TechPlomacy

Newsletter
November 2025



Building trust in the age of Intelligence

Amb. Philip Thigo, MBS
Office Of The Special Envoy on Technology

OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL ENVOY ON TECHNOLOGY

GAICA 2025
ABU DHABI AI SUMMIT

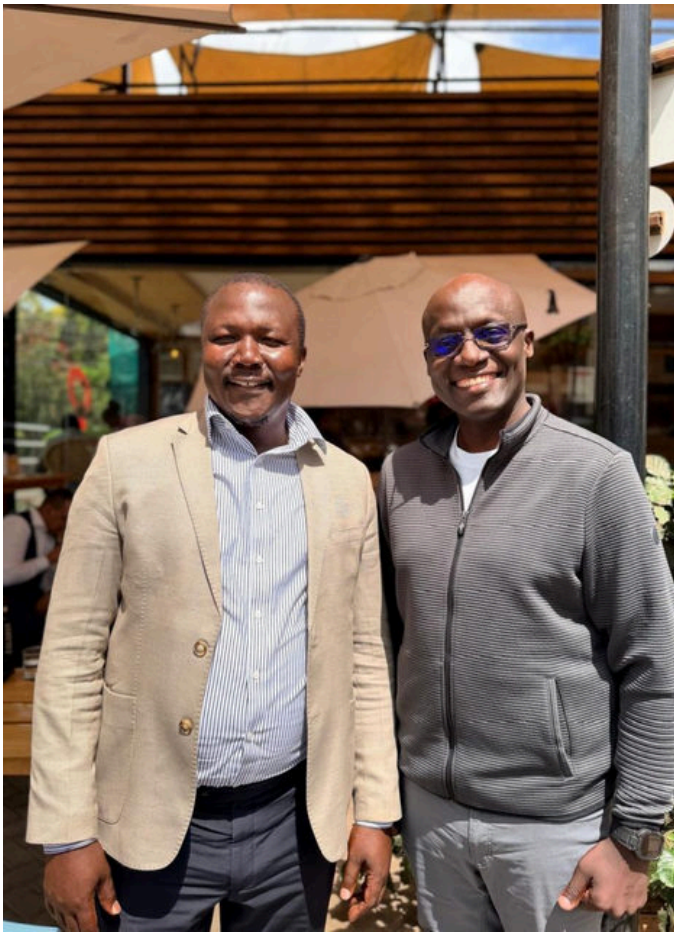
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An inspiring evening with Africa's next generation of Builders





Ambassador Philip Thigo spent an evening with Africa's next generation of builders at the Base Founders Fellowship Demo Day, showcasing the continent's emerging decentralized innovation ecosystem. Over just 10 days, 20 founders from six countries collectively transacted over $1 billion, brokered 30 partnerships and intros, engaged 4 global VCs, and saw one founder already funded. The Demo Day featured live pitches to leading investors including Andreessen Horowitz (a16z Crypto), Electric Capital, 1Confirmation, and CNGN Co., with the winning founder receiving an all-expenses-paid fellowship at Balaji Srinivasan's Network School. He then delivered keynote remarks ahead of Jesse Pollak, Head of Blockchain at Coinbase, whose vision for Base as an open, interoperable platform aligned with Africa's builder community. The event underscored President Ruto's leadership — from the Virtual Asset Service Providers Act to a regulatory environment that signals Kenya is open for innovation — and highlighted Eddie Kago's role as Base Growth Lead for East Africa in connecting African builders to global opportunity.



Digitisation to Intelligence: Reimagining Agriculture for the AI Era

Ambassador Philip Thigo met with the Deputy Country Director of FAO to reflect on Kenya's agricultural transformation journey and explore how artificial intelligence can accelerate progress across the food system. They revisited foundational reforms initiated under the leadership of H.E. President William Ruto and then CS Amb. Willy Bett — including digital agriculture, GODAN, and the Agricultural Transformation Office — as well as early contributions from partners who advanced farmer registries, food balance sheets, and market linkages.

The discussion focused on how Kenya can now build on this groundwork in the era of intelligence: using AI to boost farmer incomes, improve food balance systems, and strengthen data interoperability across value chains. The meeting highlighted that Kenya is well-positioned to advance a new phase of agricultural transformation driven by intelligent, inclusive, and resilient systems.

Reimagining Social Development in the Digital Age

The Office Of The Special Envoy on Technology participated in the Digital Cooperation Organisation (DCO) High-Level Policy Dialogue during the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in Doha, Qatar, where ministers, policymakers, and digital leaders examined how digital transformation underpins inclusive social and economic development. He emphasized that digital inclusion is now inseparable from social inclusion and highlighted the need to align the Global Digital Compact, WSIS+20, and WSSD so that global digital frameworks translate into concrete delivery. Sharing Kenya's experience in building sovereign AI capabilities, open data ecosystems, and inclusive digital public infrastructure, he underscored how digital cooperation can advance human development in practice, while expressing appreciation to the DCO and partners from Belgium, Morocco, and Nigeria for convening the dialogue.



Abu Dhabi Global AI Summit: Building Trust in the Age of Intelligence

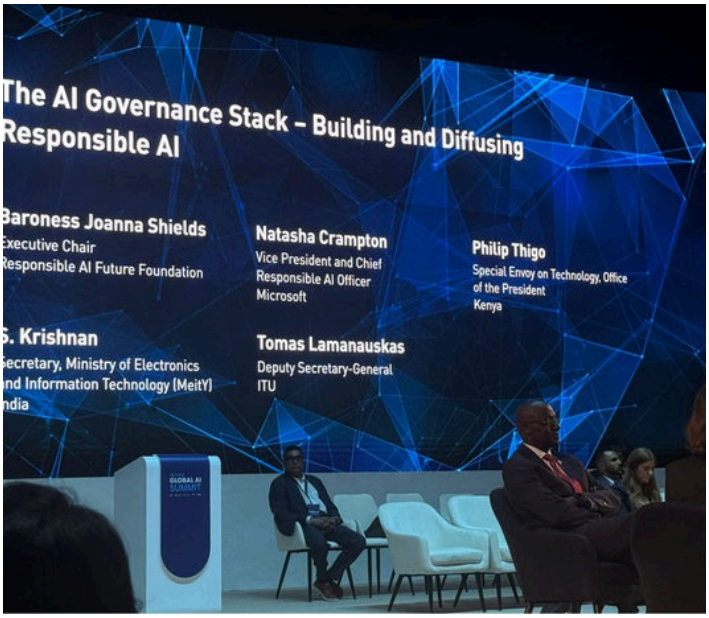
Ambassador Philip Thigo participated in the inaugural Abu Dhabi Global AI Summit, a high-level convening focused on the pillars of technology, talent, and trust in the age of intelligence. On the sidelines, he engaged fellow members of the UN High-Level Advisory Body on AI — including USG Amandeep Singh Gill, H.E. Omar Al Olama, and Natasha Crampton — on how countries can responsibly diffuse AI while safeguarding sovereignty, inclusion, and human dignity.

