

Empowering Africa's women-led entrepreneurial business ecosystem

The 4th Africa Women Innovation and Entrepreneurship Forum (AWIEF) has announced its opening keynote speakers for the two-day event that aims to accelerate the growth of women-owned and women-led businesses for Africa's inclusive economic growth.



Organised under the theme *Unleashing Ideas: Innovation, Sustainability & Enterprise Growth*, AWIEF 2018 will take place 8-9 November at the Cape Town International Convention Centre (CTICC). AWIEF is a platform that sees global thought leaders, industry experts, policymakers, academics, development organisations, and investors gather to dialogue, connect, network, share, collaborate and transact in a combined effort to boost Africa's entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Taking the stage at the AWIEF conference on Thursday, 8 November, to deliver a trailblazing opening keynote, will be the former President of the Republic of Mauritius, Dr Ameenah Gurib-Fakim.

In 2015, Dr Gurib-Fakim was sworn in as the 6th President and the First Female President of the Republic of Mauritius. She was elevated to the Order of GCSK by the Government of Mauritius and received the Legion d'Honneur from the Government of France in 2016. Dr Gurib-Fakim was ranked by Forbes as the one of the World's 100 Most Powerful Women.

On the second day of the event, the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of University of Cape Town, Professor Mamokgethi Phakeng, will share high-level thought leadership in a keynote address. Prof Phakeng's commitment to academia and research extends beyond personal advancement. She was elected as a member of the Academy of Science of South Africa (ASSAf) in November 2007, an honorary member of the Golden Key International Honour Society in May 2009, and an honorary life member of the Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa (AMESA) in July 2009.

In addition to Dr Gurib-Fakim and Prof Phakeng, AWIEF has a line-up of other high-profile thought leaders, including: Josefa Leonel Correia Sacko, African Union Commissioner for Rural Economy and Agriculture; Basetsana Kumalo, executive chairman and CEO, Basetsana Woman Investment Holdings; Monica Geingos, First Lady of the Republic of Namibia; Cecilia Julin, Ambassador of Sweden to South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia; Barbara Makhubedu, chief financial officer, Shell Downstream South Africa; Michael Hailu, director, Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA), The Netherlands; Pat Thaker, editorial and regional director, Middle East and Africa, *The Economist*; Taki Netshitenzhe, executive director, Vodacom South Africa and chief officer, Corporate Affairs, Vodacom Group Limited and [more](#).

To register and attend #AWIEF2018, [click here](#).

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