

For Editors and Correspondents

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PRESS RELEASE



MANDELA WASHINGTON FELLOWSHIP FOR YOUNG AFRICAN LEADERS

Young Leaders from 14 East African Countries Converge on Nairobi

U.S. Fellowship Conference Explores Youth Role in Africa's Development and Prosperity

NAIROBI, Monday, June 20, 2016 – Over 100 rising young East African leaders met in Nairobi, Kenya from June 15–17, 2016 to discuss the role of youth in driving sustainable development and a prosperous future for Africa. Discussions focused on inclusive development, innovation and entrepreneurship, and peace and security.

In support of U.S. President Barack Obama's [Mandela Washington Fellowship](#) for Young African Leaders, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and IREX organized the East Africa Regional Conference. It emphasized how Fellows can live by example, mobilize resources, and build inclusive societies to achieve the United Nations' Global Goals for Sustainable Development. As leading community activists, social entrepreneurs, and public servants, the Fellows also discussed the importance of giving back as young leaders, Nelson Mandela's legacy, and strategies for achieving the African Union's Agenda 2063.

Ambassador (Eng.) Mahboub M. Maalim, Executive Secretary, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), urged the Fellows to contribute to their countries' sustainable development. "Sustainable development is about today; it is about tomorrow; and it is about posterity," he said.

Ambassador Susan D. Page, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires to the African Union, stressed the Fellows' role in peacebuilding. "Africa's rise requires Mandela Washington Fellows' commitment to building peace and fighting violent extremism," she said.

Speakers also included Ambassador Robert F. Godec, U.S. Ambassador to Kenya; Dr. Joseph Chilengi, Presiding Officer, Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), African Union; Dr. Tina Dooley-Jones, Deputy Mission Director, USAID/Kenya and East Africa; and Sahm Venter, Senior Researcher, Nelson Mandela Foundation.

Over the three-day conference, Fellows showcased their projects and ideas to partners from the private and nonprofit sectors at the conference's "Pitch Competition," sponsored by TRUE Africa, M-KOPA Solar, Deloitte, Satguru Travel, and CareerCore. [Amina Shaaban](#), a Fellow from

Tanzania, received first place for her project, Trash2Treasure, which recycles trash while simultaneously creating sustainable jobs for youth, reducing methane and carbon emissions, and encouraging organic farming.

“I have come up with a business model that aims to solve youth unemployment, particularly of those living in urban slums, by combining business goals with environmental goals,” she said.

The [Mandela Washington Fellowship](#) brings hundreds of young African professionals from across the continent to U.S. universities for leadership training in business and entrepreneurship, civic leadership, or public management.

The East Africa Fellows represented 14 countries – Burundi, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Closing the conference, Ambassador Godec noted the need for collaboration in addressing the issues of development and prosperity in Africa, stating, “In today’s interconnected world, important conversations and debates cannot happen in isolation. The combination of our backgrounds and experiences is what gives us strength...”

[Photos](#) and [video](#) from the conference are available online.

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