He also held rapid bilateral exchanges with Microsoft Vice Chair and President Brad Smith and India's MeitY Secretary S. Krishnan on practical pathways to advance the AI Governance Stack and scale responsible AI diffusion. Later, Amb. Thigo joined Baroness Joanna Shields, Natasha Crampton, S. Krishnan, and Tomas Lamanauskas (ITU) on a panel titled "The AI Governance Stack – Building and Diffusing Responsible AI," examining how to embed trust, accountability, and shared standards into next-generation AI systems.

The Summit, convened by the Responsible AI Future Foundation in partnership with G42, Microsoft and others, underscored a central message: while technology moves fast, trust and talent must move with it.







Advancing Innovative Finance and Risk Solutions for Africa



On the margins of the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in Doha, Ambassador Philip Thigo held a productive bilateral meeting with Mr. Elias Chedid, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy CEO of SEIB Insurance and Reinsurance Company and Chedid Re, one of the world's top 15 reinsurance brokers. The discussion focused on advancing innovation in finance, including risk management, insurance technology, and inclusive financial instruments that can strengthen resilience and investment across emerging markets.

He also welcomed the interest in exploring a presence in Kenya through the Nairobi International Financial Centre (NIFC), reinforcing Kenya's position as a strategic gateway for financial innovation and capital flows into the continent.

The engagement underscored the growing opportunities for Kenya–Qatar collaboration in driving sustainable, technology-enabled financing solutions that support Africa's next frontier of growth.

Strengthening Financial and Technological Ties Between Kenya and Qatar

Ambassador Philip Thigo moderated a landmark session marking the signing of the MoU between the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) and the Nairobi International Financial Centre (NIFC), a major step in deepening Kenya–Qatar collaboration in financial innovation, sustainable investment, and cross-border capital markets.

Graced by H.E. President Dr. William Ruto and Hon. (Dr.) Musalia Mudavadi, Prime Cabinet Secretary, the event reaffirmed Kenya's commitment to strategic financial and technological partnerships that position Nairobi as Africa's premier financial gateway.

The engagement also underscored growing collaboration between the Office of the Special Envoy on Technology (OSET) and NIFC, aligning Kenya's technology diplomacy with emerging opportunities in fintech, sovereign AI, and the wider digital economy.









Harnessing AI for Inclusive Social Development" at WSSD-2 in Doha

"At the Second World Summit for Social Development (WSSD-2) in Doha, Ambassador Philip Thigo co-hosted the side event "Harnessing AI for Inclusive Social Development" alongside the Club de Madrid, the Stimson Center, and Regulating AI. The discussion took place as the "age of intelligence" reshapes how societies plan, protect, and prosper, examining how people-centred, rights-based AI can strengthen social protection, mental health, and climate resilience.

Participants reflected on the Global Digital Compact (GDC) and the UN High-Level Advisory Body on AI, emphasizing that AI should be treated as a global commons built on shared enablers of data, compute, talent, safety, and governance. The dialogue underscored a clear call: AI must serve humanity and inclusion, not deepen hierarchy or competition.

The event concluded with a shared view that, if countries invest collaboratively in these digital commons through openness, equity, and shared stewardship, AI can function as a true public good—advancing justice, trust, and sustainable development. Appreciation was extended to the Club de Madrid and partners for helping bridge the Global Digital Compact and the social development agenda so that intelligence—human and artificial—remains a shared resource for global progress.

Advancing Digital Cooperation and Executive Skilling with the DCO

Ambassador Philip Thigo met with H.E. Deema Al-Yahya, Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), on the margins of the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) to review progress on Kenya's DCO membership and explore avenues for collaboration—particularly in executive-level digital skilling. The discussion underscored DCO's growing role in supporting member states through context-responsive digital capacity building and reaffirmed Kenya's commitment to strengthening partnerships that advance inclusive digital transformation.



