

2-DAY  
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 1-2  
2020



HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES



Lionesses  
of Africa

# WOMEN and the Changing Face of ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN AFRICA

With support from: Hakeem and Myma Belo-Osagie, Empower Africa,  
London Stock Exchange Group, Standard Bank, and UN Economic Commission for Africa

## MEDIA RELEASE

(embargoed until 09.00 1 October 2020)

### Harvard University Center for African Studies welcomes women entrepreneur leaders from across Africa to speak at virtual conference

The Harvard University Center for African Studies' *Women and the Changing Face of Entrepreneurship in Africa* conference taking place on 1 and 2 October 2020, has brought together a powerful line-up of leading women entrepreneurs from across the African continent to share their experiences, discuss their responses to current economic challenges, and to inspire all other women entrepreneurs and global stakeholders working for positive change.

The conference is a collaboration between the Harvard University Center for African Studies, Lionesses of Africa, which is a 1 million-strong network of women entrepreneurs on the continent and Diaspora, the London Stock Exchange Group, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and Standard Bank Group, a leading financial institution with a strong track record of supporting female entrepreneurs on the continent, with additional support from Empower Africa.

Over two days, the deliberations of the conference seek to provide a clearer understanding of the landscape of female entrepreneurship on the continent, identify challenges and opportunities, examine policy frameworks, and define policy actions that would position African women, leaders in global female entrepreneurship, to play a transformative role in the world's largest emerging market.

Opening the conference will be Professor Wafaie Fawzi, Interim Director, Center for African Studies; Dean Margot Gill, Interim University Marshal; Melanie Hawken, Founder & CEO, Lionesses of Africa; and Ibukun Adebayo, Director & Co-Head of Emerging Markets, London Stock Exchange Group.

The conference programme will feature four moderated panel discussions over two days with a stellar line-up of leading women entrepreneur speakers bringing their considerable experience and insights to the conversations. These include:

- **Panel 1: Women Entrepreneurs, Business Agility, and Africa's Massive Job Creation Challenge.** The one-hour discussion will be moderated by Melanie Hawken, Founder & CEO, Lionesses of Africa. Speakers include: Kofo Akinkugbe, Founder & CEO, SecureID (Nigeria); Sarah Collins, Founder & CEO, Wonderbag (South Africa); Divine Ndhlukula, Founder & CEO, Securico (Zimbabwe); Adenike Ogunlesi, Founder & Chief Responsibility Officer, Ruff 'n' Tumble (Nigeria); Kate Quartey-Papafio, Founder & CEO, Reroy Cables Limited (Ghana)

- **Panel Two: Women Entrepreneurs, Value-added Commodity Processing, and Economic Diversification.** The discussion will be moderated by Diane Côté, Chief Risk Officer, London Stock Exchange Group (UK), Director of Women Inspired Network. Speakers include: Kimberly Addison, Co-founder, '57 Chocolate (Ghana); Tiguidanke Mounir Camara, Founder, Chairman, and CEO, Tigui Mining Group TMG (Guinea); Flora Mutahi, Founder & CEO, Melvin Marsh International (Kenya); Ndidi Nwuneli, Co-founder & Managing Partner, Sahel Consulting (Nigeria); Lorna Scott, Founder & CEO, Inverroche (South Africa)
- **Panel Three: The Digital Economy and Economic Growth for Africa's Women Entrepreneurs.** The discussion will be moderated by Roshini Naidoo, Executive and General Manager, Discovery Limited (South Africa). Speakers include: Nkemdilim Begho, Founder & CEO, Future Software Resources (Nigeria); Rebecca Enonchong, Founder & CEO, AppsTech (Cameroon); Suzan Kereere, Global Head Merchant Sales & Acquiring, Visa International (United Kingdom); Catherine Mahugu, Founder, Chiswara & Soko (Kenya); Aisha Pandor, Co-founder & CEO, SweepSouth (South Africa)
- **Panel Four: Strengthening Institutional and Policy Frameworks, Funding, and Networks to Advance Women Entrepreneurs.** The discussion will be moderated by Chantelé Carrington, Africa Business Group COO, PwC United Kingdom (United Kingdom). Speakers include: Sola David-Borha, Chief Executive, Africa Regions, Standard Bank Group (South Africa); Hend El Sherbini, Founder & CEO, IDH (Egypt); Essma Ben Hamida, Co-founder & Director, Enda Inter-Arabe (Tunisia); Natalie Kolbe, Partner, Actis (South Africa); Vanessa Mounzar, Director of Gender, Women and Civil Society, African Development Bank (Côte d'Ivoire).

The conference will also feature two keynote addresses. On 1 October, Harvard Dr. Zoe Marks, Lecturer in Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School, will speak to Gender, Power, and Entrepreneurial Transformation for Future Africa. On 2 October, Dr. Vera Songwe, United Nations Under Secretary-General and Executive Secretary, Economic Commission for Africa, will deliver the annual Hakeem and Myrna Belo-Osagie Distinguished Lecture on African Business and Entrepreneurship.

Professor Wafaie Fawzi, Interim Oppenheimer Faculty Director of the Harvard Center for African Studies, says:

“The Harvard Center for African Studies is honored to serve as host to this most esteemed gathering of women entrepreneurs from across the African continent. We see the conversations that will take place on 1 and 2 October as a catalyst for new avenues of research around women's entrepreneurship in Africa, and we look forward to working with faculty and students across Harvard to disseminate the key findings of this conference for policy makers and institutional investors across the world. It is through convenings such as this that we fulfill our mandate to ensure that African voices and perspectives inform the scholarship at Harvard.”

Commenting on the programme and the depth of expertise being brought to the discussions by the distinguished speaker panels, Melanie Hawken, founder & CEO, Lionesses of Africa, says:

“This conference will play a significant role in stimulating important conversations on a range of topics that are critical to the future growth and development of women entrepreneurs and their businesses on the African continent. Each of the speakers and panelists have an incredible amount of experience in successful business and brand building in their roles as leading socio-economic drivers of change on the continent. Our hope is that those attending the conference will gain unique insights from these discussions and will be inspired to play their own part in Africa’s future economic success story by doing business and collaborating with women entrepreneurs for future accelerated growth and job creation.”

In terms of tangible conference outcomes and to support the published post conference report, the organizers will produce a policy paper which will also highlight key facts and figures on women entrepreneurs with infographics on the sectors they are engaged in. The conference organizers will also create an informal working group with a focus on research and policy. The working group will share its research and policy recommendations with groups of women entrepreneurs and through the respective UN bodies, the Africa Union, the African Development Bank, and the African Export-Import Bank.

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