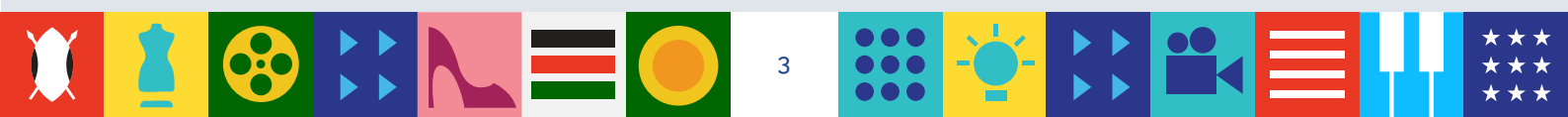


The background features a night cityscape with a digital overlay of glowing blue lines and a city skyline. The lines are arranged in a pattern that suggests data flow or connectivity, with some lines forming a grid and others curving. The city skyline is visible in the background, with various buildings and lights. The overall color scheme is dominated by dark blues and bright cyan/green highlights.

Powering
the Future of
the Creative
Economy

CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Opening Remarks	6
The Creative Economy	11
Panel Discussions	15
Music: Streaming Power & the Business of Sound	25
Film: Pitch, Produce, Profit: Navigating Global Film Markets	30
Beyond the Game: Investing in Kenya's Sport Economy	35
Closing Plenary	41
Policy Recommendations	44





INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly interconnected world, nations that harness the power of their creative industries are positioning themselves for sustainable economic transformation and global influence.

The inaugural U.S.-Kenya Creative Economy Forum, convened on June 6, 2025, in Nairobi, marked a pivotal moment in bilateral economic relations. Hosted by the U.S. Embassy in Kenya and the American Chamber of Commerce in Kenya (AmCham Kenya), this landmark event under the theme **“Powering the Future of the Creative Economy”** brought together industry leaders, government officials, and investors to explore the vast opportunities within Kenya’s rapidly expanding creative sector.

The event provided a timely platform for high-level discussions on the untapped investment opportunities within Kenya’s creative economy. It also facilitated informed dialogue between the public and private sectors regarding the necessary policy reforms to stimulate economic growth and attract investment in film, music, and sports.

The forum’s significance extends beyond a single day of presentations and networking. It represents the formalization of a strategic vision: **positioning Kenya as a premier destination for American investment while establishing pathways for Kenyan creative talent to access global markets.** With Kenya’s creative economy already contributing 5% to the nation’s GDP and ambitious plans to double this contribution by 2025, the forum unveiled a market landscape ripe for strategic partnerships and exponential growth potential.

The forum’s credibility was underscored by participation from leading American creative industry executives, including **Nicholas Weinstock (Invention Studios), Michael Finley (NBA Africa Kenya), Robert Boyd (Tyler Perry Studios), and Panos A. Panay (The Recording Academy).** Their presence signaled a serious interest in the potential of Kenya’s creative economy by American industry. Kenya’s creative sector represents not just an investment opportunity but a strategic gateway to the broader East African market of over 300 million consumers. With strong bilateral relations, favorable investment policies, and a rapidly maturing creative ecosystem, American companies are positioned to build profitable partnerships that drive mutual economic growth and shared prosperity between the two nations.

KEY INVESTMENT SECTORS

The forum highlighted three sectors with immediate investment potential: Kenya’s film industry, earning recognition as the “Hollywood of Africa,” offers American production companies competitive costs and diverse talent; the music sector provides unprecedented opportunities for U.S. record labels and streaming services to access local and pan-African markets; while Kenya’s passionate sports culture presents significant prospects for American sports franchises and athletic development organizations to establish continental operations.





OPENING REMARKS



OPENING REMARKS

COMMERCIAL POTENTIAL

In his welcome address, Maxwell Okello, CEO of AmCham Kenya, emphasized that the distinguished presence of leading investors and entrepreneurs from America's media and entertainment industry demonstrated strong confidence in the commercial viability of Kenya's creative sector.

Maxwell highlighted the Kenyan creative economy's proven ability to attract strategic investment, catalyze innovation, and accelerate entrepreneurial growth. Okello challenged investors to deepen their engagement with the country's creative entrepreneurs, emphasizing the sector's potential for substantial returns on investment.

"Let us deploy capital where creativity intersects with commercial opportunity," Maxwell declared. "We are building the foundation for a creative economy that is mainstream, investable, and scalable, an economy where raw potential transforms into measurable prosperity, and exceptional talent evolves into thriving industry."



Maxwell announced that AmCham Kenya will spearhead a dedicated task force to streamline U.S.-Kenya creative industry partnerships, working closely with the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi and the Kenyan Government to ensure the seamless facilitation of these strategic alliances.



U.S. COMMITS TO STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP

Marc Dillard, Chargé d’Affaires at the U.S. Embassy, emphasized the United States’ commitment to deepening its strategic partnership with Kenya’s burgeoning creative industries. “Kenya’s creative economy is experiencing unprecedented growth, presenting extraordinary opportunities for collaboration between our two nations,” he observed.

“Kenya stands to gain invaluable insights from America’s creative sector, which generates over \$1.1 trillion annually, representing 4.3% of U.S. GDP and sustaining more than 5.2 million jobs,” Dillard noted, highlighting the scale of potential knowledge transfer.

Our vision is to leverage the creative economy as a catalyst for shared prosperity across music, sports, and film. Kenya’s creative industries already contribute at least 5% to the national GDP, and we have every confidence this contribution can expand dramatically with strategic focus on a creative ecosystem that champions innovation, nurtures talent, builds powerful brands, and drives dynamic business engagement,” he stated.

Dillard underscored the critical importance of sustained dialogue between creative industry leaders and policymakers, emphasizing that such engagement is essential for crafting supportive policies that accelerate growth and magnetize investment.