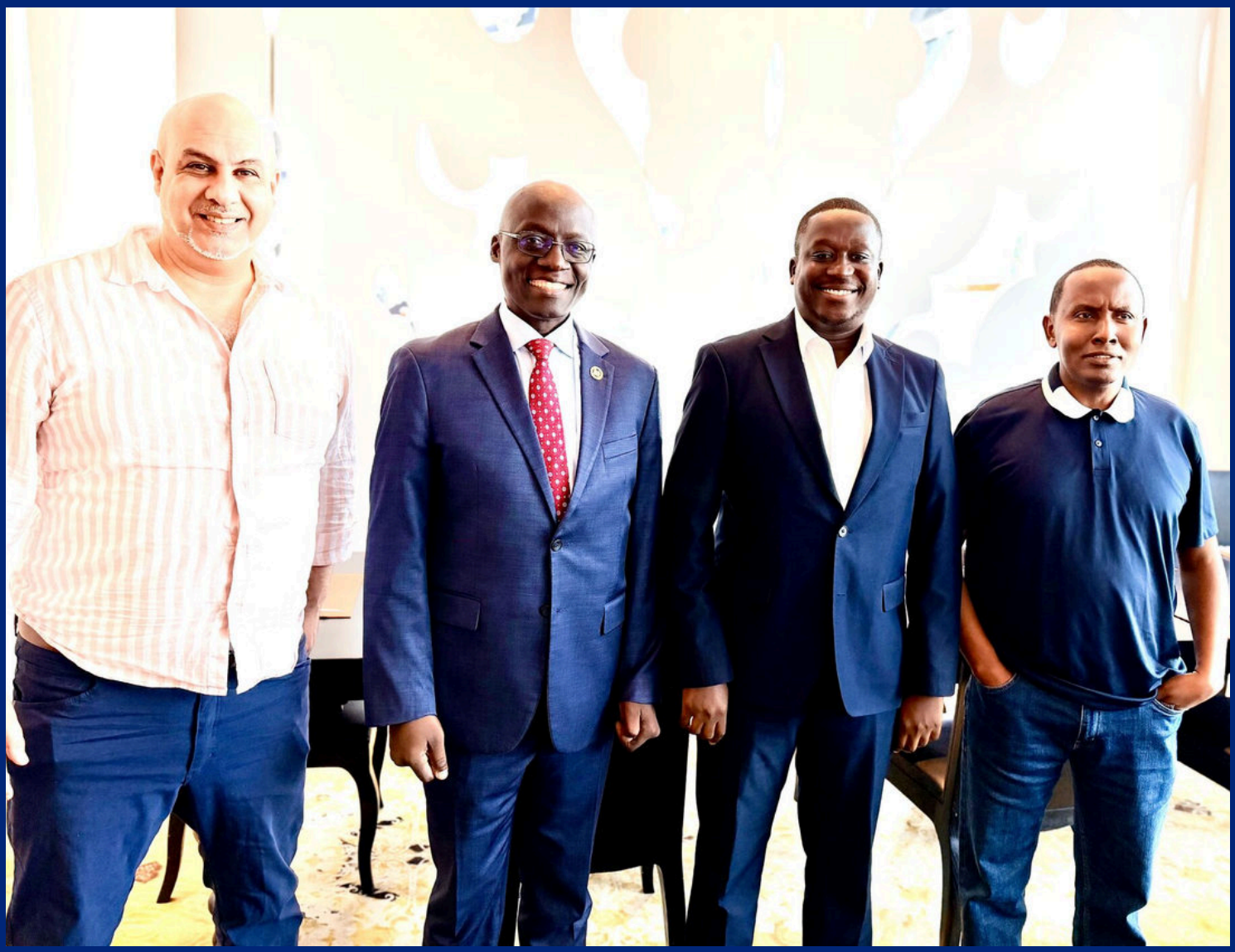


Building Bridges for Youth Innovation and Jobs

Doha wrapped up with productive engagements, including meetings with Mohammed Abdiker, Chief of Staff at the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and Dr. Tariq H. Cheema, Chairman of the Board at the World Congress of Muslim Philanthropists. Discussions focused on how multistakeholder collaboration can unlock new resources for youth innovation, entrepreneurship, and jobs.

The parties agreed to convene a high-net-worth individuals' Majlis in Kenya, under the leadership of H.E. President William Ruto — a platform to mobilize philanthropy and investment for youth in technology and the creative industries, in partnership with the Nairobi International Financial Centre (NIFC).

The initiative reinforces Kenya's position as a convening hub for purposeful capital, innovation, and opportunity across Africa's digital economy.







Strengthening Kenya–UAE Partnerships in Innovation and Investment

Kenyan officials, led by Principal Secretary for Investment, Trade and Industry Regina Ombam, together with KenInvest CEO Dr. John Mwenda and Centum Investments CEO James Mworia, held a strategic meeting with H.E. Abdullah Sultan Al Owais, Chair of the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and his delegation to deepen Kenya–UAE cooperation in technology-driven trade and investment. Discussions highlighted how Kenya's digital transformation—underpinned by progressive regulation, green energy, and a young, skilled workforce—provides a strong foundation for expanded collaboration with the UAE. The two sides explored joint opportunities in AI infrastructure, fintech, digital public platforms, and the creative industries, alongside investment linkages through the Nairobi International Financial Centre (NIFC) and private-sector partnerships. The engagement underscored a shared commitment to building a future-ready corridor for innovation, capital, and technology between Kenya and the UAE.

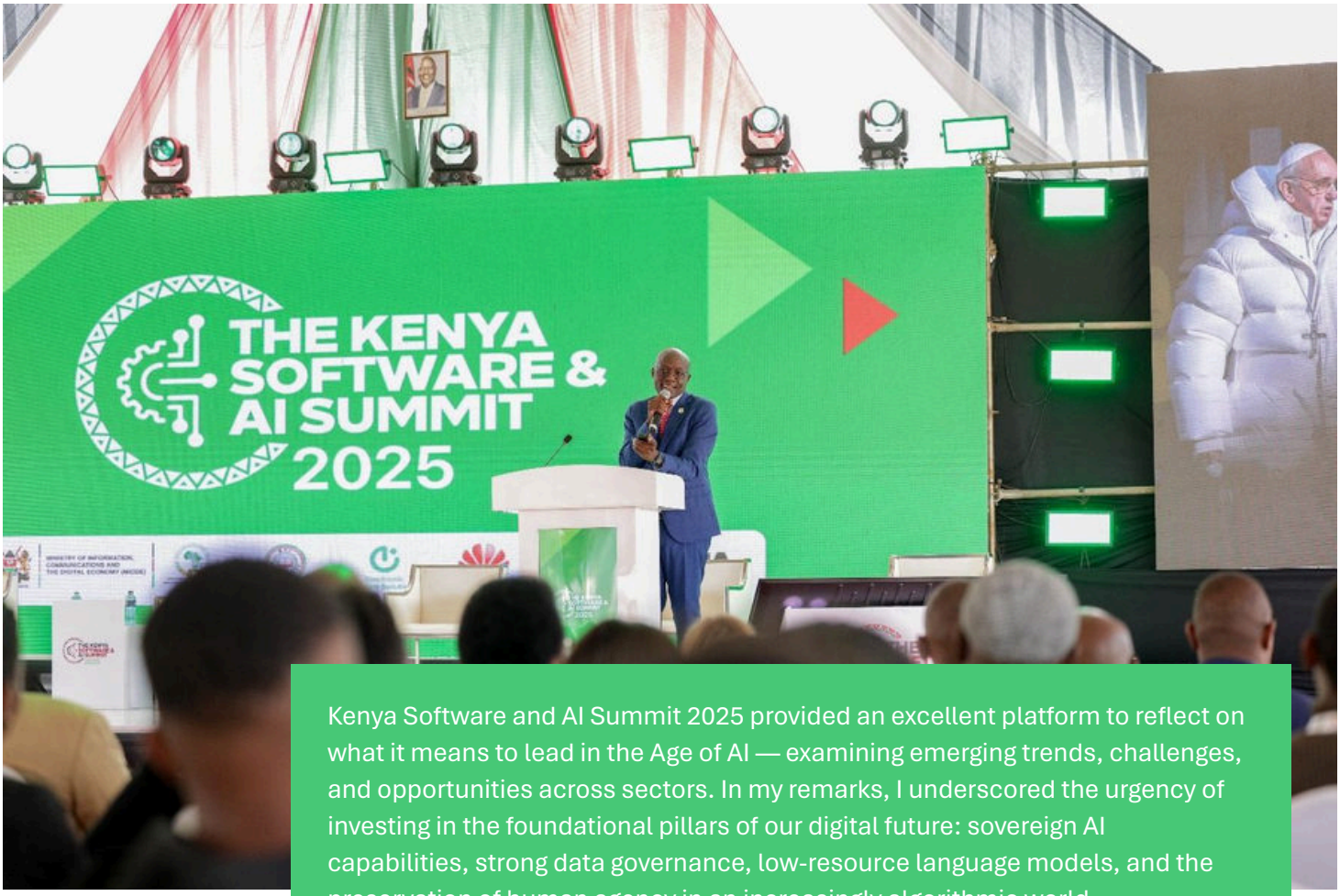
Reflections on AI, Innovation, and the Future of Higher Education

