

CONFERENCE ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Speaker's Biography



Edwin Laurent, Commonwealth Secretariat

Edwin Laurent is Head of Trade and Regional Cooperation at the Commonwealth Secretariat. He has served in Saint Lucia's Ministry of Finance and as Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism. He has held a number of diplomatic postings including Permanent representative to the WTO, the FAO, the OPCW, and Ambassador to France, Germany and to Belgium. He was the first Eastern Caribbean States Ambassador to the EU and later the Windward Islands' Governments Special Envoy to the EU on bananas. Whilst in Brussels, he chaired various ACP Ambassadorial bodies, including the Committee on Trade and Commodities and was the lead Ambassadorial negotiator and spokesman on certain subjects. He was educated at the Universities of the West Indies, Manchester and the Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies in Washington D.C



Dr John Hancock, WTO

John Hancock works at the World Trade Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, where he has served as senior policy adviser to the Director-General, representative to the IMF and World Bank, and head of investment issues. He also co-ordinated the WTO's Aid-for-Trade initiative, and was secretary of the 2006 Task Force on the subject. Prior to the WTO, John was senior adviser to Canada's trade minister. He has also been a guest lecturer at Cambridge University, IMD, and the University of St Gallen. He holds a PhD in economic history from Cambridge, and has written and spoken frequently on international issues.



Abigail Noble, World Economic Forum

Head, Latin America and Africa at Swabs Foundation & World Economic Forum. Abigail began her career in management consulting, advising Fortune 500 companies on corporate strategy with Deloitte Consulting and conducting economic policy analysis for governments while at the Brattle Group. She has worked with governments in West and East Africa on rural economic development with the United Nations. More recently, she helped launch across 13 countries in Latin America the Pioneers of Prosperity program, an entrepreneurship awards competition designed to advance competitiveness and social impact. She has worked on the investment facilitation for social impact organizations, both non-profit and for-profit, through her work at Social Equity Venture Funds (SEVEN), New Profit Inc. and Fidelity Investments, as well as her volunteer work with microfinance organizations in Peru, Haiti and

India. She was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study democracy and economic development in Uruguay. She received her B.A. in Economics from Tufts University and her Master's in International Development (MPA/ID) from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.



Gibril Faal, AFFORD & GK Partners

Gibril Faal is currently a director of GK Partners – a UK-based company that advises socially responsible businesses on ethical business models, social enterprise, legal structures, ethical and Islamic finance, corporate responsibility etc. He is a board member of the EC-UN Joint Migration & Development Initiative based in Brussels and chairman of the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) – a charity which works to extend and enhance the role Diasporans play in African development. He is also the founder of RemitAid™ – a programme to transform remittances into a sustainable form of international development finance using tax reliefs and other macroeconomic policies.



Nick Rouse, FMFM, Standard Bank

Nick became Managing Director in May 2005 having worked for Barclays Bank for 33 years. His involvement with EAIF dates from the Fund's inception and he has been a member of the Credit Committee and Non-Executive Director since 2002. Nick had worked in Africa with Barclays for the 7 years preceding his appointment, initially running Barclays Corporate Business in East Africa and more recently as Head of Credit Risk for Africa and the Middle East.



William So, China Unicom Africa

Mr So commenced his career with China Netcom Group, a Chinese State-Owned Enterprise, in 2000 as the Head of International Operations. The company later merged with part of China Telecom, and later with China Unicom, thereby becoming one of the largest full telecom service providers in China. He held strategic management positions at the company headquarters in Beijing until 2007, when he was transferred to Hong Kong as the CEO for Asian and Middle East operations. In 2008, Mr So came to London as President of China Unicom (Europe) to oversee the group's operations in both Europe and Africa.

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Geetha Tharmaratnam, Aureos Capital

Geetha is a Principal - Investments & ESG. She joined Aureos in London in July, 2008. Geetha is the Global Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Manager for Aureos Capital, coordinating the management of ESG issues through the lifecycle of the investments. In addition, she manages the Africa Health Fund Technical Assistance Facility, which provides funding to portfolio companies for capacity building projects and projects which enhance access to health goods and services for low income people. Geetha is passionate about private sector development in Africa and loves to travel. She joined Aureos because she believes that to change the world, to help bring development to our nations, you need to work with a team that is similarly motivated.



Dr Steward Iyala, CATFLD & South Bank University

Dr. Iyala Tam Stewart has considerable experience in teaching, research, accountancy and administration. Iyala has taught in Universities in Nigeria and the U.K.; and has held managerial positions in the private and public sectors. Dr Stewart is a Chartered Accountant, an Educationist and holds a PhD degree in Corporate Governance. He is actively involved in research at the Centre for Research in Accounting, Finance and Governance, London South Bank University. His research and consulting interests are in Accounting, Governance, Finance, Trade, Tourism, Small Business Management, Energy Economics, & Development Studies.



Linda Kalimba Gihana, Rwanda High Commission

Linda Kalimba Gihana is the First Councillor at the Rwandan High Commission, in charge of all international relations between the UK and Rwanda.



