AMCHAM BUSINESS SUMMIT

U.S. - EAST AFRICA TRADE & INVESTMENT FORUM

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES PANEL

AFRICAN STORIES ON GLOBAL PLATFORMS

REPORT AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS



THE SUMMIT FOCUS

Building on the momentum of previous editions of the U.S. - East Africa trade and investment summit, our platform brings together influential decision makers, facilitates direct business-to-business engagement, and fosters constructive private-sector led dialogue with the public sector and development partners. Our unwavering focus is on expanding markets, catalyzing business growth, and driving job creation and economic prosperity across borders.

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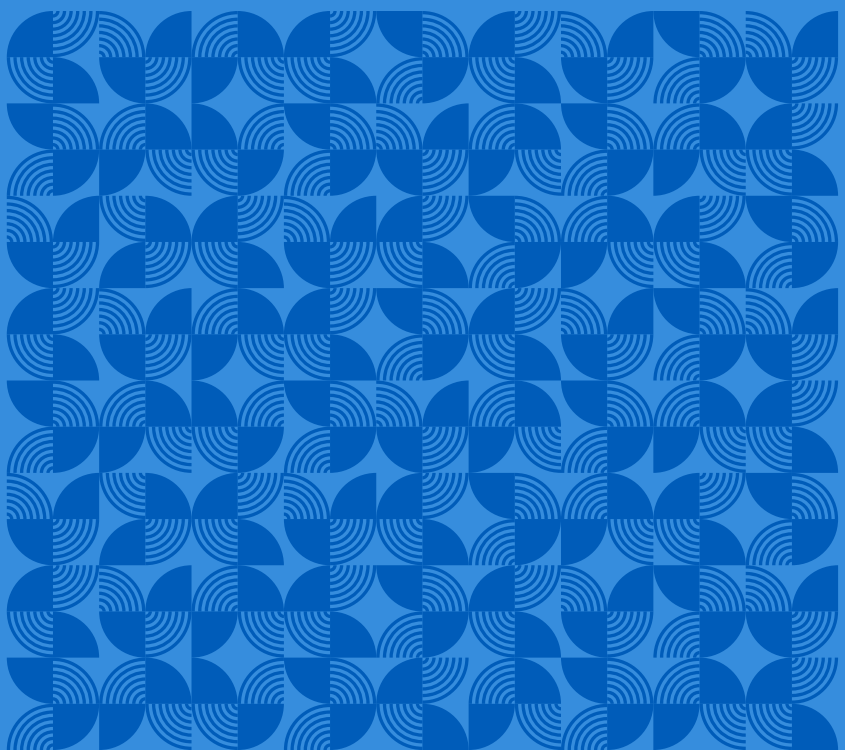
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AFRICAN STORIES

ON GLOBAL PLATFORMS



AFRICAN STORIES ON GLOBAL PLATFORMS

IP RIGHTS, REVENUE AND GLOBAL VALUE CAPTURE

At the AmCham Business Summit 2026, the creative economy emerged as a high-potential growth sector, with industry leaders calling for greater recognition of Africa's creative and cultural industries as investable economic assets. Moderated by Richard Kiplagat, Managing Director at Africa Practice, the session explored how film, music, sports and live entertainment can generate jobs, investment and global revenues when supported by appropriate capital, infrastructure, intellectual property protection and enabling policy frameworks.



MODERATOR

Richard Kiplagat

Managing Director,
Africa Practice



Nicky Weinstock

CEO,
Invention Studios

FROM CREATIVE POTENTIAL TO INVESTABLE ASSETS

Nicky Weinstock, CEO of Invention Studios, highlighted the growing connections between African and U.S. creative industries and the increasing international recognition of African content. He cited My Father's Shadow becoming the first Nigerian film selected for competition at the Cannes Film Festival, followed by Clarissa, another Nigerian production that received a 10-minute standing ovation at Cannes and is scheduled for theatrical release in December.

These milestones illustrate the commercial and cultural potential of African creative content when connected to global platforms, audiences and investment networks. The emergence of financing vehicles such as the African Export-Import Bank's $1 billion Pan-African Film Fund, which has made its first investment in Clarissa, also points to a growing recognition of creative works as viable investment assets.

Weinstock called for mainstream financial institutions and investment firms to view creative entertainment alongside established investment sectors, arguing that the industry can deliver both financial returns and broader economic and cultural value.

