

Power Players - Africa Tech Festival's 2023 Headliner Line-up

Top notch speaker list, including several government ministers, exemplifies importance of tech to drive Africa's needed economic big boom

Johannesburg, 05 October 2023 - Africa has abundant economic potential and the enormous uptake of digital technology socially and in the business sector, has positioned the continent for explosive growth, but there are challenges that lie in wait. Many of these will be spotlighted at the 2023 Africa Tech Festival in Cape Town 13-16 November, along with innovative solutions all led by a line-up of headline speakers including several African government ministers.

"Businesses across Africa have benefitted enormously from leap-frogging traditional technology to the digital world and wireless connectivity, and this is spurring incredible growth across the continent," says James Williams, Director, Events | Connecting Africa | Informa Tech. "The incredible advantages of digitalisation are, however, dependent on a plentiful and reliable source of power, and it's essential that the public sector has strong strategies in place to drive this growth."

The tech world is driven by entrepreneurial innovators, but it relies heavily on the public sector to provide infrastructure, regulations and often funding to smooth the way for technological advancement, especially in terms of providing access and infrastructure for the public to access to engage with and benefit from the technology.

Among the 200-plus speakers, presenters and panellists will be **Gwede Mantashe, Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy**, whose input on how the South African government is tackling the critical issue of loadshedding will no doubt ensure a packed hall of delegates all hopeful of hearing positive news. The dynamic **H.E. Dr. Kgosiensho Ramokgopa, South Africa's Minister in the Presidency responsible for electricity**, will provide backup to the Minister in shining a light on the country's energy crisis.

Not to be missed, is the panel discussion '*Universal Power Access: Plotting a Route Through Africa's Electricity Challenge*', which puts the future of digital transformation squarely on the shoulders of electricity and citizens' access to energy.

In Africa, energy insecurity has been a chronic inhibitor of economic development for decades, and continues to cripple enterprise growth and innovation, and the panel will unpack why a staggering 30 of Africa's 54 nations face daily power shortages and supply interruptions, all of which play economic havoc with local business and consumer activity. It's important to understand how the collaboration of public and private funding is essential for striking the right balance between the two sectors to create the perfect solution to the crisis.

Also addressing delegates will be **H.E. Ousmane Gaoual Diallo, the Republic of Guinea's Minister of Posts, Telecommunications and Digital Economy**, as well as **Namibia's Minister of Information and**

Communication Technology, H.E. Minister Dr Peya Mushelenga, and their Executive Director & Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, Dr Audrin Mathe.

Another key area of public sector engagement with the tech sector will be discussed in the keynote panel *'Unleashing Digital Prosperity: How Progressive Policy is Shaping Africa's Tech Transformation'*. This session will present African Ministers from across the continent with an opportunity to share how they are tailoring policy to their unique national environment and priorities, in addition to the need for a more continental, collaborative approach.

"The process of developing and implementing policy across myriad industries and sectors is, however, an inherently complex and lengthy process and relies heavily on industry consultation, sector-specific legislation and flexibility to evolve with rapidly changing sectors," says Williams, highlighting the importance of the growing number of Ministerial delegations at Africa Tech Festival year on year.

Among the high-level speakers sharing with delegates over the three days are:

- Dion Jerling (Co-Founder, Connect Earth)
 - Richard Cazalet (Exec: Strategy and Transformation, Telkom SA)
 - Robert AOUAD (CEO, ISOCEL Telecom)
 - Russell Southwood (CEO, Balancing Act)
 - Vuyani Tati (Managing Partner, AfriTech Catalytic Growth Fund),
 - Jocelyn Nyaguse (Head of Marketing and Storytelling, Startupbootcamp AfriTech)
 - Calvin Govender (General Manager ICT Fixed Services, MTN)
 - Marjorie Saint-Lot (Country Manager, Ghana and the Ivory Coast, Uber)
 - Evan Jones (CEO, The Collective X)
 - Nfaly Sylla (Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and Digital Economy, Republic of Guinea)
 - Kellie Murungi (Chief Investments Officer, East African Power)
 - John Davies (TMT Equity Research Analyst, EMEA, TMT, Bloomberg Intelligence)
- An expanded list of speakers is noted below).

Aside from presenting cutting-edge content and a speaker line-up of note, the Africa Tech Festival is also the meeting place of Africa's largest community of tech champions and offers this vibrant grouping the ideal space to connect and interact. However, just as these connections are so important for the industry, so is the connecting of 1.2-billion people across Africa's 54 unique nations, vital for the continent's growth, with cross-border connectivity a particular concern.

