

# During President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa Mission to Kenya, Raimondo Highlights Public-Private Partnerships to Deepen Bilateral Commercial Ties & Announces Joint Statement on AI and Digital Upskilling

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*Secretary Raimondo led members of the President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa (PAC-DBIA) to Nairobi, where she underscored the impact of the [Commerce-wide Africa strategy](#) and highlighted numerous announcements and commercial deals that will strengthen bilateral commercial ties.*

*The U.S. Department of Commerce and Kenya's Ministry for Information, Communications and the Digital Economy announced a [Joint Statement](#) on Harnessing AI, Facilitating Data Flows, and Empowering Digital Upskilling.*

**NAIROBI, Kenya** – U.S. Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo announced and highlighted U.S. private sector commitments and public-private partnerships during an event at the AmCham East Africa Business Summit in Nairobi this week, where Raimondo led members of the President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa (PAC-DBIA).

Secretary Raimondo also announced two Department of Commerce initiatives, including collaboration with African partners on data protection, as well as an African Women Digital Leaders Training program, which will be funded separately by Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration bureau.

Raimondo was also joined by Minister Eliud Owalo, Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communications and the Digital Economy for Kenya, to announce a Joint Statement on Harnessing AI, Facilitating Data Flows, and Empowering Digital Upskilling.

"I chose Kenya for my first official trip to Africa because of the strength of our relationship and because there is so much more our two nations can do together," **said Secretary Raimondo**. "I brought with me members of the President's Advisory Council on Doing Business in Africa and representatives from the U.S. private sector to connect directly with Kenyan and African business leaders on the ground and demonstrate our commitment to action by announcing new and expanded programs across Africa. The Biden Administration is all in on Africa and the U.S. companies who participated in this trip share that same belief and optimism about the opportunities in Kenya and the continent."

Together, delegates participating in the mission announced numerous U.S. investments, creating educational and career opportunities and expanding access to critical internet infrastructure for communities in Nairobi, throughout Kenya, and across the African continent.

- **The U.S. Department of Commerce will pursue data protection collaboration with African partners.** The U.S. Department of Commerce has committed to undertake training and capacity building with African partners, focused on data transfers, cloud usage, enforcement cooperation, and the newly established Global Cross Border Privacy Rules Forum. Starting later this year, these initiatives will be tailored to the needs of African data privacy regulators, aiming to enhance skills, exchange knowledge, and empower African data privacy experts to establish interoperable data protection frameworks that benefit both Africa and the international community.

- **The U.S. Department of Commerce, through NTIA, will fund an African Women Digital Leaders Training program.** Echoing Vice President Harris' call to increase inclusivity in tech and in support of the key pillars of the [Women in the Digital Economy Initiative](#), NTIA will provide grant funding and work with the United States Telecommunication Training Institute (USTTI) to facilitate digital transformation with Africa by empowering and developing the next generation of women tech leaders and entrepreneurs on the continent. The African Women Digital Leaders Training Program will kick-off later this year in Washington, DC, with a follow-up event in Silicon Valley, with a focus on training, networking, and mentorship with U.S. tech sector leaders. The training will seek to build skills, share knowledge, and empower African women leaders in digital technology.
- **The U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) will fund a feasibility study to assess the viability of developing a cross-continent fiber backbone connecting the Atlantic and Indian Ocean coasts of Africa.** USTDA's grant, provided to Kenyan company CSquared, will also assess viability of establishing metro fiber networks in cities or towns along the backbone and creating fiber connections from the metro networks to towers, buildings, and homes. The countries through which the backbone will pass, and which will be assessed by the study, are Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. USTDA approved funding for this feasibility study in April 2024 and the study will be competed among U.S. firms.
- **USTDA will fund a feasibility study to assess the commercial and technical viability of deploying new fiber and tower infrastructure along the Meter Gauge Railway in Kenya.** The grantee of USTDA's funds, the [Wilken Group](#), will construct a wholesale open-access fiber optic network and a series of 5G-capable towers across approximately 1,172 kilometers of railway between the cities of Mombasa and Malaba. USTDA approved funding for this feasibility study in early March 2024 and the study will be competed among U.S. firms.
- **Baylis Emerging Markets announced private equity investments in fiber network construction and semiconductor fabrication capacity.**

  - Baylis, working with a technical partner, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Wilken Group to arrange the \$30 million financing and development of a 1,200km fiber optic network, with cell towers, along the railway from Malaba to Mombasa, providing new digital connectivity along this key corridor that connects the port city of Mombasa to the capital Nairobi.
  - Baylis also signed an MOU with [Semiconductors Technologies Limited \(STL\)](#) in Kenya announcing the launch of an up-to \$250 million fundraising effort to expand STL's existing semiconductor fabrication plant and research laboratory, introducing chip manufacturing capacity to Africa, de-risking and diversifying the global supply chain.
- **The National Basketball Triple Double: NBA Africa Startup Accelerator announced it will support Africa's tech ecosystem and the next generation of African tech entrepreneurs by providing them with access to mentorship and capital that will help drive growth in the sports and creative industries.** The accelerator is open to early-stage startups in Africa that develop solutions in event management and ticketing, youth development, AI, and digital marketing. Ten selected startups will be paired with mentors comprised of NBA Africa leadership and other corporate stakeholders, who will provide guidance to the companies with a focus on product development, business growth and go-to-market strategy.
- **Rendeavour announced its plans to expand high-speed fiber network to the surrounding local communities around Tatu City, including Ruiru, Africa's sixth fastest**

**growing town.** Tatu City's new high-speed internet business, called Fahari Link, will serve hundreds of thousands of people earning a daily wage of \$2-4, offering low connection fees, daily internet plans, as most cannot afford a monthly plan, and top-level customer service and technical support.

- **CISCO announced the launch of its first Cybersecurity Technology Experience Centre on the African continent.** The Experience Centre is part of Cisco's Country Digital Acceleration (CDA) initiative in Kenya and, in collaboration with Kenya's Information and Communication Technology Authority and the University of Nairobi, will offer cybersecurity training and awareness, including courses from [Cisco Networking Academy](#), one of the world's longest-running IT skills-to-jobs programs. It is designed to serve as a hub for cybersecurity training and a showcase of state-of-the-art cybersecurity solutions. In addition to offering cybersecurity training, the team operating the center will also help organizations create architecture blueprints and proofs of concept and do lab testing. The Experience Centre will use advanced technologies like artificial intelligence and virtual reality to equip government officials and the community with the skills and knowledge necessary to detect, prevent, and respond to cyber threats effectively.
- **Pfizer launched its "Living With" app to help reduce stigma and increase women's ability to learn about cancers, treatments, and ultimately living with cancer.** This was originally announced during Vice President Harris's trip to Africa in 2023, and today was the official launch of the app. Pfizer selected three countries to pilot the app in Africa--Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria – and has developed versions in both English and Swahili.
- **Qualcomm announced Echorich Solutions Limited as the recipient of the 2023 Qualcomm Wireless Reach Social Impact Fund, which aims to provide support and resources to the awarded startup company, enabling them to further advance their innovative initiatives.** Qualcomm also announced its second cohort of 10 startups for the 2024 Qualcomm's Make it in Africa (QMIA) program, which were selected from approximately 250 applicants across Africa.
- **Texas-based AST SpaceMobile, Inc. announced that it has begun testing its space-based low Earth orbit satellite constellation to deliver cellular broadband service in Kenya.** This is the company's first testing in Africa, and the second region tested outside the United States. AST SpaceMobile aims to close the global connectivity gap and digitally transform nations by offering affordable 5G broadband service from space for use with everyday smartphones.