"Let's invest in creative entertainment as an emerging and powerful industry along the same lines as other sectors like oil, gas, infrastructure, mining or minerals."

BUILDING THE CONDITIONS FOR CREATIVE INVESTMENT

The panel examined the structural conditions required to attract capital, retain value and enable African creative businesses to scale internationally. Participants identified limited venue infrastructure, weak intellectual property enforcement, gaps in talent development, fragmented markets and the high cost of moving people and production equipment across borders as significant constraints. The discussion underscored that talent alone cannot create a globally competitive creative economy. Sustainable growth requires an ecosystem in which intellectual property can be protected and monetized, creative enterprises can access appropriately structured financing, infrastructure can support regular commercial activity, and artists and production companies can operate more seamlessly across African markets.



Wakiuru Njuguna
Managing Director,
HEVA Fund

UNLOCKING AFFORDABLE CAPITAL THROUGH INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Wakiuru Njuguna, Managing Director of HEVA Fund, emphasized the need for affordable, appropriately structured capital across the creative-business lifecycle, from early-stage enterprises to established companies seeking to scale.

She identified intellectual property as one of the sector's most significant assets, while noting that financial institutions often lack the frameworks needed to recognize, value and monetize creative IP. Weak enforcement further limits creators' ability to generate sustainable revenues and reduces investor confidence.

A stronger IP ecosystem would therefore serve both creators and investors: enabling artists and creative businesses to capture more value from their work while providing financiers with greater visibility into revenue streams and potential returns. Strengthening IP protection and developing financing models suited to creative businesses were identified as critical steps toward unlocking institutional capital.

INFRASTRUCTURE AS A FOUNDATION FOR SCALE

Panos A. Panay, President of The Recording Academy, emphasized that Africa's challenge is not a shortage of creative talent, but the infrastructure, policy frameworks and skills required to convert that talent into sustainable businesses and globally competitive industries.

Live entertainment emerged as a particularly significant opportunity. While demand for African artists is growing, inadequate venue infrastructure, fragmented markets and cross-border constraints make continental touring more difficult and expensive than in established global markets.



Panos A. Panay
President,
Recording Academy

Panay argued that Africa needs a network of quality venues capable of supporting sustained touring and commercial activity, rather than relying primarily on one-off performances. He also called for a more integrated approach to creative-economy development, recognizing the connections between music, film, sport, technology, infrastructure, education and policy.

This extends to the design of creative infrastructure itself. Multipurpose facilities capable of hosting concerts, sporting events and other forms of entertainment can generate more consistent utilization, broaden revenue streams and improve the commercial viability of large-scale investment.

SPORT AS A CATALYST FOR INVESTMENT AND GLOBAL VISIBILITY

Clare Akamanzi, CEO of NBA Africa, illustrated the wider economic impact of multipurpose infrastructure through Kigali's BK Arena. Although the venue was initially developed with basketball and the Basketball Africa League (BAL) at its core, BAL now accounts for approximately 25% of the arena's revenue, with concerts and other events generating the majority.

Over four years, BAL operations generated an estimated $22 million in GDP impact and 37,000 jobs across Rwanda and other host markets. The experience demonstrates how sports infrastructure can create economic value well beyond the sporting event itself, supporting entertainment, tourism, employment and international investment.



Clare Akamanzi
CEO,
NBA Africa

Akamanzi also highlighted the role of globally credible infrastructure in strengthening a country's ability to attract major international events.

Rwanda's investment in BK Arena and its broader sports ecosystem has helped position the country for opportunities including the 2025 UCI Road World Championships, the first edition of the global championship to be held in Africa.

The experience demonstrates how strategic investment in sports infrastructure can strengthen global visibility while creating platforms for local enterprise, talent development and tourism.

BUILDING THE CREATIVE TALENT PIPELINE



Peter Griffin
Senior Vice President of Venues, Live Nation

Peter Griffin, Senior Vice President of Venues at Live Nation, emphasized that major arenas must be complemented by a strong network of smaller, professionally managed venues. These spaces provide the development pathway through which emerging artists can build audiences, refine their craft and progress toward larger commercial performances.

The rise of social media has shortened the path between emerging talent and global audiences, making it increasingly important to establish a connected venue ecosystem that can support artists at different stages of their careers.

