

# AFS Press Release

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Kenya and France pave the way for future-oriented partnerships for innovation and growth ahead of the Africa Forward Summit 2026**

**April 21, 2026, Nairobi, Kenya** — Kenya and France have signalled a new wave of high-impact strategic partnerships across Africa, as preparations intensify for the Africa Forward Summit (AFS) 2026, following a high-level engagement with the Kenya Editors Guild.

In a decisive shift from dialogue to delivery, the Summit is positioning itself as a deal-making platform, expected to step up mutual investment and unlock partnerships across AI and digital innovation, nuclear and renewable energy, health manufacturing, infrastructure, transport, agriculture, and the creative economy - sectors critical to Africa's long-term growth.

With between 1,500 to 2,000 global CEOs and business leaders anticipated, the Africa Forward Summit 2026 is emerging as one of the largest Africa–Europe investment convenings in recent years.

Speaking during the engagement, Dr. Korir SingOei, Principal Secretary, State Department for Foreign Affairs emphasized the need to re-frame the Africa–France relationship in place of old stereotypes and barriers to progress that can limit innovation, constrain partnerships, and ultimately slow down development.

“France is looking for a new relationship with Africa, one that is grounded in mutual respect, shared opportunity, and practical outcomes. We must consciously move away from pre-written narratives that have historically defined this relationship. Africa Forward Summit is about breaking these barriers and focusing on solutions,” said SingOei.

The Summit will spotlight artificial intelligence and digital transformation ecosystems. Other key areas include health sector investments, including local manufacturing of essential commodities, creative and cultural industries as economic drivers and sports as an emerging frontier for investment and job creation.

Additionally, energy transition and infrastructure development alongside regional connectivity systems, agriculture and food systems transformation will feature in the high-level summit that is designed as a reset of Africa–France relations.

Reinforcing the economic weight behind the Summit, Arnaud Suquet, Ambassador of France to Kenya, Somalia, and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, highlighted France's sustained commitment to Africa and Kenya.

“Over the past decade, French investments in Kenya have grown significantly, particularly in energy, infrastructure, and services. Today, more than 140 French enterprises operate in Kenya. In the past decade, France has invested an estimated €1.8 billion in Kenya in sectors of employability and sustainability for a better future.” Said Suquet.

France currently ranks as Kenya’s 4th largest foreign direct investment partner as well as the leading bilateral partner in Kenya’s energy sector. According to Suquet, global convergence around key issues such as climate action, digital transformation, and sustainable development are constantly creating new opportunities for deeper Africa–France collaboration.

Africa Forward Summit 2026 is not only a government-to-government (G2G) Summit, as the two leaders emphasized that private sector capital will be central to delivering the envisioned outcomes out of the Summit.

“Governments alone cannot drive economic transformation at the scale Africa requires, therefore private sector participation at the Africa Forward Summit is not complementary but quite essential if we are to deliver on the commitments”, noted Dr. SingOei.

The Summit scheduled for May 12, at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) will be preceded and accompanied by a series of high-impact engagements designed to drive both policy and people-to-people connections, most of them being held at the University of Nairobi on May 11.

These include the Africa Forward Literary Festival on May 8, Civil Society Forum on May 10, a Youth & Innovation Engagement on May 11 and two high-level Creative Industries and Sports Engagement the same day. The Summit will culminate in the ‘Africa Forward Le Concert’, a flagship cultural diplomacy event at Moi International Sports Centre Kasarani Indoor Arena.

On the line up are leading African artists including Youssou N’Dour, Fally Ipupa, Yemi Alade, Nomcebo Zikode, Savara, and Jose Chameleone among others.

The engagement with the Kenya Editors Guild underscored the critical role of media in shaping public understanding and ensuring accountability. Editors were briefed on the Summit’s outcomes-driven approach, pipeline of expected deals and partnerships as well as the importance of balanced, evidence-based reporting.

Africa Forward Summit 2026 will mark the first Africa–France Summit of its kind hosted in Anglophone Africa, underscoring Kenya’s growing role as a continental convenor of global dialogue and investment. Africa Forward 2026 is expected to culminate in a Nairobi Declaration and a series of action-oriented deliverables, positioning the Summit as a turning point in Africa–France engagement, ahead of the G7 Summit that will be held in Evian-les-Bains, France, in June. Certain conclusions of the Africa Forward Summit will provide substance at the G7 level, in which Kenya will participate.

**Ends...//**

### **About the Africa Forward Summit (AFS) 2026**

The [Africa Forward Summit](#) is a joint Africa–France initiative, co-convened by the Republic of Kenya and the Republic of France, with African Union endorsement. It takes place in Nairobi on 11–12 May 2026 and represents a structural shift in how Africa and

France engage - from a donor-recipient dynamic to a partnership grounded in innovation, parity and shared implementation. It prioritizes African agency and serves as a catalyst for sustainable development and inclusive prosperity. **#AfricaForward**