Ambassador Philip Thigo, together with PS John Tanui, engaged the leadership of Moi University across multiple faculties to reflect on outcomes from the Kenya Software and AI Summit 2025 and explore pathways for deeper academia–industry collaboration. PS Tanui emphasized the importance of aligning university training with real-world opportunities, supported by the University's more than 16 MoUs signed during the Summit. Discussions also highlighted opportunities to reimagine university design and student experience, including potential collaboration with institutions such as Arizona State University's University Design Institute. Cisco further committed to strengthening student certification through globally recognized credentials. Faculty members shared fresh perspectives on integrating AI across curricula to prepare learners for the emerging Age of Intelligence.





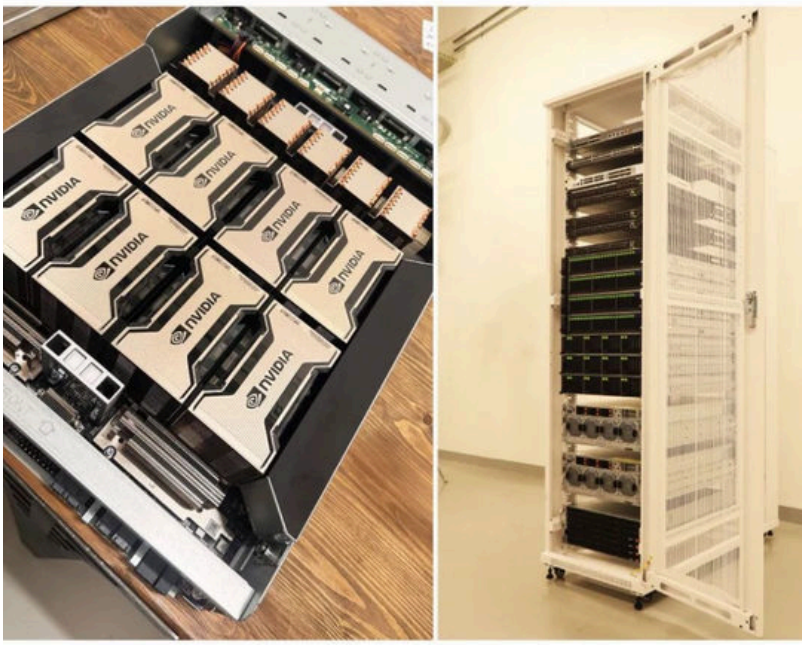
Leading in the Era of Intelligence



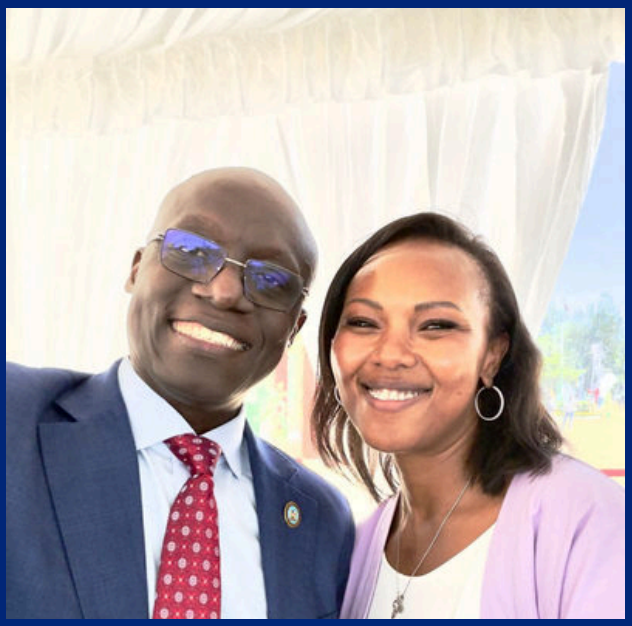
Kenya Software and AI Summit 2025 provided an excellent platform to reflect on what it means to lead in the Age of AI — examining emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities across sectors. In my remarks, I underscored the urgency of investing in the foundational pillars of our digital future: sovereign AI capabilities, strong data governance, low-resource language models, and the preservation of human agency in an increasingly algorithmic world.
Ultimately, the defining test of this era is not the technology itself, but how people across disciplines — from education and agriculture to health and finance — harness AI to innovate, adapt, and thrive.

