic partnerships, continuous knowledge exchange, and collaborative joint program implementation to maximize impact at national, local, and continental levels. Supported by a follow-up and coordination mechanism through country chapters to track progress measure impact.
- 3. Advance youth integration in intra-African trade** by translating policies into action through clear implementation mechanisms, market access pathways, and innovation support programs for scaling businesses continent-wide.



Who to expect At the summit!



+5 000

In person

+25 000

Online



Thematic Areas

Track 1

Markets without borders: digital integration and informal trade

The paradigm shift: Intra-African integration under the AfCFTA can't just be a framework for multinational corporations. For the next generation, prosperity will be defined by digital trade, cross-border logistics, and the formalization of youth-led micro-enterprises. We must bridge the gap between high-level trade policy and the reality of young traders operating on the ground.

Action-focused reflection questions:

- How can we structurally lower cross-border barriers and transaction costs for small-scale, informal youth entrepreneurs who form the backbone of local trade?
- If this generation were to redesign African trade from scratch to favor digital agility and local value addition, what protectionist bottlenecks would they dismantle first?

Track 2: The new social contract: trust, legitimacy, and accountable governance

The paradigm shift: Across the continent, generational change is driving a push for deeper institutional accountability. In an era of global and local turmoil, peace and stability can't be maintained through top-down mandates alone; they require a modern consensus built on transparent, responsive, and digital-era public governance.

Action-focused reflection questions:

- Through what concrete mechanisms can public institutions rebuild systemic trust with a youth population demanding measurable outcomes over political rhetoric?
- When youth feel unheard in traditional forums, what civic platforms and collaborative mechanisms can we build to channel their agency into constructive policy dialogue and institutional development, rather than social fragmentation?

Track 3

Beyond the paycheck: dignified work and livelihoods in the modern economy

The paradigm shift: Traditional employment metrics fail to capture the reality of African youth, the vast majority of whom navigate the informal economy out of necessity. This track bypasses generic "job creation" statistics to focus on what young Africans actually need: income security, skill sets that survive technological disruption, and platforms that dignify independent work, freelancing, and micro-entrepreneurship.

Action-focused reflection questions:

- What legal, financial, and structural frameworks do public and private sectors need to build together to provide targeted support and social safety nets for the millions of young people working in the informal and gig economies?
- How can we scale regional skilling models that match the rapid evolution of technology, ensuring youth talent isn't displaced by automation and/or AI?

Track 4: Generational sovereignty: climate, resource security, and green livelihoods

The paradigm shift: climate change, water scarcity, and environmental degradation are actively repressing the livelihoods of young African farmers, pastoralists, and urban laborers today. True sovereignty requires shifting from passive climate vulnerability to proactive governance of our natural resources, ensuring they fuel local circular economies that directly benefit youth.

Action-focused reflection questions:

- How can we design natural resource deals so that local young people actually get a share of the wealth, ownership opportunities, and jobs created by their country's resources?
- What commercially viable green and circular economy models can be financed today to create localized, climate-resilient jobs in vulnerable communities?

Track 5: Driving the global narrative: monetizing Africa's creative and cultural capital

The paradigm shift: Through hard work, African identity, music, fashion, film, and sports have achieved unprecedented global influence, but the financial returns rarely stay on the continent. This track focuses on building the underlying infrastructure (intellectual property rights, digital distribution networks, and venture capital) needed to turn raw creative talent into sustainable, wealth-generating industries for young creators.

Action-focused reflection questions:

- What institutional barriers prevent young African creatives from legally protecting, financing, and scaling their intellectual property in both local and global markets?
- How can the private sector invest in physical and digital infrastructure to ensure the monetization of African culture directly enriches local communities and ecosystems?

Track 6: Structural well-being: building youth-responsive and resilient health systems

The paradigm shift: Economic productivity is inextricably linked to physical and mental well-being. For the millions of young Africans working outside the formal safety net, a single health crisis can trigger immediate economic collapse. African health systems must transition from reactive crisis management to affordable, preventive, and highly accessible care tailored to the realities of a young and mobile population.

Action-focused reflection questions:

- How do we dismantle the structural barriers that exclude informal-sector workers and marginalized youth from accessing quality, non-discriminatory healthcare?
- What public-private delivery models can make health tech and preventive care affordable and accessible to youth living in underserved urban and rural areas?



PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Pre-Summit

23-24 November 2026

- YouthConnekt Africa Technical Committee
- YouthConnekt **Export Accelerator Bootcamp**
- **Leadership** Workshop
- **Masterclass**
- High-level **Networking Cocktail**

Day 1

25th November 2026

Grand Opening **Ceremony**
Intergenerational Dialogue
11:00 am

Lunch

Plenary and Breakout sessions
14:30 – 16:00

- Partner led sessions
- Regional Sessions
- Intergenerational debates
- Policy Round Tables
- Connekting Zone

18:00 - **Social Events**

- Gala Dinner (invitation only)
- Kigali immersion activities

Day 2

26th November 2026

Plenary Session
09:30 -11:00

Plenary and Breakout Sessions
11:30 -13:00

Lunch
13:00 – 14:00

Plenary and Breakout Sessions
14:30 – 16:00

18:00 **Social Events**

- Social networking activities

Day 3

27th November 2026

Plenary Session
09:30 – 11:00

Plenary and Breakout sessions
11:30 – 13:00

Lunch 13:00 – 14:00

Official Closing Ceremony
14:30 – 16:00

Kigali Night run

Day 4

28th November 2026

YouthConnekt Africa Steering Committee
09:00 – 14:30

Visit Rwanda Activities
9:00 -

A large audience is seated in a modern theater with a curved ceiling and blue lighting. The audience is diverse and appears to be engaged in a presentation or performance. The text "Let's Connekt in Kigali." is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font. The word "in" is highlighted in a light orange color. The background shows a large, curved ceiling with blue lighting and a large screen on the left side of the stage.

Let's
Connekt
in Kigali.