“Through collaboration with these creative visionaries, policymakers, and innovators, we can catalyze substantial business growth while strengthening both commercial ties and policy frameworks. By ensuring robust policies that facilitate private sector participation, we can generate immediate investment opportunities and sustainable long-term industry expansion, ultimately empowering artists, entrepreneurs, and Kenya’s dynamic youth population,” he concluded.

Kenya stands to gain invaluable insights from America’s creative sector, which generates over **\$1.1T** annually,

This represents **4.3%** of U.S. GDP and sustaining more than 5.2 million jobs.

Kenya’s creative industries already contribute at least **5%** to the national GDP



COMPREHENSIVE REFORMS UNDERWAY

Salim Mvurya, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports, reiterated the government's commitment to supporting the creative industry and growing its contribution to the GDP.

"The creative economy is no longer a fringe sector. It is a force for economic transformation, and through this partnership with our friends from the United States, we seek to position Kenya not just as a consumer, but as a leading exporter of world-class content and talent," said CS Mvurya.

He noted that Kenya has seen firsthand how music, fashion, film, gaming, and digital content are shaping identity, driving technology adoption, and opening global markets. "The government of Kenya, under the leadership of President William Ruto, is committed to positioning Kenya as a continental and global hub for creative excellence," said CS Mvurya.



To support this, Kenya is implementing a "Creative Economy Master Plan," aligned with the country's Vision 2030 and the African Continental Free Trade Area, among other measures, including regulatory reforms.

CS Mvurya said the government is committed to expediting the passage of various legislation to bolster the creative economy. He cited the 2024 Creative Economy Support Bill, which will provide a structured framework for monetization, streamline regulatory hurdles, and unlock private sector financing and tax incentives. He said it is a pivotal step in anchoring Kenya as a continental leader in creative enterprise.

He also noted that the government is working closely with stakeholders to finalize the Intellectual Property Bill and related policies. These reforms will include institutional reorganization, increased funding for anti-piracy operations, stricter penalties for infringement, public awareness campaigns, and the integration of Digital Rights Management (DRM) systems. This will, among other things, ensure that artists' gains are safeguarded in the digital age.

He added that Kenya was committed to enhancing logistics and licensing processes in the creative sector to facilitate easier operations for international partners, including U.S. companies, in the country. Among these initiatives is the fast-tracking of visa and work permit issuance for film crews within two to four weeks, facilitating equipment clearance waivers, and reducing bureaucracy in the licensing of film productions.

He also highlighted government-led efforts to promote investments in the sports industry. "In the realm of sports, we are advancing reforms that will encourage greater participation by both local and U.S. investors. We are amending the Sports Act to allow private companies to register as sports organizations and reviewing registration requirements to enable U.S. investors to serve as club officials.

"Additionally, we are developing clear revenue-sharing models that incentivize private sector investment and establishing a robust framework for public-private partnerships in sports infrastructure development and leasing," he added.

Mvurya concluded by extending an enthusiastic welcome to U.S. investors keen on exploring the opportunities in Kenya's creative economy.

"Kenya is open for business. With a youthful population, rich cultural diversity, and a government committed to reform and innovation, the creative sector is ripe for investment and global collaboration," he said.

"We are equally inspired by the growing interest from global icons like the Recording Academy (Grammys), represented here by its President, Mr. Panos A. Panay. The presence of the Academy in this conversation signals a powerful shift, one where African sounds, voices, and stories are no longer peripheral, but central to the global music and entertainment industry," he remarked.

"To all investors present today, whether you are in music, film, fashion, gaming, animation, or digital content, Kenya offers you a dynamic ecosystem powered by youth, policy reform, and an unshakable creative spirit. The message is clear: Kenya is ready. Kenya is rising. Kenya is your next creative frontier," he concluded.

Kenya is open for business. With a youthful population, rich cultural diversity, and a government committed to reform and innovation, the creative sector is ripe for investment and global collaboration.

The graphic features a quote on the left and a stylized data visualization on the right. The visualization consists of a grid of blue squares that recedes into the distance, overlaid with a line graph and candlestick chart in shades of blue and pink.



THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

WHY KENYA, WHY NOW?



OPENING KEYNOTE

Nicholas Weinstock, Founder and President of Invention Studios, delivered the keynote address at the forum. Weinstock has produced movies that have together made more than half a billion dollars at the box office, and television series that have been nominated for 26 Emmy Awards. Among his notable works are comedies such as *Get Him to the Greek*, *Pineapple Express*, *Step Brothers*, and *Bridesmaids*, as well as hit series *In the Dark* and *Severance*, which became the most popular series on Apple TV.

Weinstock kicked off his speech by emphasizing that Kenya was not unfamiliar territory for him.

He spent his formative years in the country while studying at the University of Nairobi, where he learned Swahili and formed lifelong connections.

He has made several return trips over the years, including in recent times, to seal business deals for Invention Studios.



INVESTING IN KENYAN FILMS

"A year and a half ago, President Ruto and I launched a historic initiative together, in which my company, Invention Studios, became the first Hollywood company to set up a long-term creative partnership with Kenya," he said.

"We are developing movies and shows by Kenyan creators empowered by Hollywood support and resources, and are putting them on a track for distribution across Africa and around the world," he remarked, noting that the studio now has around a dozen projects that originated from Kenya.

"In return, the Kenyan government is helping to facilitate those projects, providing help with visas and permits, arranging low-cost housing to shoot our movies and shows, and withholding many of the taxes and hindrances that could stand in the way of a fast path to profitability for Kenyan filmmakers and American investors alike.



HARNESSING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

He urged filmmakers and actors to leverage digital technology to expand the distribution of their content. Digital technology, he argued, provides a pathway for creatives to achieve international stardom and unlock revenues from overseas markets, much faster.

"In the age of digital technology and the ubiquitous use of Internet and phones, creative Industries generate the products that are most watched, most downloaded, most streamed, and most treasured in the hearts and minds of human beings across the planet," he said.