Kenya unveils region's first GPU-Powered AI infrastructure

Kenya is now home to East and Central Africa's first GPU-powered Artificial Intelligence (AI) infrastructure, reinforcing its position as a regional technology leader. The new AI facility, developed by Atlancis Technologies under its Servernah Cloud brand in partnership with Everse Technology and iXAfrica Data Centres, will enable enterprises, startups, researchers, and public institutions to train and deploy AI models locally — without exporting sensitive data or relying on offshore cloud systems.Citizen TV Feature



Strengthening Collaboration at the Margins of the AI Summit at Moi University









At the margins of the AI Summit at Moi University, Ambassador Philip Thigo held a series of “speed-dating” style bilaterals with key ecosystem partners to advance Kenya’s AI skilling and innovation agenda. Discussions with Chepkemoi Magdaline (Founder & CEO, EldoHub), Winnie Karanu (AI National Skills Director, Microsoft Africa), and Terryanne Chebet (CEO, Pink Foundry Communications) focused on scaling AI fluency, building inclusive programmes, and supporting women in business and technology.

He then engaged Joel Onditi, President & CEO of Pathways Technologies Ltd, on strengthening university–industry partnerships for AI skilling — a conversation that followed an earlier request to H.E. President William Ruto and was graciously witnessed by Eng. John Tanui, Principal Secretary, State Department for ICT and the Digital Economy. Ambassador Thigo also conferred with Immaculate Kassait, MBS, Data Protection Commissioner of Kenya, on reinforcing data sovereignty and governance as the foundation for trusted, people-centred AI ecosystems.

Education in the Age of Intelligence



At the AI for Education Summit in Nairobi, Amb. Philip Thigo highlighted that Artificial Intelligence is already reshaping learning, teaching, and skills development, making education the defining frontier for Africa's AI future. He noted that the continent must move from simply using AI to becoming a creator and governor of AI systems designed for the public good.

Drawing lessons from Arizona State University's University Design Institute, he emphasized that education reform — including curriculum redesign, teacher training, and modern infrastructure — is essential to national AI readiness.

Amb. Thigo referenced Kenya's emerging innovations such as Roy Allela's Sign-IO gloves, Esther Kimani's AI-powered solar pest detector, and Elly Savatia's Terp 360 as early examples of Digital Public Intelligence, where data, compute, and talent converge for societal benefit.

He stressed the need for investments in sovereign digital public infrastructure to ensure learners and educators have access to trustworthy, locally grounded intelligence built on African data and values.

He reiterated a core message:

"*No country or region should outsource its intelligence — because when we outsource intelligence, we outsource our future.*"

France–Africa Summit Focal Points Meeting

Amb. Philip Thigo participated in the France–Africa Summit Focal Points Meeting as part of preparations for the upcoming Summit scheduled for 11–13 May 2026.

He contributed to discussions under the theme "Harnessing Artificial Intelligence and Digital Technologies for Sustainable Economic Growth," highlighting how strategic investments in sustainable digital infrastructure, inclusive AI ecosystems, talent development, start-up growth, and financing for green and public-interest technologies can drive shared prosperity.

The exchange strengthened the collaborative agenda between Africa and France as work continues toward a Summit focused on long-term, sustainable economic transformation powered by technology.



