

AFRICA SME FINANCE FORUM 2018

Harnessing Innovation

Nairobi, 14 - 16 May, 2018

Job creation and economic growth through private sector development have become primary areas of focus for policy makers around the world including Africa where around 20% of its 1.246 billion population are youth, aged between 15-24 years, and about two fifths of them are in the 0-14 age brackets. As more youth enter the workforce, they are known to face increasing difficulties in procuring employment. The traditional sources of opportunity, governments and large corporations, in general are not hiring at the same levels, if at all. As such, SMEs entrepreneurship is seen as an important option for creating sustainable livelihoods for this segment of the population.

Recent evidence also points to the importance of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in providing employment across countries. In addition to employing the largest number of people in aggregate, SMEs generate the most new jobs (Ayyagari et al., 2011).

But SMEs also face many challenges in day-to-day operations and to grow. Access to finance is often cited as one of the primary obstacles that affect SMEs disproportionately (Ayyagari et al., 2012).

The Africa SME Finance Forum 2018 aims to examine some of the key challenges faced by MSMEs in Africa, and explore innovative solutions, both regionally-grown and globally-grown, that promote sustainable growth of youth entrepreneurship and enhance access to financing for MSMEs.

The two days conference, despite its primary focus on Africa region, will feature global good practices and cutting edge innovations by bringing leading and successful innovators, internationally recognized experts, and successful practitioners to share their perspectives and experiences. The conference will be preceded by study visits to some of the institutions with remarkable innovations in serving SMEs clients.

May 14	Theme	Topics/ Speakers
	Study visits	UBER CBA EQUITY Bank (TBC)
- Evening	Cocktail reception	
May 15	Theme	Topics/ Speakers
7.45 - 8.45	Registration	
8.45 - 9.15	Welcome & Opening Remark	Matt Gamser, CEO, SME Finance Forum

9.15 – 9.45	Keynote – 1	Innovations: key to unlocking SME finance
9.45 – 10.15	Keynote – 2	The voice of MSMEs in Africa
10.15 – 10.45	Networking break	
10.45 – 12.15	Panel discussion	Supply chain financing: winning strategies in digital age
12.15 – 13.30	Lunch break	
13.30 – 14.45	Panel discussion	Leapfrogging development through innovation: showcasing successful innovation partnership btw banks and fintechs
14.45 – 16.00	Fintech demos	Presenting emerging innovative tech solutions
16.00 – 16.15	Networking break	
16.15 – 17.30	SME finance marketplace/ speed dating session	
18.00 – 20.30	Gala Dinner + keynote	
May 16	Theme	Topics/ Speakers
8.00 – 9.15	Panel discussion	SME banking in the digital era
9.15 – 10.15	Parallel breakout session/ Workshop 1	SME & ecommerce
	Parallel breakout session /workshop 2	Youth entrepreneurship finance
	Parallel breakout session /workshop 3	Bridging the last mile in SME financing
10.15 – 10.45	Networking break	
10.45 – 12.00	Panel discussion	Banking on women: beyond ROI
12.00 – 13.00	Lunch break	
13.00 – 14.15	Plenary discussion	Innovations in Agri-finance
14.15 – 15.30	Plenary discussion	Regulatory sandbox: accelerating innovation

15.30 – 16.00	Networking break	
16.30 – 17.00	Parallel breakout session/ Workshop 1	Digital credit scoring / RM: roles of alternative data in SME banking
	Parallel breakout session /workshop 2	NFS: beyond financing
	Parallel breakout session /workshop 3	Leveraging big data and AI to enhance financial services
17.00 – 17.30	Closing	Cheikh O. Seydi, Director, Sub-Saharan Africa Department, Eastern and Southern Africa Hub, IFC (TBC)

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