"Our creative industries are also more international than ever. One only has to look at the global spread of Afrobeats music, which went from 2 billion streams on Spotify in 2017 to nearly 15 billion streams just a few years later," he added.

He said that language and culture were no longer significant barriers for creatives targeting global audiences. He argued that locally produced films and shows, delivered in indigenous languages, can capture substantial international viewership. He pointed to the shifting landscape of the most profitable and widely-watched films, highlighting the increasing popularity of non-English language movies and TV series.

Weinstock provided examples of Parasite, a South Korean film that cost \$15 million but grossed over \$230 million, becoming the first non-English film to win the Academy Award and top Cannes honors. Other non-English films that have achieved major success include Squid Game (Korean) and RRR (Indian), which both generated substantial revenue.

"There is nothing to say that the next Parasite, the next RRR or the next Squid Game, can't come from right here in Kenya," Weinstock said.

CONFRONTING MISPERCEPTIONS AND BIAS

Weinstock argued that strategic investment in Kenya's film industry presents an unprecedented opportunity to redefine the country's global narrative, crafting authentic and compelling portrayals of its society, economy, and culture. He emphasized that international audiences are hungry for genuine African storytelling that transcends outdated stereotypes. "For far too long, Kenya has been reduced to simplistic imagery, zebras galloping across picturesque savannas, with little recognition of its deeper complexity," Weinstock observed.

"Like many African nations, Kenya has endured decades of misrepresentation through harmful clichés that reduce the continent to poverty, conflict, disease, and civil unrest. At best, international perceptions acknowledge natural beauty while completely overlooking Kenya's rich storytelling traditions, cultural sophistication, powerful narratives, and blockbuster creative potential, along with the extraordinary profits and wealth generation these assets can produce," he elaborated.



Weinstock challenged a critical misconception that Kenya's creative sector must confront: the widespread assumption that creative industries offer limited commercial viability due to perceived funding constraints. He emphasized that this perception fundamentally misrepresents market realities.

"Let me be unequivocally clear: this is not philanthropy or diversity initiatives. This isn't nostalgia, sentiment, or altruistic 'giving back.' This represents the strategic capture of a massive economic opportunity, both for profit-driven American enterprises like mine and for Kenya's ambitious creative professionals who are our partners. That entrepreneurial spirit defines our collaboration today," he declared.

Weinstock highlighted the transformative multiplier effect of creative economy investments, emphasizing their catalytic impact across multiple sectors. "These are not isolated industries but what I characterize as radiant sectors, they generate employment, opportunities, capacity building, and income elevation throughout interconnected industries."

"When you establish a sport in Kenya, as the NBA is so expertly demonstrating, you energize far more than athletics alone. You stimulate food and beverage industries, construction, insurance, urban infrastructure, broadcasting, legal services, textiles, and countless other businesses," he explained.

"When you produce a film in Kenya, you create jobs and economic growth across carpentry, crafts, fashion, transportation, hospitality, accounting, tourism, and a spectrum of additional sectors that collectively strengthen the economic foundation of every nation involved," he concluded.

KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 **Leverage digital technologies:** Kenyan filmmakers should utilize digital technologies, including streaming platforms, to broaden the distribution of their content.

- 2 **Capture international demand:** Filmmakers should capitalize on the increasing global demand for local content produced in indigenous languages that authentically represents local culture.

- 3 **Invest in film to reshape global perceptions:** Investment in the film industry presents an opportunity to reshape the country's global narrative and challenge outdated stereotypes.

- 4 **Recognize the multiplier effect of creative industry investment:** Policymakers should acknowledge the transformative multiplier effect of investments in the creative economy, which has the potential to generate employment in related sectors such as food and beverage, media, textiles, and others.





PANEL DISCUSSIONS



PANEL DISCUSSIONS

PANEL 1: UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF THE U.S.-KENYA CREATIVE ECOSYSTEM

This high-level discussion brought together industry leaders from film, music, digital content, and sports to explore how strategic U.S.-Kenya collaboration can unlock investment and drive growth in Kenya's creative economy. The session was moderated by Liz Lenjo, Intellectual Property and Entertainment Law Expert; Chairperson, Copyright Tribunal; Founder, MyIP Legal Studio. Panelists included Policarp Otieno, producer, musician, guitarist (Sol Generation), Katherine Hiner, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, IP Attaché, Michael Finley, Kenya Country Lead, NBA Africa, and Tosh Gitonga, Executive Producer and Director, Primary Picture Ltd.



Policarp Otieno

Producer, Musician, Guitarist,
(Sol Generation)



Katherine Hiner

U.S. Patent and Trademark
Office, IP Attaché



Michael Finley

Kenya Country Lead,
NBA Africa



Tosh Gitonga

Executive Producer and
Director, Primary Picture Ltd



Liz Lenjo

Chairperson, Copyright Tribunal;
Founder, MyIP Legal Studio

Moderator

1. GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES IN THE STREAMING ERA

Tosh Gitonga observed that the emergence of global streaming platforms has created unprecedented opportunities for Kenyan filmmakers to achieve international recognition. "We're witnessing a transformative era where geographical boundaries have dissolved. When I entered the industry two decades ago, distribution channels were severely limited, perhaps a handful of viable outlets for film releases. Today, those barriers have virtually disappeared." However, Gitonga acknowledged the persistent challenges Kenyan filmmakers face in accessing global distribution networks. Securing distribution agreements remains a formidable obstacle, he noted. "Despite these technological advances, we continue to grapple with distribution challenges, specifically accessing platforms that can deliver our films to global audiences effectively."



"Kenyan creatives, your excellence matches global standards. When engaging with investors and collaborative partners, approach every opportunity knowing you possess exceptional value and capability," he declared.