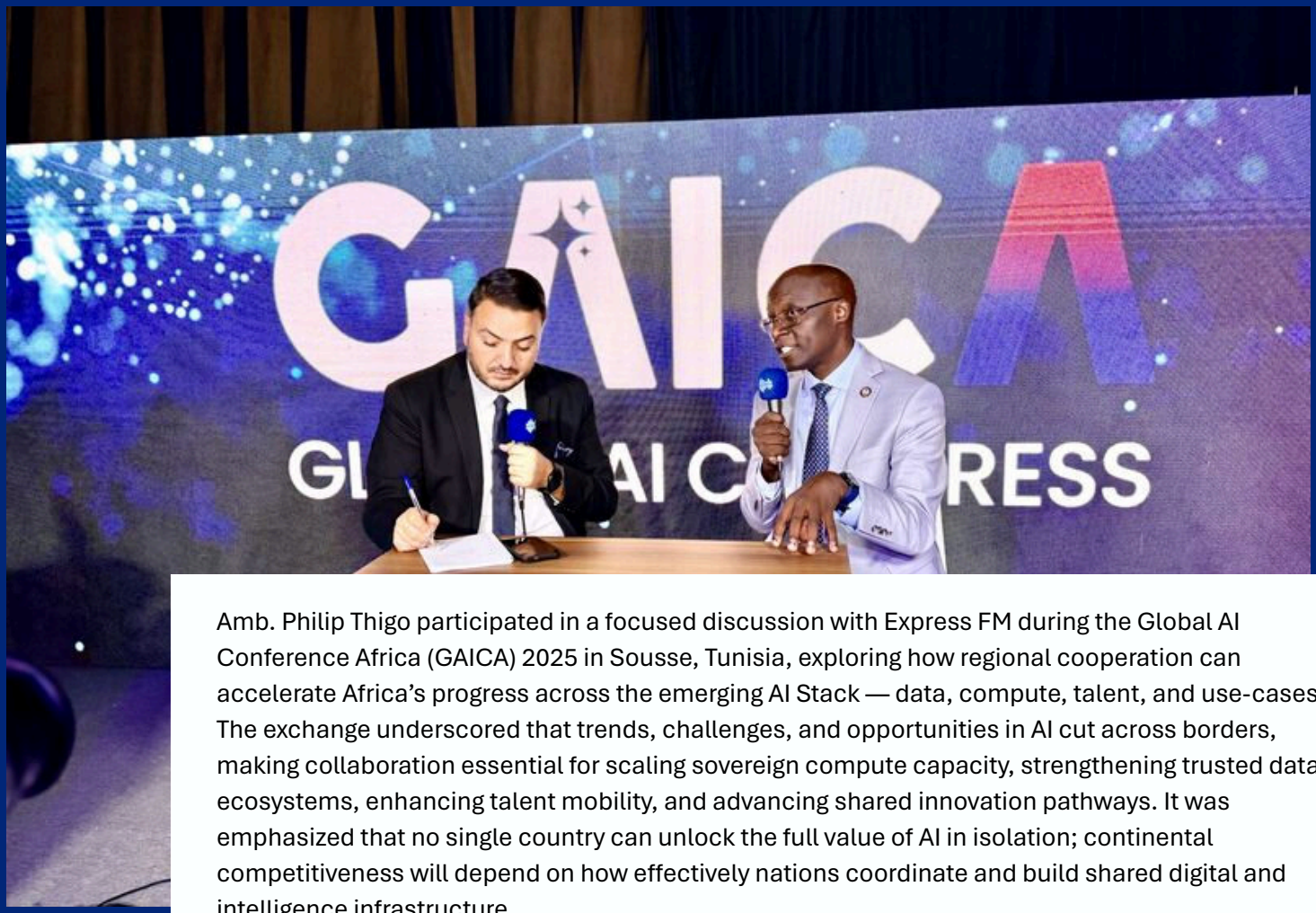




Honouring King's Day – Kenya–Belgium Partnership

Ambassador Philip Thigo represented Kenya as Chief Guest at the King's Day celebrations hosted by H.E. Ambassador Peter Maddens and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium. In his remarks, he highlighted six decades of Kenya–Belgium cooperation in peacebuilding, health, and development, and the deepening partnership in climate action, digital transformation, and governance of emerging technologies. Belgium's leadership — including the deployment of an in-house AI expert and its "Belgium Goes Green" net-zero embassy initiative — was noted as a model of modern diplomacy. Amb. Thigo reaffirmed Kenya's commitment to a future-focused partnership that expands opportunity, advances equitable development, and delivers shared prosperity.

Building Africa's AI Future Through Collaboration



Amb. Philip Thigo participated in a focused discussion with Express FM during the Global AI Conference Africa (GAICA) 2025 in Sousse, Tunisia, exploring how regional cooperation can accelerate Africa's progress across the emerging AI Stack — data, compute, talent, and use-cases. The exchange underscored that trends, challenges, and opportunities in AI cut across borders, making collaboration essential for scaling sovereign compute capacity, strengthening trusted data ecosystems, enhancing talent mobility, and advancing shared innovation pathways. It was emphasized that no single country can unlock the full value of AI in isolation; continental competitiveness will depend on how effectively nations coordinate and build shared digital and intelligence infrastructure.

Amb. Thigo commended GAICA for convening a strategic platform for this dialogue and expressed appreciation to Wassim Ben Larbi of Express FM for the substantive engagement.



STRENGTHENING KENYA–TUNISIA COLLABORATION IN THE AGE OF INTELLIGENCE

Amb. Philip Thigo held productive discussions with H.E. Sofien Hemissi, Minister of Communication Technologies of Tunisia, focusing on the evolution of both countries' technology ecosystems and identifying practical pathways for deeper collaboration — particularly in tech talent development, innovation, and Africa's emerging leadership in Artificial Intelligence.

During the meeting, Amb. Thigo noted Tunisia's role in his formative years, adding a meaningful personal dimension to the exchange. The CEO of Novation City also joined the conversation, with the parties agreeing to brief both Heads of State on a proposed Kenya–Tunisia leadership initiative on AI in Africa. The initiative aims to advance shared ambitions around African agency, innovation, and sovereign digital capabilities in the evolving Age of Intelligence.

The engagement sets the foundation for a concrete partnership designed to benefit citizens, innovators, and the wider continent.

Africa's AI Moment — From Vision to Implementation at GAICA 2025

Amb. Philip Thigo delivered remarks at the High-Level Opening Panel of GAICA 2025 in Sousse, emphasizing how Africa can shift from AI vision to implementation by investing in sovereign, trusted, and development-driven AI ecosystems.

He highlighted Kenya's approach—rooted in African ownership, governance, and investments in data, computing, talent, and applied use cases—and stressed the need for regional cooperation on multilingual models, safety science, and shared innovation.

Amb. Thigo noted that while digital infrastructure will shape competitiveness, talent remains Africa's greatest advantage, and must include women, youth, creatives, pastoralists, and informal traders.



He affirmed that with coordinated action, Africa can move from consuming global intelligence to producing sovereign, trusted African intelligence that drives inclusive growth.



Strengthening Cybersecurity Collaboration with Tunisia

Amb. Philip Thigo held a constructive meeting with Dr. Yacine Djemal, Director of Tunisia's National Cybersecurity Centre, focusing on the evolving threat landscape shaped by AI and emerging technologies. The discussion highlighted shared concerns around quantum-driven shifts in cryptography, increasing complexity in cyber-risk, and the rise of deepfakes, misinformation and disinformation that require coordinated regional responses.
Both parties underscored the importance of strengthened cooperation to enha

Building a Resilient African Sovereign AI Ecosystem

Amb. Philip Thigo held discussions with Karim Beguir, CEO and Co-Founder of InstaDeep, following his keynote at GAICA on an African sovereign AI stack spanning infrastructure, data and models. The engagement focused on how Africa can build resilient, sovereign AI capabilities that serve its development priorities.





Advancing the Global Data Festival 2026

Amb. Philip Thigo met Jenna Slotin for a timely debrief on the National Steering Committee meeting with the Kenya Space Agency and KNBS, which reviewed progress toward the Global Data Festival 2026.
He also appreciated CIO Africa for convening the private-sector roundtable — a key step in strengthening collaboration across government, industry and partners as Kenya builds a robust, insight-driven data ecosystem to support national development.

Ambassador Philip Thigo delivered the closing keynote at the CIO100 Symposium & Awards 2025 to a community of CIOs, digital executives, and technology leaders committed to shaping Africa's digital transformation. In his remarks, Ambassador Thigo noted that Africa stands at a critical turning point in the emerging "Intelligent Age," where systems increasingly learn, adapt, and anticipate. He underscored that the key divide is no longer only about connectivity or basic digital skills, but about the capacity to build and govern sovereign intelligence — nationally owned data, compute, and talent aligned to domestic development priorities.

The keynote highlighted Africa's unique strategic advantages, including abundant and increasingly affordable green energy, a young and ambitious population, and growing sovereign compute capacity. Ambassador Thigo stressed that, combined with responsible innovation and bold leadership, these assets can position Artificial Intelligence as a catalyst for inclusive growth rather than a driver of inequality. He reiterated that no organisation or nation should outsource its intelligence, emphasizing that AI must be harnessed to strengthen resilience, competitiveness, and shared prosperity across the continent.





