



PRESS RELEASE

Announcement date: 08 March 2021

Event go live: 21-22 April 2021

1ST COMMONWEALTH WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUMMIT LAUNCHED ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AND COMMONWEALTH DAY

On the first joint International Women's Day and Commonwealth Day for several years, the inaugural Commonwealth Women's Entrepreneurship Summit is launched. Held while the UK is Commonwealth Chair and G7 President, it will be a 2 day online conference focusing on women's entrepreneurship across emerging tech sectors.

Targeting policy makers, entrepreneurs, government agencies, entrepreneurship support organisations, funders, and educational institutions, it aims to frame and feed into key international meetings including CHOGM and the G7 which will be held within about 100 days of the Summit and the G20 and UNCTAD 15 later in 2021.

As WTO Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, said at her recent appointment, 'Ecommerce will help us to be more inclusive of women' and as the G20 said in December 2020, there is 'a missed opportunity - to tackle the gap that needs immediate action, which is the representation of women in emerging fields.' The Commonwealth Women's Entrepreneurship Summit will address that need.

The event is being convened by the world's largest entrepreneurship community (Global Entrepreneurship Network) which supports entrepreneurship ecosystems across 180 countries; the Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network (directly recognised by all 54 Commonwealth governments); the UK Government (Women in Innovation Network); and Africa's largest network of women entrepreneurs (AWEP: African Women's Entrepreneurship Program) which was established and supported during and by the Obama-Biden Administration.



worldlabs.org/cwesummit



The Summit will focus on how business is being transformed by emerging tech areas such as fintech, createch, edtech, biotech, cleantech and agritech, how women from diverse backgrounds are and can be such a key part of this innovation ecosystem and how governments and industry can help to make this happen. Three of the partners already host their communities on the WorldLabs innovation ecosystem platform which we aim to leverage to drive involvement before, during and after the event.

Women entrepreneurs from across the Commonwealth are being invited to create a short 60sec video sharing their experiences as entrepreneurs providing inspiring and challenging on the ground accounts. The campaign called Heroine Stories will be shown during the Summit and made available to worldwide audiences through social media. This is the most innovative project involving women entrepreneurs, schools and universities in the Commonwealth's history and will be a powerful legacy of the Summit.

The Summit will feature some of the world's leading experts on women's entrepreneurship and fast-growing tech sectors from Fintech to Edtech, Healthtech to Agritech. Details of speakers and sessions will be released soon. The Summit registration site is live now and will provide the latest updates regarding the programme and activities as we countdown to the conference.

Link to [Summit website](#)

Quotes

HE Jane Marriott, British High Commissioner to Kenya

"I'm delighted that today is a double celebration as we mark both International Women's Day and Commonwealth Day. As we #choosetochallenge discrimination against women in all walks of life, it is fantastic to see initiatives that give women the chance to chart their own path. The 2021 Commonwealth Women's Entrepreneurship Summit is one of the ways countries can be a part of that change, by creating a strong business environment for female entrepreneurs. Today, we celebrate their success, and those who challenge the status quo and champion inclusivity."

HE Eric Kneeder, US Chargé d'Affaires and Acting Ambassador to Kenya:-

"Congratulations to the Commonwealth Women's Entrepreneurship Summit for convening on the important topic of women's entrepreneurship, appropriately launched on International Women's Day.

COVID-19 has disrupted and damaged economies around the world, with women and girls among the hardest hit by the pandemic's economic toll. The United States recognizes the resilience of women to persevere through the crisis but also their potential to drive economic recovery where they live, if given the right tools. We know that communities and families thrive when women are economically empowered, enabling them to re-invest and produce a multiplier effect that spurs economic growth and contributes to global peace and





stability. The United States understands that women have the entrepreneurial ideas and passion, but still lack access to markets, capital, training, and digital tools.

We support programs and projects to address these issues such as the Kenya Investment Mechanism (KIM), a financial ecosystem to mobilize capital for Kenya's agricultural and clean energy sectors, especially for women and youth-led businesses that typically have difficulty gaining access to the capital needed to grow their businesses. KIM supports women entrepreneurs by co-creating new credit products that address the persistent gender gaps in financial services. Through USAID, we support women conservation leaders in Kenya spearheading the fight against climate change and creating solutions in their communities for economic recovery from COVID-19. We provide grassroots assistance to local women's groups and community organizations for projects encouraging self-reliance through the Ambassador's Special Self Help fund, and through the African Women's Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP). The US government empowers women entrepreneurs around the world, because you cannot achieve sustainable economic growth if half of the population is left behind.

