



Dear <<First Name>> ,

Thank you to everyone who joined us at our annual UNGA event! Since our first gathering in 2019, our events have become key platforms for impactful discussions, bringing together policymakers, industry leaders and innovators to tackle pressing global issues, and build stronger connections between the continent and global diaspora.

Our journey has been one of growth and determination. From our early discussions championing the acceleration of Black women into leadership to Africa's role in addressing global challenges, and the importance of women's leadership and Africa's youth in an ever- evolving world, our mission has always been to ensure that African and diaspora voices— especially those of youth and women—remain central in global conversations.

Returning to the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice, where it all began, was a full-circle moment, and a reminder of how far we've come.



## Forward Africa Leaders Symposium 2024

In collaboration with Convene Africa, Development Bank Ghana, and other esteemed partners, Africa Soft Power and African Women on Board hosted the Forward Africa Leaders Symposium, focusing on two critical themes: shared prosperity through remittances, and a unified digital economy for Africa. These conversations were led by influential voices at the forefront of financial technology and services in Africa and the diaspora, underscoring the importance of collaboration, innovation, and forward-thinking policy as key drivers of sustainable growth across the continent. We are incredibly grateful to our distinguished speakers, whose insights fueled such thought-provoking conversations. The bold discussions and insights shared will undoubtedly influence Africa's economic trajectory.

### Symposium Highlights

#### ***Building the foundations of innovation through policy***

We had the distinct honour of welcoming **His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo**, President of Ghana, who delivered a compelling keynote address emphasizing the critical role of sound policy in unlocking the potential of digital technology. "To truly harness the power of digital technology, we must start with a solid foundation—policy. Good policies foster innovation, drive business growth, and give people access to services that enhance their lives," he stated. His message perfectly aligned with the event's focus on policy as a cornerstone for Africa's technological and economic advancement.



*H.E. Nana Akufo-Addo, President of Ghana*

#### ***Unlocking Africa's potential through remittances***

Our first panel, "Windows of Opportunity: Innovating for Shared Prosperity through Remittances and Global Connections," delivered powerful insights into how remittances are reshaping Africa's economic landscape. Panelists highlighted remittances as a critical lifeline for millions, driving not just economic resilience but also new opportunities for

financial inclusion and entrepreneurship across the continent.

The discussion emphasized the urgent need for innovative regulatory frameworks that can fully capitalize on the billions flowing into Africa each year. By creating a streamlined ecosystem for financial transactions, Africa can turn remittances into a game-changer for sustainable growth.

Collaboration was a key theme, with panelists calling for governments, multilateral organizations, and financial institutions to work in tandem. Harmonizing regulations, scaling digital payment platforms, and enhancing cross-border partnerships were pinpointed as the next frontier in unlocking Africa's growth potential and driving its economic transformation.



L - R: **Anita Erskine**, CEO, **Anita Erskine Media** (Moderator); **Oluwabankole Falade**, Chief Regulatory and Public Policy Officer, **Flutterwave**; **Gakii Mwongera**, Director of Mobile Financial Services, **Ericsson**; **Benjamin Fernandes**, CEO, **Nala**; **Faheen Allibhoy**, Managing Director & Global Head for Multilateral & Development Institutions, **JP Morgan**

### ***Powering Africa's digital future***

Our second panel, “Cross-sector Collaborations: Investing in Critical Digital Public Infrastructure and Strategic Partnerships to Advance a Unified Digital Economy,” sparked a compelling discussion on how strategic alliances can fast-track Africa's digital revolution. Panelists underscored the groundbreaking potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), particularly in driving mobile money interoperability across borders—an innovation that could unleash unprecedented economic growth.

With Africa poised to lead the next wave of global digital innovation, the panel emphasized the urgent need for sustained investment in digital infrastructure. From creating robust public-private partnerships to scaling critical technology platforms, the future of Africa's digital economy hinges on bold action and collaboration at every level. The message was



clear: Africa's digital transformation is not just an opportunity—it's an imperative for the continent's prosperity in the 21st century.



L - R: **Innocent Isichei**, CEO, **ACIOE Associates** (Moderator); **Dr. Amany Asfour**, President, **Africa Business**

**Council**; **Ebenezer Twum Asante**, Senior Vice President, Markets, **MTN Group**; **Osaruyi Orobosa-Ogbeide**, Senior

Vice President & Head, Project Development, **Africa Finance Corporation (AFC)**

### ***Youth at the heart of innovation***

**Wamkele Mene**, Secretary-General of the AfCFTA Secretariat, delivered an inspiring call to action, emphasizing the critical role of Africa's youth in the continent's digital transformation. "We must take concrete steps to empower young people, who are driving digital innovation, to actively participate in the implementation of AfCFTA," he urged.



**H.E. Wamkele Mene**, Secretary General, **AfCFTA Secretariat**

### ***The importance of connectivity for data interoperability***

Our fireside chat, "Towards Economic Integration: Harnessing the Power of Data Interoperability," was an engaging conversation between two policymakers and a private sector leader. They emphasized the crucial role of mobile network operators, highlighting

how government-private sector collaboration is key to enabling seamless trade, accessible financial services, and driving economic growth across regions.



L - R: **H.E. Wamkele Mene**, Secretary General, **AfCFTA Secretariat**; **Joy Kategekwa**, Director, Regional Integration, **AfDB Group** (Moderator); **Peter Ndegwa**, Group CEO, **Safaricom Group**

### Check out Event Highlights!

Relive moments from the event and [explore the photo gallery here](#). For guests who joined us, please feel free to post photos from our gallery with your thoughts on social media and tag @africasoftpower & @awb.network. For your convenience, here's a caption template you can tweak to your own voice:

- *Honoured to have been part of the #ForwardAfricaLeadersSymposium hosted by @africasoftpower & @awb.network during #UNGA2024! It was inspiring to engage in conversations around remittances, a unified digital economy for Africa, and the power of cross-sector collaborations. Looking forward to seeing the impact of these discussions across the continent and beyond!*

### Explore the photo gallery

### Looking Ahead

For those who were unable to attend the event, we'll be sharing a post-event Insights Report capturing the key takeaways and reflections. Stay tuned to our social media: @africasoftpower & @awb.network for more information and updates in the coming weeks. If you'd like to share your thoughts on the event or engage us on future programming and initiatives, we would love to hear from you! Send an email to:

[asp@theafricasoftpowerproject.com](mailto:asp@theafricasoftpowerproject.com) or [awb@africanwomenonboard.org](mailto:awb@africanwomenonboard.org)

Thank you for being a part of this incredible journey and for your continued support in amplifying African and diaspora voices.

Warm regards,

**Nkiru Balonwu**

Chief Executive, Africa Soft Power Group



Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).