Investment should therefore extend from grassroots clubs and performance spaces to major arenas, creating a more continuous pipeline for talent development, audience growth and commercial opportunity.

DATA AS THE NEXT FRONTIER OF SPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT VALUE

Stephen Domingo, Founder and CEO of Okapi Sports Inc., highlighted data as an increasingly important but underdeveloped asset in African sports. Better data on audiences, attendance, player performance, and consumer behavior can strengthen media-rights strategies, improve fan engagement, and give investors the commercial intelligence required to assess opportunities.

"Every single answer to how we continue to develop the ecosystem lies in the data around it."

For Domingo, understanding and monetizing audiences is central to building sustainable sports businesses. Okapi Sports is applying this approach as it expands beyond Kenya and Rwanda into additional African markets, demonstrating the potential for data-driven models to unlock new sources of commercial value.



Stephen Domingo
Founder and CEO, Okapi Sports Inc.

The discussion reinforced a broader shift in how Africa's creative economy is being understood: from a conversation primarily about talent and cultural influence to one centered on intellectual property, infrastructure, data, investment and global value capture.

Unlocking the sector's full economic potential will require the same strategic attention afforded to other growth industries, supported by fit-for-purpose financing, stronger IP protection, investable infrastructure, integrated regional markets and the data capabilities needed to connect African creative talent with global audiences and revenues.

KEY OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

01

Position the creative economy as a strategic investment sector
Africa's creative and cultural industries should be recognized as significant economic assets with the potential to generate investment, employment, entrepreneurship and global revenues, warranting investment attention comparable to established sectors such as energy and mining.

02

Scale structured financing for creative enterprises
Growing recognition of film, music and sports as bankable assets presents an opportunity to develop dedicated financing instruments and investment structures that enable creative businesses to access capital and scale sustainably.

03

Strengthen intellectual property protection and value capture
Intellectual property is the foundation of the creative economy and must be better protected, valued, and monetized. Stronger enforcement and clearer frameworks for IP-backed financing are essential to improving creator earnings and strengthening investor confidence.

04

Invest in infrastructure that enables creative industries to scale
Expand the ecosystem of multipurpose arenas, live-event venues and smaller performance spaces, alongside supporting digital infrastructure, to create sustainable revenue opportunities, nurture talent and maximize the commercial utilization of creative assets.

05

Deepen regional integration of Africa's creative economy
Reduce barriers to the movement of artists, production teams and equipment across African markets to enable touring, collaboration and cross-border production, creating a more integrated and commercially viable continental creative ecosystem.

06

Harness data to unlock new models of commercial value
Strengthen data and digital capabilities across sports and entertainment to better understand audiences, enhance fan engagement, monetize media rights and generate the insights required to attract commercial and institutional investment.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

01

Establish a dedicated financing framework for the creative economy
Develop financial and regulatory frameworks that enable banks, investment funds and other capital providers to recognize intellectual property, royalty streams and other creative assets as viable bases for financing, expanding access to capital across the creative-business lifecycle.

02

Strengthen intellectual property protection and investor safeguards
Enhance IP enforcement and establish appropriate investor-protection mechanisms that give creators greater ability to monetize their work while providing investors with the confidence and security required to finance creative assets.

03

Develop a connected ecosystem of multipurpose and grassroots venues
Invest in multipurpose arenas alongside a network of professionally managed small and mid-sized venues capable of supporting year-round programming, developing emerging talent and creating sustainable revenue streams for artists and creative enterprises.

04

Embed creative infrastructure within national development and investment planning
Integrate creative-economy infrastructure into national industrialization, urban-development and investment strategies to create commercially viable opportunities for private-sector participation and maximize the economic value of cultural and entertainment assets.

05

Facilitate the movement of talent and production equipment across African markets
Advance harmonized visa, customs and other mobility arrangements under the AfCFTA to reduce barriers to regional touring, filming, production and live events, enabling creative businesses to operate and scale across borders more efficiently.

06

Develop a digital-data strategy for sports and entertainment
Establish frameworks and digital infrastructure that enable the responsible collection, analysis and monetization of audience and fan data, strengthening media-rights revenues, commercial partnerships and evidence-based investment across the sector.

07

Build a future-ready creative-industry workforce
Expand skills development across film, music, sports, live entertainment and technology, with a focus on both creative and business capabilities, to build the talent, technical expertise and entrepreneurial capacity required for a globally competitive creative economy.

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