We applaud summit participants on your work toward building a world in which women entrepreneurs can follow their dreams to success. The United States will continue to strive to empower women and build a more peaceful, inclusive, and prosperous world."

Freda Miriklis, Chair, Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network

"The Commonwealth's power and potential comes from its diversity – of people, communities and ideas. As we build back better, we must harness and harvest the imagination and innovation from the billion plus girls and women across our 54 countries. The 1st Commonwealth Women Entrepreneurs Summit aims to supercharge that journey."

Elaine Gold, Co-founder and Director, Global Entrepreneurship Network UK

"GEN UK is proud to be a foundation partner for the first the Commonwealth Women Entrepreneurs Summit and to support the growth of women in the tech sector throughout the Commonwealth. As part of a global network of over 180 countries, we are excited to bring together a programme of inspiring speakers and thought leaders."

Caroline Kendem Sack, Chair African Women Entrepreneurship Program (AWEP C.A)

"Bridging gaps across nations, developing constructive partnerships, erasing barriers to market access particularly throughout the African continent for African women entrepreneurs, these are the many challenges that make the Commonwealth Women Entrepreneurs Summit relevant for our network and the largest businesswomen's program in Africa."





Notes for Media

About GEN UK

GEN UK is a non-profit organisation set up to support and represent the entrepreneurial ecosystem across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, working with entrepreneurs, investors, policymakers, researchers, public bodies and support organisations. GEN has built a presence around the world integrating the work of governments and NGOs to create one global entrepreneurial ecosystem that is open to all. Our network of 'alternative embassies' in over [180 countries](#) enables us to connect UK organisations with the rest of the world.

<https://www.genuk.org>

About Commonwealth Businesswomen's Network

CBWN is a Community Interest Company and accredited organisation recognised by 54 governments across six continents, committed to advancing the Commonwealth Charter and SDG 5. This enables the organisation to advocate at all levels and promote inclusiveness. CBWN connects through a network of Ground Partners and with other Commonwealth organisations to influence policy, legislation, and to engage with global and national priorities across the world. It works with women in business to encourage, enable and embed women's economic empowerment and leadership potential through trade, talent and training. <http://cbwn.org>

About Women in Innovation

Innovate UK's Women in Innovation programme empowers pioneering female entrepreneurs to develop innovations. Delivered by KTN, the programme enables brilliant women to fully achieve their visions and change the world, while championing and celebrating gender diversity throughout UK innovation. KTN and Innovate UK work in collaboration to create a vibrant community of female role models, sharing knowledge and encouraging entrepreneurial growth for women throughout the UK.

<https://ktn-uk.org/programme/women-in-innovation/>

About AWEP

African Women Entrepreneurship Programme (AWEP) is an outreach, education, and engagement initiative that targets African women entrepreneurs to promote business growth and trade through training, mentorship, and access to finance. Established in 2010, the African Women Entrepreneurship Programme (AWEP) is sponsored by the United States Department of State (DOS) to help more women entrepreneurs participate in international markets and take advantage of the benefits of AGOA and other trade initiatives.

<https://exchanges.state.gov/non-us/program/african-womens-entrepreneurship-program-awep>





About WorldLabs

WorldLabs is a cutting-edge community, collaboration and innovation management platform that enables organisations to create centralised digital spaces in which to bring together stakeholders from across the innovation ecosystem. From within these digital spaces (or “communities”), users can network, team up with others, collaborate on projects, share resources and opportunities, showcase their start-ups, launch and apply for challenges, attend events, access funding, join interest groups, and seek advice and feedback.

Links to the Summit website and social media channels

CWE Summit website <https://www.worldlabs.org/cwesummit>

Twitter @cwesummit

Facebook @cwesummit

Instagram @cwesummit

LinkedIn

Hashtag #CWESummit

Images

Images of a selection of speakers and Summit branding are available upon request.

Contact

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