Wanja Michuki, Kenya High Commission

Wanja Michuki, the principal counsel for trade and economic affairs at the Kenya High Commission in London overseeing all trade and investment activities between UK and Kenya.



Hirut Zemene, Ethiopia High Commission

Hirut Zemene, currently the minister Counsellor for trade and Investment at the Ethiopian Embassy in the UK, coordinating and overseeing all trade and investment promotion activities between UK and Republic of Ethiopia.



Kevin Korgba, ETK Consulting

Kevin is a self-starter with a strong combination of excellent education, corporate work experience and an insatiable knack for setting up and developing businesses that share a single underlying principle – African development! Having worked on three different continents in the areas of IT, finance, education and consultancy, Kevin has a broad idea of the workings of the corporate and business environment. He set up his first company at the age of 20 dealing in marketing and sale of petroleum products to corporate bodies as well as individuals. He has since gone on to set up ETK Nigeria Ltd, an education consulting company set up to help bridge the gap between UK universities and Nigerians keen to study in the UK, a charity educating children in Africa called The BIG Foundation, which has currently awarded full scholarships to 10 children now in their third year of school, and most recently set up ETK Consulting UK with his business partner. He holds a BA (Hons) in Business Administration from the University of East London, an MSc in Global Banking & Finance from the European Business School London and an MBA from Webster Graduate School, London. Kevin is also an avid sportsman, amassing 13 trophies from his martial arts days and loves to keep fit by running and working out.



Eugene Nizeyimana, Sub-Saharan Consulting Group

Eugene is the Chief Operating Officer for Sub-Saharan Consulting Group. Prior to his appointment, worked as a business development advisor for UK & Africa at Innovation Intelligent Group. He is an entrepreneur with more than 10 years working experience from both private and public sectors including NGOs. He spent several years working in various posts, diverse institutions and companies in UK. Besides being born and brought up in Africa, has developed extensive economic development knowledge about the continent in various capacities in addition to his passion.

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Sarah Teacher, Africa Innovation Prize

Sarah Teacher works as director at Africa Innovation Prize and a trustee at Avonbrook Projects Abroad which she joined in 2009. Sarah is a graduate from Oxford and Cambridge University taking an MPhil in Development Studies. Prior to her studies, she was Director for Next Generation Philanthropy at the Institute for Philanthropy, working to promote effective giving in the UK and internationally. She has coordinated various Enterprise training programmes to graduate students at the universities in Rwanda over the past 2 year and passionate about university entrepreneurship development in Africa.



David Smith, British Africa Business Association (BABA)

David Smith MCAM, is the chairman of BABA, a marketing specialist, David also brings his experience from working with, as well as his memberships of The World Trade Centre - Chicago, The Commonwealth Business Council, The Chicago Land Chamber of Commerce, The Federation of Small Businesses, Business Network International, Business Link (UK), and the Association of Bi-National Chambers, in Florida.



Rita Spada, World Trade Centre London

Rita Spada, Chief Executive of World Trade Centre London, MD, Director and Non-Executive, entrepreneurial and strategic with a strong commercial and international business network, highly innovative with a proven record in driving rapid change in complex situations, business turnaround, maximising revenues and profitability through strategic change management, innovative marketing, including digital (multichannel), new business, product development and operational excellence. Over the past has had position managing multinational organisations including Business Result UK, HBS, MNT Africa, Multichoice Africa Ltd, ESKOM, Deloitte, Shell and Haskins.



Dr Chege Githiora, SOAS Africa Study Centre

Dr Chege Githiora, Chairman of the Centre of African Studies at SOAS, a professor linguistics, translator, and short story writer. He was born and raised in Kenya. He lived in Mexico for six years before proceeding to the U.S. In 1999 he graduated with his doctorate in Linguistics from Michigan State University. He taught Swahili at El Colegio de Mexico and at Boston University from 1998 to 2000 before taking up his current position at the University Of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) where he is the senior lecturer of Swahili.



Ida Horner, Ethnic Supplies

Ida is an advocate and social entrepreneur focusing on African women's financial independence and Poverty alleviation. Her company Ethnic Supplies supports women in the East African countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Madagascar by sourcing handmade handicrafts and fashion accessories from suppliers that support women to be financially independent or directly from established women's groups in rural locations. In addition she helps companies to source products in Africa through ethical means by connecting them to the relatives suppliers/producers in Africa and government officials if necessary. She is an excellent networker focused on the promotion of women owned businesses.



Adam Green, This is Africa, Financial Times

Adam Green, Senior Reporter at the Financial Times magazine 'This is Africa', a bimonthly publication. My writing has also been published in China Post, New Internationalist, the Middle East Institute, Foreign Policy in Focus, and IPS (all views in this blog are my own). I have published one novel called Satsuma Sun Mover, published by Lazy Gramophone Press and long-listed for the Dylan Thomas Prize for Young Writers. It has pictures by Carl Slater and it isn't too long. I also have a band called Blue Swerver whose album 'The Art of Collapsing' is freely available on the internet and Spotify