5. BASKETBALL PRESENTS UNTAPPED INVESTMENT POTENTIAL

Michael Finley identified basketball as significantly under-monetized despite its widespread popularity and cultural integration in Kenya. He attributed the current enthusiasm for the sport to its incorporation into school athletics programs during the administration of former President Daniel Moi.

"Kenya boasts passionate basketball fans across all demographics, supported by robust high school and secondary school programs that have received consistent government backing through the Ministry of Education for 15-20 years," he noted, highlighting the professional league's emerging strength.

"Thousands of Kenyans are actively engaged in basketball," he observed, while expressing concern that this participation hasn't translated into sustainable income streams. "Unfortunately, most participants aren't generating meaningful revenue."

"Kenya possesses extraordinary basketball talent that I believe many Kenyans underestimate. Consider Olivia Nelson-Ododa, daughter of former Kenya Morans player Sebastian Ododa, who plays for the Connecticut Suns in the WNBA and was a standout at the University of Connecticut. Madina Okot from Mumias played for Mississippi State and recently signed with South Carolina. Grace Mbugua has signed with Louisville, while her sister competes at Jackson State."

6. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROTECTION: ECONOMIC FOUNDATION, NOT VICTIMLESS CRIME

Katherine Hiner emphasized that the long-term viability of the creative industry depends fundamentally on robust intellectual property frameworks. While Kenya has modernized IP legislation to address revenue leakage vulnerabilities, significant enforcement gaps persist, a challenge common throughout Africa.

"Across sub-Saharan Africa, enforcement capacity represents a critical bottleneck. Even in countries like Kenya that have recently updated and modernized their legal frameworks, substantial gaps exist between legislative promises and ground-level enforcement capabilities, including public awareness of IP rights."



She attributed weak enforcement partly to the misconception that IP theft constitutes a victimless offense. "There's a dangerous perception that IP theft harms no one. This perspective not only disregards content creators' and rights holders' legitimate interests but also ignores the serious reality that counterfeiting operations often produce dangerous goods posing health and safety risks, while funneling profits into criminal enterprises."

"We also observe systemic issues with royalty collection mechanisms and distribution institutions. Rights holders consistently report opaque processes and inadequate transparency," she noted.

"Effective policymaking requires two essential components: comprehensive legislation and unwavering political commitment to enforcement," she emphasized.

KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 **Maintain high production quality:** Kenyan filmmakers should not compromise on production quality if they aim to attract distribution partners and engage international audiences.

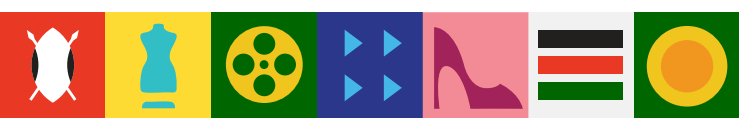
- 2 **Boost investment in the creative economy:** Local investors in the creative economy should increase their involvement, as this is crucial for enhancing the sector's attractiveness to international investors.

- 3 **Adopt formal business structures:** Creative professionals should embrace formal business structures, as operating informally limits access to markets and investors, making it challenging for artists to achieve sustainable livelihoods from their talents.

- 4 **Foster self-confidence:** Kenyan creatives must cultivate self-confidence and determination, believing that they can compete with the best in the world.

- 5 **Explore basketball's potential:** In sports, basketball represents a significant untapped opportunity, bolstered by a strong and engaged fan base that remains under-monetized.

- 6 **Strengthen intellectual property rights enforcement:** Enhancing the enforcement of intellectual property rights at the ground level is essential for ensuring that creatives fully benefit economically from their talents.



PANEL 2: BUILDING GLOBAL PATHWAYS FOR COLLABORATION, DISTRIBUTION, AND REVENUE

This panel assembled pioneering leaders in digital media, technology, and content creation to examine how digital innovations are revolutionizing cross-border collaboration, distribution strategies, and monetization frameworks. Distinguished panelists included Panos A. Panay, President of The Recording Academy; Muthoni Kiarie, Group Senior Project Manager at Royal Media Services Limited (ViuSasa); Martin Nielsen, CEO and Co-founder of Mdundo.com; Nzola Miranda, Managing Director of MultiChoice Kenya; Sarah Muyonga, Public Policy Manager for East and Horn of Africa at Meta; and Nikita Kering, award-winning singer, songwriter, performing artist, and four-time Afrima Awards winner recognized as Africa's Rising Star. Dr. Laila Macharia, Director of the Africa Digital Media Institute and Founding Director for Aspen Africa Initiative, moderated the discussion.



Panos A Panay
President,
The Recording Academy



Muthoni Kiarie
Group Senior Project Manager,
Royal Media Services Ltd
(ViuSasa)



Martin Nielsen
CEO and Co-founder,
Mdundo.com



Nzola Miranda
Managing Director,
MultiChoice Kenya



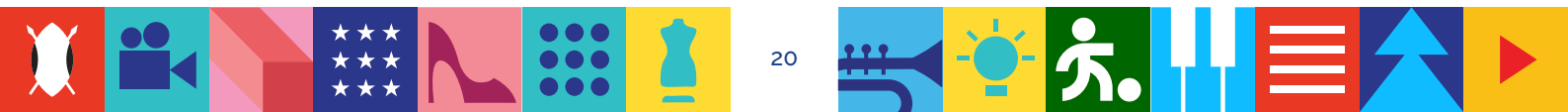
Sarah Muyonga
Public Policy Manager,
East and Horn of Africa,
Meta



Nikita Kering
Award-winning Singer,
Songwriter, Performing Artist, &
Four-time Afrima Awards Winner



Dr. Laila Macharia
Director, Africa Digital Media Institute
& Founding Director, Aspen Africa
Initiative
Moderator



1. BUILDING AUTHENTIC ARTISTRY THROUGH STRATEGIC FOUNDATION

Nikita Kering reflected on the insights gained during her remarkable 14-year musical journey, which began when she started performing at the age of nine. She identified four critical success pillars: exceptional talent, distinctive brand identity, articulate communication, and authentic community engagement.

