

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

Innovation: the AFRICA CEO FORUM to put African start-ups in the spotlight

[**The 8th edition of the AFRICA CEO FORUM, to be held on 9 and 10 March in Abidjan, is hosting more than 20 of the continent's most promising start-ups.**

[**The largest gathering of the African private sector seeks to encourage these innovation pioneers as well as leaders from the continent's biggest companies to interact and form partnerships with one another.**

[**In addition, six African start-ups at the forefront of innovation are in the running for the prestigious Disrupter of the Year award.**

From Cape Town to Dakar, to Lagos, Nairobi, Casablanca and Cairo, the African tech ecosystem is shaking up the continent's development models. After raising a record-breaking \$2.02bn in capital in 2019 (234 start-ups via 250 funding rounds, representing a 74% year-on-year increase according to Partech Africa), the continent's unicorns continue to find favour with investors.

During its upcoming edition, the AFRICA CEO FORUM will prominently feature the continent's start-ups in a special first-of-its-kind session. The forum's goal is to put the continent's most promising disrupters in the spotlight and promote meet and greets with important CEOs who could help accelerate their expansion.

Representing sectors key to the continent's development, i.e., health, solar energy, e-commerce, fintech, logistics, digital, food and telecoms, over 20 start-ups – including Twiga Foods, Kobo360, Flutterwave Technology Solutions, 54gene, Element, Paystack, Africa's Talking and Ringier (ROAM) – will come together at the forum. From all four corners of Africa, these unicorns with continental ambitions, who together managed to raise a total of almost \$600m over the past two years, will have the opportunity to showcase their respective expertise and business plans through a meet and greet session featuring influential CEOs and investors.

In parallel, a brand-new kind of session focused on sectoral outlook will give four African start-up entrepreneurs the chance to share their vision of the future of their sector through dynamic ten-minute presentations. This new format seeks to provide AFRICA CEO FORUM participants with a way to develop a better understanding of potential game-changing innovations in their respective business sectors.

The session will culminate in the announcement of the winner of the Disrupter of the Year award, which recognises the African start-up with the greatest growth potential. Six major start-ups at the forefront of innovation in fintech (Flutterwave Technology Solutions), health (54gene), solar energy (Fonroche Lighting and Daystar Power Group), financial inclusion (Baobab+) and e-commerce (Ringier One Africa Media) are in the running for the prestigious award bestowed during the AFRICA CEO FORUM AWARDS ceremony. The judging panel is made up of African tech experts and CEOs from influential companies, including: Samir Abdelkrim, founder of Emerging Valley and author of *Startup Lions: Au cœur de l'African Tech* ; Elisabeth Moreno, Managing Director of HP Africa; Elisabeth Medou-Badang, Senior Vice President and Spokesperson of Orange Middle East and Africa; Mohammed Dewji, CEO & President of MeTL; and Ife Oyedele II, the co-founder of Kobo 360 and previous recipient of the Disrupter of the Year award.

“Today, African start-ups have reached a new level of maturity. Now that they’ve become essential and indispensable, they’re taking a seat at the table of top African executives to actively participate in the continent’s economic transformation” Samir Abdelkrim, founder of Emerging Valley and author of *Startup Lions: Au cœur de l’African Tech*.

About the AFRICA CEO FORUM

Founded in 2012, the AFRICA CEO FORUM is an annual gathering of decision-makers from the largest African companies, as well as international investors, multinational executives, heads of state, ministers, and representatives of the main financial institutions operating on the continent.

As a platform for high-level business meetings and a place to share experiences and identify trends that affect the business world, the AFRICA CEO FORUM is committed to offering concrete and innovative solutions to help the continent and its companies move forward. Through its “Women in Business” and “Family Business” initiatives, it also aims to increase the representation of women in decision-making positions on the continent and to support the transformation of African family businesses.

Organised by Jeune Afrique Media Group, the AFRICA CEO FORUM also hosts the Women in Business Annual Leadership Meeting dedicated to women leaders, and in 2019 launched the Africa CEO Network, the most powerful and influential network of business leaders in Africa, to extend the AFRICA CEO FORUM experience year-round.

Information and registration: <https://bit.ly/2JwgbSn>

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