



U.S. TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

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RWANDAN PRESIDENT PAUL KAGAME OPENS USTDA CONFERENCE ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE IN AFRICA

USTDA Commits Over \$1.1 Million to Support the Development of Africa's ICT Sector

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Promoting a dialogue on the development of the information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure necessary to support Africa's economic development is the focus a USTDA-sponsored conference that opened today at the Hilton Hotel in the San Francisco Financial District. The event, which continues through March 21st, attracted participation by approximately 200 participants, including [His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda](#), and His Excellency Jean Eyeghe Ndong, Prime Minister of Gabon, as well as 8 Ministers and more than 35 other senior government officials from 17 other African nations.

“Information and communications infrastructure is an important foundation for economic growth and development, providing the private sector with the connection it needs to compete in the global economy,” said USTDA Director Thelma J. Askey in remarks at today's opening plenary. “This technology also strengthens democratic institutions by increasing transparency and empowering citizens. Each of the countries at this conference has taken steps to create the right conditions for private industry to enter the market with the solutions necessary for this sector to serve as a catalyst in Africa's development.”

Reflecting the U.S. government's commitment to the development of this essential sector in Africa, Director Askey announced USTDA's commitment to provide \$258,350 in support of regional training for ICT leaders across Africa at the U.S. Telecommunications Training Institute (USTTI). Following the opening plenary, Director Askey also signed separate grant agreements, totaling \$900,000, to determine the feasibility of national ICT backbone network projects in Tanzania and Burkina Faso. [Additional information on the training program announcement and the grants signings is contained in a separate fact sheet.](#)

Under the theme *Sub-Saharan Africa Information and Communications Technology Conference: Solutions for a Vibrant ICT Market*, African project sponsors at this week's conference are providing U.S. company representatives with details on new export and investment opportunities associated with more than two dozen projects ranging in value from \$1 million to \$200 million. Participating countries at the event include Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo, Ethiopia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda.

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The projects being presented include telecommunications network expansion, fiber networks, submarine communications systems, rural connectivity solutions, telecommunications operator licenses, advanced media services, as well as e-government solutions for health, education and postal services. The conference agenda is also addressing key policy issues and highlighting efforts to expand telecommunications infrastructure, improve delivery of government services, and support the growth of e-commerce.

In addition to Director Askey and President Kagame, the Honorable David A. Gross, U.S. Coordinator for International Communications and Information Policy also presented remarks at the opening plenary. Prime Minister Ndong is expected to make remarks at the luncheon on March 20th.

USTDA is pleased to partner with key players in the ICT sector including the following sponsors: Motorola, Cisco Systems, Hewlett Packard, QUALCOMM, Alcatel-Lucent, Oracle, iDirect Technologies, Google and Telecom/Telematique, Inc. Each of these partners will share their perspective on ICT development and how different solutions may benefit the long-term growth of the African continent.

Other participants at the event include representatives of the U.S. Departments of State and Commerce, the U.S. Agency for International Development, and Sub-Saharan African companies interested in partnering with U.S. firms. Officials from international lending institutions, including the Export-Import Bank of the United States and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, are also present to discuss loan and insurance programs available for ICT exports and investment.

The U.S. Trade and Development Agency advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The agency funds various forms of technical assistance, early investment analysis, training, orientation visits and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment. USTDA's strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support sound investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment and sustainable economic development. In carrying out its mission, USTDA gives emphasis to economic sectors that may benefit from U.S. exports of goods and services.

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[Remarks by His Excellency Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda](#)

[Fact Sheet on USTDA-Funding Commitments at the Sub-Saharan Africa Information and Communications Technology Conference: Solutions for a Vibrant ICT Market](#)