She emphasized her commitment to developing a unique sonic signature that deliberately diverged from conventional Kenyan musical styles. This authentic approach gradually cultivated a dedicated audience, which she considers her creative community.

2. UNDERSTANDING INDUSTRY MECHANICS TO MAXIMIZE REVENUE

Kering attributed persistent monetization challenges among Kenyan artists to fundamental knowledge gaps. Many musicians and entertainers, she argued, prioritize artistic expression while neglecting essential business competencies, including distribution mechanics and contract negotiation strategies.

"Strategic planning becomes impossible without a comprehensive understanding of our music's distribution pathways," she observed. "I urge fellow artists: even when securing investor opportunities, we must master industry fundamentals ourselves, don't delegate this responsibility entirely to managers or legal counsel. My most significant mistakes resulted from an inadequate understanding of the contracts and agreements I was entering."

3. PLATFORM REVENUE SHARING REQUIRES REFORM

Martin Nielsen advocated for enhanced artist compensation from digital platforms, highlighting Mdundo.com's commitment to musician earnings. The platform serves 39 million monthly active users and collaborates with 200,000 African artists, generating approximately \$2 million annually, with roughly half of the revenue distributed directly to artists.

He challenged social media companies to reconsider compensation structures for musicians who drive substantial platform traffic. "Significant revenue generation occurs within Africa's music industry across social media and broadcast channels. However, social media platforms generate substantial advertising revenue without adequately compensating the artists who create that value."

Nielsen identified weak anti-piracy enforcement as a significant source of revenue leakage for artists. "We must ensure that generated revenues reach content creators. The necessary frameworks exist, we don't require new policies and regulations, but rather robust enforcement of existing protections and fair artist compensation."



4. GRAMMY AWARDS EXPANDING AFRICAN ENGAGEMENT

The Recording Academy, which administers the Grammy Awards, positions itself as a music industry coordination hub and is strategically expanding its African presence to foster sustainable economic development, Panos A. Panay explained. "Our objective is expanding recruitment and continental presence to establish long-term sustainable economic ecosystems."

He emphasized the government's crucial role in driving the growth of the creative economy, "Government serves as a vital accelerator through foundational policy development. These policies can support ecosystem development, encourage entrepreneurialism, and strengthen organizations responsible for producing and distributing artist-created content."

Panay noted that Africa has an opportunity to transform its creative economy into a major driver of export revenue. "Currently, there's an enormous trade imbalance, substantial imports but insufficient continental exports. We must address and reverse this dynamic."

He emphasized the importance of artists rediscovering the value of live performance, arguing that it offers the most direct path to audience discovery and revenue generation. "We've extensively discussed royalty collection, publishing, and streaming, but haven't addressed live music, which remains the largest revenue generator for artists."

5. CULTIVATING CONTENT PAYMENT CULTURE

Muthoni Kiarie discussed ViuSasa's evolution, noting its launch during a period when convincing Kenyans to pay for content proved extremely challenging. The platform's growth and success have demonstrated that audiences are willing to invest in high-quality content. "It's been an extensive educational journey convincing people that content requires payment and that revenue must reach content producers and artists. This has been our greatest challenge."

She identified high data costs as another significant barrier. "Despite extensive mobile connectivity, data costs remain problematic. ViuSasa content requires data access, creating the primary distribution obstacle and directly impacting artist revenue streams."

"Our key insight emphasizes the necessity of collaboration, partnering with mobile network operators to reduce data costs would significantly enhance content monetization for producers."

Despite increased demand for local content, she noted that producers struggle to meet demand due to financial constraints. "We weren't receiving desired content volumes. ViuSasa was designed to empower regional content producers, particularly vernacular content creators. While we provided support, it's unsustainable when working with hundreds of artists."



6. AVOIDING EXCESSIVE SECTOR TAXATION

Sarah Muyonga announced that Meta introduced sub-Saharan African monetization in August of the previous year. Initially focused on video content, monetization has expanded to include additional formats, presenting opportunities for Kenyan content creators who are increasingly emphasizing quality and expanding audience reach beyond comedy.

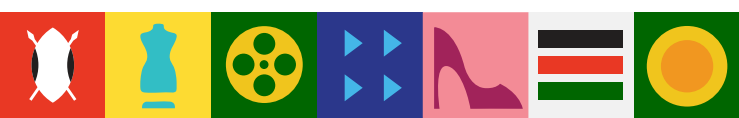
"We're witnessing substantially more local content, high-quality, diverse material that strongly resonates with audiences. Content has evolved beyond comedy, which previously dominated the landscape."

She argued that enhanced creator earnings require government restraint regarding excessive taxation in the creative economy. "We're observing increased industry taxation proposals, including creator withholding taxes. But which creators specifically? Where is this revenue? Have you verified the existence of revenue? Are you certain there's taxable revenue? What measures have been implemented to ensure this sector can now generate taxable income?"

7. VIDEO-ON-DEMAND TRANSFORMS VIEWING PATTERNS

Nzola Miranda explained that video-on-demand has fundamentally disrupted linear programming, compelling companies like MultiChoice to reimagine operational strategies to maintain audience connection. "The film and television industry is transforming linear viewership, where audiences schedule viewing around broadcast times, to Video-on-Demand, enabling content access anytime, anywhere, on any device."

Beyond on-demand content provision, the media company is exploring the delivery of mobile-optimized content. "Mobile environments demand shorter attention spans, so we're collaborating with creatives to develop condensed content formats."



KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 **Artists must sharpen their business acumen:** To succeed commercially, artists must comprehend industry dynamics and develop essential business competencies, including knowledge of distribution mechanisms and contract negotiation strategies.
- 2 **Reevaluate creator compensation structures:** Streaming platforms and social media companies should reassess their compensation structures for musicians who significantly contribute to platform traffic.
- 3 **Tap into the power of live events:** Despite the access that streaming platforms provide to broader audiences, artists should not overlook live events, as they represent the most direct means of audience engagement and revenue generation.
- 4 **Cultivate a content payment culture:** To promote increased video streaming of local content, it is essential to foster a culture of content payment by producing high-quality content that audiences are willing to pay for, as well as by reducing prohibitive data costs.
- 5 **Adopt a consultative approach to taxation:** Policymakers should adopt a consultative approach to taxation, taking into account the growth potential of the sector and avoiding excessive taxation that could stifle development.
- 6 **Optimize content for mobile:** Video content producers need to explore the delivery of mobile-optimized content, considering the shorter attention spans of audiences consuming media via mobile devices.



INDUSTRY FOCUSED BREAKOUT SESSIONS

MUSIC: STREAMING POWER & THE BUSINESS OF SOUND



MUSIC: STREAMING POWER & THE BUSINESS OF SOUND

This session, expertly moderated by Angela Ndambuki, Regional Director for Sub-Saharan Africa at the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) Kenya, examined strategic approaches for Kenyan artists and music entrepreneurs to maximize commercial opportunities within popular streaming platforms.

The distinguished panel featured Peng Chen, CEO of HustleSasa Inc.; Bilha Ngaruiya, Country Manager for Kenya at ONErpm; Bien-Aimé Alusa Baraza, acclaimed Kenyan musician, songwriter, and record executive at Sol Generation Records; and Eric Musyoka, music producer and Chairman of the Recording Industry of Kenya (RIKE).



Peng Chen
CEO,
HustleSasa Inc



Bilha Ngaruiya
Country Manager - Kenya,
ONErpm



Bien-Aimé Alusa Baraza
Acclaimed Kenyan Musician,
Songwriter & Record Executive,
Sol Generation Records



Eric Musyoka
Music Producer and
Chairman of the Recording
Industry of Kenya (RIKE)



Angela Ndambuki
Regional Director for Sub-
Saharan Africa, International
Federation of the Phonographic
Industry (IFPI) Kenya,

Moderator

THE STREAMING REVOLUTION'S COMMERCIAL IMPACT

Ndambuki opened by highlighting the revolutionary impact of digital platforms, including Apple Music and YouTube, which have fundamentally democratized music creation, distribution, and consumption. She presented compelling industry data demonstrating the emergence of streaming platforms as the dominant global music distribution channel.



"The U.S. recorded music industry generated \$17.1 billion in 2023, with streaming accounting for 84% of total revenue, according to the Recording Industry Association of America," she reported. She added that IFPI estimates Kenya's streaming market for sound recordings alone reached approximately \$4 million in 2024.

VIDEO-FIRST CONSUMER BEHAVIOR DRIVES DISCOVERY

Bilha Ngaruiya emphasized that artists seeking to capture new Kenyan audiences through streaming platforms must prioritize the creation of video content. "The East African market, particularly Kenya, demonstrates a distinctly video-first consumer preference. Most music discovery occurs through TikTok and YouTube. When examining top African artists' YouTube metrics, Kenyan viewership represents the dominant traffic source."

Despite clear video preferences, she noted Spotify's steady market penetration. "Spotify experienced significant growth after the 2020 pandemic, but consumer adaptation to paid music services requires time. Audiences gravitate toward YouTube and TikTok primarily because they're free platforms."

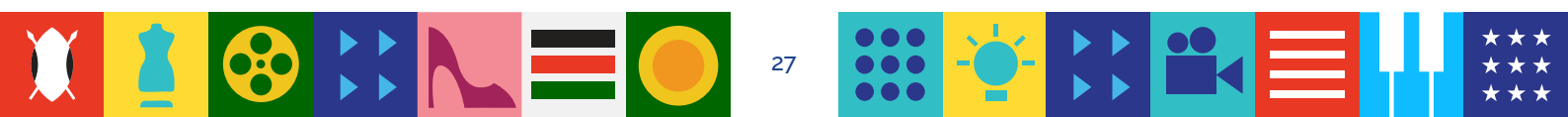
LIVE EVENTS REMAIN REVENUE POWERHOUSES

Peng Chen emphasized that, amid the excitement of streaming, musicians must not underestimate the transformative power of live events. "We view live events as fundamental to building local communities and expanding regional reach," he explained. He disclosed that his company had distributed over \$4.5 million to live event creators in Kenya, demonstrating the substantial commercial potential of this channel. "Live events continue representing one of the most effective audience engagement strategies."

STRATEGIC GLOBAL MARKET ENTRY

Bien-Aimé Alusa Baraza, following his sold-out U.S. tour, shared valuable insights on international market penetration. He emphasized the importance of artists taking calculated risks by organizing overseas tours without guaranteed sell-out status. "The world awaits our artistic demonstration. When I departed for the U.S. tour, shows weren't sold out; they achieved capacity after my arrival and local market engagement. Opportunities like The Breakfast Club emerged because I was physically present and actively participating in that market."

Bien noted that the widespread availability of affordable recording and distribution technologies enables artists to circumvent traditional industry gatekeepers, an impossibility when he began his singer-songwriter career.



"While I still rent studios due to traditional preferences, I could essentially record everything at home," he observed. "This represents a liberating position where we can thrive without gatekeeping restrictions. From Kenya, you can reach Brazilian audiences and connect with listeners globally."

He urged artists to embrace unwavering discipline, emphasizing its irreplaceable role in achieving success. Artists must exercise financial discipline and "treat music as a sophisticated business enterprise."

"Understanding music's business dimensions is crucial. Beyond my passion for singing, I discovered an entire business ecosystem. Our game-changing decision at Sauti Sol involved the Stanford SEED programme. Sauti Soul Entertainment participated in Stanford University's business program, learning process flows, and the comprehensive behind-the-scenes work that drives business prosperity."