Strengthening Partnerships on Data, Origins & Intelligence



Ambassador Philip Thigo held a series of engagements on the margins of the CIO100 Leadership Summit in Naivasha, including discussions with the Kenya Home of Human Origins team (Vata Ng'anda and Davis Adieno) on preparations for the Global Data Festival and the potential of using humanity's journey from origins to intelligence as a unifying narrative for Africa's digital future.

A meeting was also held with Harry Hare, Chairman of CIO, to deepen private-sector collaboration ahead of the Festival, followed by a session with the Africa Data Centres team to review progress on the Cassava AI Factories — a key driver of sovereign compute, regional innovation, and Africa's agency in the Age of Intelligence.

These engagements highlighted the importance of cross-sector collaboration, investment in sovereign digital public infrastructure, and innovation anchored in African identity and culture as momentum builds toward June.



UK-AISI Introductory Workshop

The Action Lab team participated in a UK AISI introductory workshop focused on the use of the Inspect platform, including foundational training on how to develop evaluation tools within the system. The session provided practical guidance for new users and outlined core features relevant to AI evaluation work. It was agreed that a follow-up workshop would be organised to deepen the team's skills, particularly on building and refining evals within Inspect.

AI as a Game Changer – Summary of Engagement at the UNIDO Global Industry Summit 2025

Ambassador Philip Thigo participated in the UNIDO Global Industry Summit 2025 in Riyadh, where discussions centred on AI's growing role in shaping production, logistics, energy systems, and workforce capabilities. He emphasised the need to mitigate widening global disparities by prioritising sustainable digital and compute infrastructure, strengthened human capital —particularly for SMEs—and robust innovation ecosystems supported by cross-border pilots and Centres of Excellence. The intervention further highlighted the importance of blended financing to de-risk early adoption and transparent procurement to build trust. Overall, the Summit reaffirmed that AI can serve as a catalyst for inclusive and sustainable industrial growth when anchored in strong governance, investment, and collaboration.



Kenya Joins Global Network of AI Centres of Excellence

Ambassador Philip Thigo participated in the Global Best Practice Showcase at the UNIDO Global Industry Summit in Riyadh, where discussions focused on how collaboration and innovation can advance sustainable industrial transformation across the Global South. The session underscored the growing role of AI Centres of Excellence in consolidating talent, data, research, and compute into high-efficiency platforms that strengthen national capabilities and inclusive industrial growth. During the engagement, it was announced that Kenya has joined the Global Network of AI Centres of Excellence, reinforcing the country's commitment to sovereign capability, regional cooperation, and responsible digital transformation for SMEs. The intervention further highlighted that no single country can build the full AI stack alone, and that Centres of Excellence must function as regional bridges rather than national silos, with UNIDO and partners providing an important platform for shared progress.





Accelerating Proven Innovations: Reflections from the ScaleX Roundtable



Ambassador Philip Thigo co-chaired the High-Level Roundtable on "Accelerating the Scaling of Proven Innovations for Industrial Transformation" at UNIDO's GC.21, alongside H.E. Amb. Melita Zupcevc of Slovenia and Mr. Tornike Jobava of the Georgia Innovation & Technology Agency, under the leadership of the UNIDO Innovation Lab.

The session emphasized that many strong innovations remain stuck at pilot stage and highlighted UNIDO's ScaleX Programme as a strategic vehicle to align policy, investment, testbeds and ecosystems to scale what works. Kenya signalled three commitments: to co-design ScaleX East Africa anchored in Nairobi, to support the establishment of a Global ScaleX Alliance, and to convene a regional consultation in 2026 with ministries, innovation hubs and investors.

Deepening collaborations at UNIDO GC21



Ambassador Philip Thigo held a bilateral engagement with Celine Lee of Zindi at UNIDO GC.21, reflecting on the growing participation and strong performance of Kenyan data scientists on the platform, and the demonstration that African technical talent is globally competitive. He also engaged Ambassador Ruwange on deepening partnerships with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, including new opportunities emerging from UNIDO GC.21, together with officials from the Ministry of Investments, Trade and Industry (MITI), Kenya, including Ms. Florence Kimata. Kenya reaffirmed its commitment to advancing collaboration across the AI stack—talent, data, innovation and sustainable industrialisation—to expand value-creating pathways for young people and drive shared prosperity.

Building Cybersecurity Capacity Across Africa

Ambassador Philip Thigo participated in the 3rd Africa Forum on Cybercrime and Electronic Evidence alongside Cabinet Secretary Hon. William Kabogo and Principal Secretary Dr. Raymond Omollo, where he took part in a bilateral meeting with Hon. Lamin Jabbie, Minister of Communications and Digital Economy of The Gambia, to explore deeper cooperation in cybersecurity capacity building, digital infrastructure, and strengthening shared resilience across the continent. The Forum convened ministers, jurists, law-enforcement leaders, prosecutors, regional bodies and global partners to review the rapidly evolving cyber threat landscape, including AI-enabled attacks and cross-border criminal networks that are outpacing traditional response systems, and underscored the need to reinforce infrastructure, capabilities, capacity and digital fluency across all arms of government and along the justice chain. Recent AI-driven cyber incidents globally were noted as further evidence of escalating risks and the importance of collaboration, harmonised legal frameworks, strong institutions and technology-neutral safeguards. Appreciation was extended to the European Union, the Council of Europe and colleagues from ICT&DE and NC4, as well as the organisers, experts and partners who contributed to making the Forum an effective platform for learning, coordination and joint action.



