

AWIEF 2017 aims to ignite change in Africa's socioeconomic landscape

Cape Town will host the third annual Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum (AWIEF) from 5-6 October at the Century City Conference Centre. The event, themed 'Equity, impact and inclusive growth towards Agenda 2030 and a sustainable African future', aims to ignite fundamental changes in Africa's socioeconomic landscape.



“It is naive to think that we can transform Africa leaving the women behind,” says Irene Ochem, AWIEF founder and director. “You cannot ignore over 50% of the population of a continent and hope to harness and exploit its full potential. It is imperative that we overturn traditional mindsets and customs to promote inclusivity in business and industry, tapping into the immense untapped resources offered by women. We need to turn women from being job-seekers into job creators, becoming entrepreneurs and businesswomen.”

Interactive, panel discussion model

The AWIEF conference programme will cover from education to innovation and technology, from e-commerce to agriculture and food security, and from infrastructure to finance, procurement and the “creative economy”, which embraces such sectors as fashion and design. Ochem explains that the programme has been designed mainly on an interactive, panel discussion model, so that the expertise and creativity of participants can be given maximum free rein.

Confirmed ministers and dignitaries participating in the event include: Esperance Nyirasafari, minister of Gender and Family Promotion of Rwanda; Jean A. N. Kalilani, minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare of Malawi; Nyasha Chikwinya, minister of Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development of Zimbabwe; Elizabeth Thabethe, deputy minister, Department of Tourism of South Africa; Patricia De Lille, executive mayor of Cape Town; Cecilia Julin, ambassador of Sweden to South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia, Embassy of Sweden in Pretoria; Trine Skymoene, ambassador, Royal Norwegian Embassy in Pretoria – Republic of South Africa and Botswana, Madagascar and Namibia; Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu and Leah Tutu of Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation; Mathabo Gail Makenete, deputy governor, Central Bank of Lesotho, and Vanessa Mounigar, director, Gender, Women and Civil Society of the African Development Bank, Côte d'Ivoire.

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