COMBATING INDUSTRY PIRACY

Eric Musyoka discussed RIKE's anti-piracy initiatives, addressing one of Kenya's music industry's most critical challenges.

RIKE represents sound recording and recorded music owners, he explained. "We don't distribute royalties but represent, regulate, and monitor the recorded music industry. When copyright legislation requires advocacy, we represent members and sound recording owners."

He noted RIKE's collaboration with government entities, lobbying for equitable laws and copyright protections that safeguard investments in the recorded music business. Data revealed that Kenyan piracy site visits increased from 50.5 million in 2022 to 79.4 million in 2023, a 57.22% surge. The Kenyan music industry loses approximately Sh15 billion annually to piracy.

Musyoka identified a lack of standardization as a major piracy contributor. "The International Standard Recording Code (ISRC) enables global music consumption tracking through embedded metadata. Upon studio release, it facilitates worldwide music identification, royalty collection, and regional consumption analysis."

According to Musyoka, Kenya is pursuing full World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) recognition through ratification. "This ratification provides enhanced authority and leverage in combating piracy, making it our strategic priority."



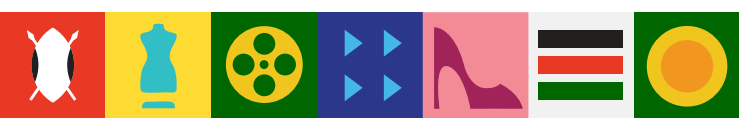
KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 **Leverage video to reach new audiences:** Musicians should harness the power of video, as the majority of music discovery occurs on video-sharing platforms such as YouTube and TikTok, which are preferred by audiences due to their free access.

- 2 **Utilise affordable recording and distribution technologies:** Musicians must take advantage of cost-effective recording and distribution technologies to circumvent traditional industry gatekeepers.

- 3 **Embrace financial discipline:** Artists are encouraged to maintain financial prudence and treat music as a sophisticated business enterprise to ensure sustained success.

- 4 **Adopt global music tracking standards:** Implementing global music tracking standards, such as the International Standard Recording Code (ISRC), can help mitigate piracy by facilitating the tracking of global music consumption through embedded metadata.





INDUSTRY FOCUSED BREAKOUT SESSIONS

FILM - PITCH, PRODUCE,
PROFIT - NAVIGATING
GLOBAL FILM MARKETS



FILM - PITCH, PRODUCE, PROFIT - NAVIGATING GLOBAL FILM MARKETS.

NAVIGATING KENYA'S FILM INDUSTRY: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES

In a comprehensive panel discussion moderated by Ambassador Thomas Kwaka Omolo, HSC, former Consul General of Kenya to the United States, industry experts examined the complex business dynamics of Kenyan filmmaking, revealing both the extraordinary potential and persistent challenges within Kenya's rapidly expanding creative sector.

The session assembled prominent figures in Kenyan cinema, including Timothy Owase, the CEO of the Kenya Film Commission; Reuben Odanga, Executive Producer at Multan Production Limited; Pascal Tokodi, acclaimed director and actor; Phillip Karanja, Founder of Philit Productions; and Yvonne Muinde, CEO of Ikweta Arts.

Panelists identified prohibitive production costs and labyrinthine licensing requirements imposed by national and county governments as primary obstacles constraining film production growth. Producers typically navigate multiple permit applications across various government agencies, creating significant operational complexity.



Timothy Owase
CEO,
Kenya Film Commission



Reuben Odanga
Executive Producer,
Multan Production Limited



Pascal Tokodi
Acclaimed director
and actor



Phillip Karanja
Founder,
Philit Productions



Yvonne Muinde
CEO,
Ikweta Arts



Amb. Thomas Kwaka Omolo, HSC
Former Consul General of Kenya
to the United States

Moderator

DEVELOPING A SUPPORTIVE LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Timothy Owase outlined government initiatives aimed at establishing comprehensive legal frameworks and policies designed to streamline industry operations. This includes the Creative Industry Support Bill 2024, which has advanced to its third parliamentary reading.

Sponsored by Eddy Oketch, the Senator for Migori County, the legislation aims to ensure that content creators receive direct support from the county government. Upon passage, the Bill would mandate the Education Cabinet Secretary, in consultation with the National Treasury, to implement incentives, including tax relief and financial benefits for eligible creatives. However, these advantages would exclusively apply to registered members of recognized creative guilds.

Owase also referenced the Intellectual Property Bill, which encompasses institutional reorganization, enhanced anti-piracy operation funding, infringement penalties, public awareness campaigns, and Digital Rights Management (DRM) system integration.

"When we harmonize the legal framework, we'll resolve double licensing challenges at the county level. We aim to establish legislative frameworks that create industry-friendly environments. Filmmakers require supportive operational conditions," Owase affirmed.

Tax incentives, particularly on imported production equipment, will attract increased foreign production to Kenya, thereby facilitating expanded Kenyan content exports globally, with the United States serving as a strategic partner.

"We need incentives ensuring Kenya's competitiveness as the preferred destination for international production houses and filmmakers, simultaneously generating national wealth," Owase stated.

Acknowledging artists' persistent royalty payment difficulties, he noted: "This issue has been chaotic, but the government is championing transformative change. We'll deliver solutions within a short timeframe. However, creatives must develop comprehensive business plans to support their endeavors."

BUILDING STRATEGIC PERSONAL BRANDS

Phillip Karanja emphasized that personal brand development represents "the optimal path forward" for creative professionals. Karanja noted that Kenya's exceptional mobile phone penetration creates tremendous reach opportunities for content creators, while stressing that strategic collaborations remain essential for sustained success. He emphasized that creatives must cultivate robust personal brands to maximize these opportunities.



"We must transform our mindset, beginning with appropriate policy implementation and infrastructure development to support industry growth and content commercialization. While we possess social capital, monetization remains inadequate," he added.