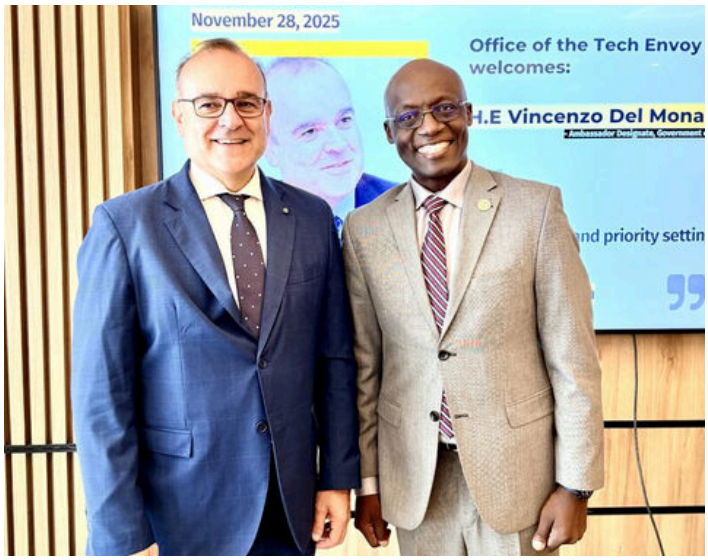




Kenya and Italy: Partnering on AI, Earth Observation & Innovation

Ambassador Philip Thigo held a meeting with Italian Ambassador-Designate to Kenya, H.E. Vincenzo Del Monaco, the Deputy Ambassador, Lorenza Gambacorta, and the Science Attaché to review ongoing and prospective collaboration between Kenya and Italy on Artificial Intelligence, Earth Observation, and innovation. The discussion focused on the AI Hub for Sustainable Development, co-created by Kenya and Italy under the Mattei Plan, as a platform that positions AI, data, and innovation at the centre of inclusive development and climate resilience. The parties also explored how Italy's long-standing investments in satellite technology and its strategic presence in Malindi can further support joint Earth Observation initiatives for development. The engagement underscored the partnership as a key example of how space technology, AI, and public-interest innovation can accelerate progress across both nations, and identified priority areas for the next phase of Techplomacy collaboration to be advanced with the Kenyan and Italian private sectors in early 2024.









Driving Kenya's AI Future: Action Lab × Cassava Technologies

Ambassador Philip Thigo chaired a working session between Kenya's Action Lab and Cassava Technologies to advance key priorities within the national AI Stack. The meeting reviewed progress on the deployment of sovereign, green-powered AI Factories to support innovators, public agencies, universities and MSMEs nationwide; aligned on high-impact use-case portfolios in areas such as food systems, climate intelligence and public service delivery; and discussed pathways for developing Africa-relevant AI models, including domain-specific systems, multilingual African language models, efficient small models for government and SMEs, and safety-aligned public-interest models.

The Action Lab team held a recurring weekly coordination meeting with CISCO on Kenya initiatives. The session focused on reviewing Nairobi County use cases being developed with CISCO and the County Digital Accelerator (CDA), discussions on AI-ready data centres for Kenya, and plans for talent and capacity building in AI, networking and cybersecurity. It was agreed that the teams would prioritise the identified use cases and co-design an implementation plan, consult CISCO/CDA data-centre experts on optimal options for Kenya, and engage the CISCO Network Academy to co-develop a structured learning and capacity-building pipeline.



A team from the Office Of The Special Envoy on Tech attended a briefing on the forthcoming AI Safety International Report 2026, joining a group of approximately 25 participants. The session provided an overview of the report's scope, emerging findings, and anticipated timelines. It was agreed that the team would remain engaged with the process and follow up on subsequent updates as the report advances toward publication.

The office aattended the Ilina Program office warming event, which provided an informal opportunity to introduce the Lab's mandate and confirm Ilina's interest in future collaboration. A subsequent initial Ilina Program–Action Lab meeting brought together the Action Lab team and Ilina members (Cecil Abungu, Marie Iradukunda, Carringtone Kinyanjui and Michelle Malonza) to discuss specific collaboration areas, namely AI and safety research, capacity building and convenings. The Action Lab committed to identifying and engaging designated leads in each area to define concrete workstreams and follow-up actions.





First health Consultative Workshop to Inform the AI in Health Opportunities Plan

A team from the Office of the Special Envoy on Technology held a health consultative workshop to inform the development of an AI in Health Opportunities Plan. The workshop brought together policymakers, clinicians, community representatives, development partners, and digital-health stakeholders, and provided practical insights into health system priorities and constraints, including gaps in data flows, referral coordination, community–facility linkages, and health worker readiness to adopt digital and AI-enabled tools. The outcomes were used to refine the research focus and validate the need for a comprehensive, evidence-driven plan grounded in perspectives from across all levels of care.





Advancing Africa's AI Ambitions: Special Envoy Representation Joins Kenyan Delegation to Accra



Munyala Mwalo, Design Director at Action Lab, proudly represented the Office of the Special Envoy this month as a member of the Kenyan delegation travelling to Accra, Ghana. The visit focused on reinforcing regional cooperation and accelerating the operationalisation of African digital and Artificial Intelligence (AI) policy objectives.



This high-level engagement occurred within a dynamic environment, as both Kenya and Ghana are actively engaged in advancing their AI landscapes. Ghana is working toward an AI strategy and is recognised as a regional leader in AI policy readiness. Accra is a critical regional hub, specifically noted for hosting the AI Community Centre established by Google, designed to host technical workshops, research exchanges, and community events for various stakeholders.

The delegation's visit aligned with key continental initiatives emphasising how African governments must work together on AI skilling and policy implementation. Ghana's National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (2023–2033) aims to leverage AI for inclusive social and economic transformation across various sectors, including finance, agriculture, and healthcare. Furthermore, Ghana aims to cultivate a robust AI-ready workforce by skilling over 1 million youth by 2033. The collaboration demonstrated a shared commitment to addressing gaps in AI talent, as many African firms report a need for staff capable of utilising AI in various business functions.



For Kenya, whose strategy targets positioning the country as a leading AI hub for research and application, these dialogues are crucial for advancing shared prosperity. The Office of the Special Envoy supports the ongoing necessity for **multi-stakeholder dialogues** to ensure AI policies are "future-proofed". Promoting capacity-building and dialogue among African policymakers is a core approach for translating national and continental AI strategies into concrete policies that drive inclusive economic development.



The effective adoption of AI across Africa is analogous to synchronising multiple gears in a machine: success hinges not just on ensuring each country's national policies (the individual gears) are strong, but also on guaranteeing that these policies are interoperable and aligned through regional collaboration (making sure the gears mesh seamlessly) to achieve scaled impact.



OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL
ENVOY ON TECHNOLOGY

H.E. Ambassador Philip Thigo, MBS, is an award-winning technology and public policy expert. He is the Special Envoy for Technology for the Republic of Kenya and the first in Africa.