

KDC Hosts Inaugural Next Frontier Africa Summit 2025 to Catalyse Transformative Investments and Accelerate Industrial Growth

Nairobi, Kenya — Kenya today marked a pivotal milestone in its economic transformation journey with the official launch of the Next Frontier Africa Summit 2025; a premier gathering of global and continental leaders from government, finance, enterprise, and development. Hosted by the Kenya Development Corporation (KDC) at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC), the Summit serves as a high-level platform to advance transformative investments, deepen public-private partnerships, and shape a sustainable, inclusive growth agenda for Africa.

The Summit was officially opened by the Principal Secretary for Industry, Dr. Juma Mukhwana, who presided over the ceremony on behalf of the Cabinet Secretary for Investments, Trade and Industry, Hon. Lee Kinyanjui. He described the gathering as a bold expression of Kenya's and Africa's shared ambition to harness capital, innovation, and policy reforms to unlock the continent's next phase of industrialization.

“Today, we open the doors to a new frontier of opportunity for Kenya and Africa. This Summit reflects our collective resolve to attract quality investments, forge robust partnerships, and develop practical solutions that deliver real impact; jobs, industries, and inclusive prosperity. Africa's next frontier will be shaped by the bold decisions we take,” said PS Mukhwana.

Welcoming delegates to the Summit, Norah Ratemo, Director General of the Kenya Development Corporation, affirmed KDC's central role as Kenya's national development finance institution in mobilising capital, addressing financing gaps, and enabling the growth of strategic sectors through patient and blended capital.

“This Summit provides a unique opportunity to engage with investors, policymakers, and development partners on how we can collectively unlock Kenya's full economic potential. At KDC, we are committed to providing financial and technical support that is tailored, inclusive, and transformative support that moves beyond transactions to drive real change in communities and value chains,” Ms. Ratemo noted. She highlighted the critical importance of key sectors such as manufacturing, post-harvest management, health, tourism, the digital economy, and climate resilience; all of which remain central pillars in Kenya's long-term development strategy and are priorities for KDC's investment portfolio.

Delivering remarks on behalf of the State Department for Investment Promotion, Mr. Stephen Odua, Director for Business Environment and Private Sector Development, who represented Principal Secretary Abubakar Hassan, underscored the importance of sound policy and a predictable investment environment in positioning Kenya as a premier destination for foreign direct investment.

“Kenya's strong performance as a regional investment hub is the result of deliberate reforms and a forward-looking policy environment. We continue to improve the ease of doing business, digitise government services, and build an investor-friendly ecosystem that supports growth across priority sectors,” said Mr. Odua.

He stressed that these reforms must translate into tangible impact by unlocking opportunities in value-added manufacturing, renewable energy, innovation, and climate-smart industries,

while enabling local enterprises to thrive through streamlined processes and adaptive regulation.

In his keynote address, Hon. Dr. Sakwa J. Bunyasi, Chairman of the KDC Board, spoke passionately about the transformative power of patient capital in driving long-term, inclusive growth. He noted that real transformation demands investments that endure, nurture nascent industries, and withstand global shocks.

“Patient capital is about purpose. It enables us to unlock complex value chains, boost local manufacturing, and support climate-smart enterprises that create dignified jobs and build economic resilience,” said Dr. Bunyasi.

He highlighted that in 2024 alone, over KES 783 billion was channelled into Kenya’s SMEs by development finance institutions and strategic partners, with KDC’s own SME portfolio expanding nearly sevenfold to over KES 29 billion; targeting sectors historically underserved by commercial finance.

A key moment of the day was the address by Dr. James Mworira, CEO of Centum PLC, who underscored the pivotal role of private equity and venture capital in powering inclusive growth and job creation. He advocated for policies that incentivise equity capital and unlock domestic institutional investment to drive enterprise development and innovation.

Dr. Mworira, referencing Kenya’s progress on strategic investment zones like the TRIFIC SEZ, challenged stakeholders to align ambition with implementation: *“If we can get this right, if we can mobilise patient capital, deploy it wisely, and support our investors to succeed, we will not only grow Kenya’s economy. We will transform the lives of millions of young Kenyans. And that is a prize worth fighting for.”*

As the Summit progresses, delegates are engaging in sector-specific forums, investment showcases, and high-level policy roundtables aimed at identifying co-investment opportunities, addressing systemic barriers, and charting clear pathways toward industrial transformation.

Through its alignment with the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), Vision 2030, and Agenda 2063, the Next Frontier Africa Summit 2025 represents a bold commitment to mobilising capital, building resilient industries, and accelerating inclusive prosperity for Kenya and the region.

About Kenya Development Corporation (KDC)

Kenya Development Corporation was established in 2021 following the merger of the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation, Tourism Finance Corporation, and IDB Capital. KDC is mandated to promote sustainable economic development by providing long-term development finance, infrastructure financing, and business advisory services to medium and large-scale enterprises in strategic sectors across Kenya and beyond.

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