Continental broadband penetration is currently around 45%, but this varies dramatically across regions. Connectivity is critical to the rapidly expanding SME business community, as well as for wider socioeconomic development needs. Looking at this the fireside chat, *'Connectivity Beyond Borders: Unlocking Universal Broadband Access in Africa'*, will explore how innovations in strategy and technology are aiming to ensure that no individual, business, or community is left behind in Africa's pursuit of universal broadband access.

While most of the discussions and presentations relate to most players in the industry, the event has been structured in such a way as to ensure that specialists are also able to sit in on the most relevant content to them, either by staying in one venue for a series of talks, or by exploring the 'centre stages' in each of the exhibition halls in which masterclasses and presentations will take place.

Other major topics on offer this year include:

- Connectivity for All: Addressing the Needs of Underserved Communities
- Driving Innovation: Unravelling the Business Applications of 5G FWA in Africa
- The Changing Role of Satellites to Leapfrog Africa Into an Era of Online Connectivity.

This year, the Africa Tech Festival will offer delegates several new features, along with six presentation stages and a staggering amount of content, while hundreds of exhibitors on the show floor will once again engage with the brightest tech gurus from around the continent and globally, who will all descend on the Cape Town International Convention Centre to discover the latest products and services and to connect with other tech professionals.

Williams shares that: "This year we have added a new interactive feature to the festival - a dedicated tech demo area that we are sure will draw crowds throughout the three days. It's a chance to engage with the cutting-edge innovations that Africa needs to know about... as well as some of the exciting innovations that Africa has to offer the world."

For more information, please see website here: [Africa Tech Festival 2023 - The Home of AfricaCom & AfricaTech](#)

View all ticket options for Africa Tech Festival, including start-up passes, [here](#).

(Please note that all requests are adjudicated and there may be some delay before you hear back from us).

For media enquiries, interviews and/or images please contact: Kaz Henderson kaz@networxpr.co.za or call on +27 (0) 82 339 1199.

Social Media Handles:

Facebook: @africatechfestival

Twitter: @africatechfest

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/showcase/africa-tech-festival/>

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List of Speakers:

[Dion JerlingCo-FounderConnect Earth](#)

[Richard CazaletExec: Strategy and TransformationTelkom SA](#)

[Miriam AltmanDirector: Altman Advisory & Professor of 4IR PracticeUniversity of Johannesburg](#)

[Guy ZibiManaging DirectorXalam Analytics](#)

[Robert AOUADCEOISOCEL Telecom](#)

[Ronan De RenesseSenior Research Director, Service Provider MarketsOmdia](#)

[Russell SouthwoodCEOBalancing Act](#)

[Matt ReedChief Analyst, Service ProviderOmdia](#)

[Vuyani TatiManaging PartnerAfriTech Catalytic Growth Fund](#)

[Jocelyn NyaguseHead of Marketing and StorytellingStartupbootcamp AfriTech](#)

[Nathan-Ross AdamsData & Tech LawyerMichalsons](#)

[Paula GilbertEditorConnecting Africa](#)

[Matshepo SehlohoAssociate EditorConnecting Africa](#)

[Calvin GovenderGeneral Manager ICT Fixed ServicesMTN](#)

[Marjorie Saint-LotCountry Manager for Uber Ghana and the Ivory CoastUber](#)

[Joseph NdabaCEO of Mafikeng Digital Innovation Hub4IR Commissioner: Presidential Commission on the Fourth Industrial Commission](#)

[Marion BalandraFounder & CEOMeridian Remote Teams](#)

[Evan JonesCEOThe Collective X](#)

[Badi SudhakaranCo-FounderVALR.com](#)

[Nfaly SyllaChief of CabinetMinistry of Posts, Telecommunications and Digital Economy, Republic of Guinea](#)

[Mumbi Ndung'uChief Growth and OperationsPower Learn Project](#)

[Dr Cherise DunnCo-founder and COOSouth Africa Makes](#)

[Judith GardinerVice President, Growth and Emerging MarketsEquinix](#)

[Robinson Tombari SibeMD/CEODigital Footprints](#)

[Bernard WanyamaPresident, Kampala ChapterISACA](#)

[Ryan Van den BerghManaging Executive: Group Technology Strategy, Architecture, Spectrum & AssuranceVodacom](#)

[Andy HalsallCEOpoa! Internet](#)

[Sabrine ChennaouiCo-FounderMONSAPO](#)

[Pablo MlikotaSenior Vice President – International Mobility Servicese& GROUP](#)

[John DaviesTMT Equity Research Analyst, EMEA, TMTBloomberg Intelligence](#)