INVESTING IN TRAINING AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Yvonne Muinde emphasized the crucial need for training and capacity-building investments to ensure high-quality productions that appeal to international audiences. She noted that excellence demands unwavering commitment, without taking shortcuts. "We must create meaningful incentives for the creative industry. Film possesses enormous employment generation potential; we need innovative thinking about industry development, from training and production standards to profitability. Industry building requires comprehensive commitment without shortcuts," she declared.

INDUSTRY LEADERSHIP IN POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Reuben Odanga attributed most of the challenges in the Kenyan creative industry to policy gaps, emphasizing the need for clear policymaker direction regarding strategic roadmaps. "Foreign companies benchmark against local producer practices, necessitating appropriate structural frameworks," he observed.

Pascal Tokodi emphasized: "Creatives must demonstrate intentionality regarding their objectives while remaining dedicated to their craft. We must capitalize on opportunities within domestic markets and international territories."

He also identified knowledge transfer as a persistent challenge, urging African creators to share expertise while encouraging producers and directors to develop talent and facilitate creative professional growth.

LEGISLATIVE VISION AND INDUSTRY SELF-GOVERNANCE

Senator Eddy Oketch, sponsor of the Creative Industry Support Bill 2024, stressed that industry stakeholders must lead policy discussions. Upon passage, Senator Oketch explained, the Bill will establish a creative council and dedicated fund managed by creative professionals themselves.

"The industry lacks proper organizational structure, and delays in creating appropriate environments continue frustrating and suppressing sector development," he observed. "Industry participants must actively engage in policy conversations. Regulations must originate from within the industry itself. Beyond grants, we must pursue diverse revenue streams. We must build an industry and policies that magnetize investor interest," Oketch concluded.



KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Join professional guilds: Creatives are encouraged to become members of recognized professional guilds, as registered members may benefit from proposed legislation offering tax incentives and financial advantages.
- 2 Address royalty payment challenges: While the payment of royalties remains a persistent challenge, the government is actively working on a transformative solution to address this issue.
- 3 Cultivate a strong personal brand: Creatives should focus on developing robust personal brands to enhance their competitiveness and strengthen their negotiation power in commercial agreements.
- 4 Invest in training and capacity building: Providing training and capacity-building opportunities within the local filmmaking industry is essential to ensure consistently high-quality productions that appeal to international audiences.
- 5 Industry must actively shape policy dialogue: The industry must take an active role in policy dialogue by engaging with policymakers to ensure that industry insights and perspectives inform regulations.





INDUSTRY FOCUSED BREAKOUT SESSIONS

BEYOND THE GAME:
INVESTING IN KENYA'S
SPORT ECONOMY



BEYOND THE GAME: INVESTING IN KENYA'S SPORT ECONOMY

The panel discussion, moderated by Carol Radull, a renowned sports media personality, examined the commercialization of sports in Kenya. The panel featured Thom Wallace, Chairman of If We Build It.org; Sandra Kimokoti, Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer of Twende Sports; Robert Opiyo, Chairman of the Kenya Federation of Ice Sports (KEFIS); Edwin Sifuna, Senator for Nairobi County; and Delvin Savara Mudigi, artist and creative entrepreneur at Sol Generation.

The panelists unanimously agreed that while Kenyans possess deep knowledge and genuine enthusiasm for various sports, the commercialization of these activities has been severely hampered by decades of underinvestment and deteriorating infrastructure. Notably, the last significant investment in sports infrastructure occurred in the late 1980s.

The discussion highlighted the critical synergy between entertainment and sports, with panelists emphasizing the importance of leveraging strategic branding and compelling storytelling to market athletes more effectively.



Thom Wallace
Chairman,
We Build It.org



Sandra Kimokoti
Co-Founder & Chief
Commercial Officer,
Twende Sports



Robert Opiyo
Chairman,
Kenya Federation of
Ice Sports (KEFIS)



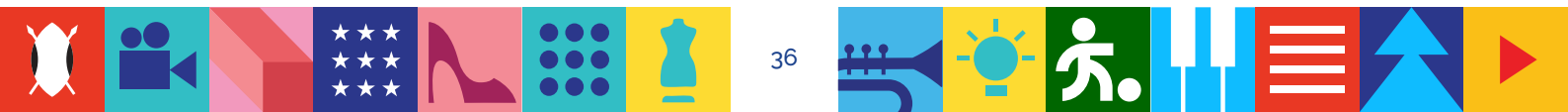
Edwin Sifuna
Senator,
Nairobi County



Delvin Savara Mudigi
Artist & Creative Entrepreneur,
Sol Generation



Carol Radull
Sports Media Personality
Moderator



1. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: THE FOUNDATION OF SUCCESS

Thom Wallace argued that companies investing in sporting facilities must view these assets as community resources rather than isolated commercial ventures. “When we build infrastructure, those facilities essentially become community centers where audiences can gather, and players can come together. From there, economies can truly flourish,” he explained.

Wallace shared that If We Build It.org has partnered with JKUAT to construct Kenya’s first baseball pitch, the Nairobi Field of Dreams, for \$40,000. Importantly, his organization did not introduce the sport to Kenya; instead, it discovered an existing community of enthusiastic fans eager to play and expand their knowledge of baseball.

“We found baseball already being played in Kenya. Thousands of young people are playing baseball across Kenya and the broader African continent, but they lack the proper fields needed to support these communities,” Wallace noted.

“Over the past three years, we’ve built a field and raised approximately \$40,000. We’re now operating the country’s first 18-and-over senior league. We have players traveling from South Sudan to participate in our league because they recognize we’re not there solely to monetize them, it’s a space where people can come to play,” he added.

Wallace proposed establishing a sports subcommittee within the American Chamber of Commerce, Kenya and offered his expertise to help establish the committee, noting that this would foster the necessary conversations to drive positive policy change.

2. RAISING AWARENESS ABOUT THE CREATIVE ECONOMY’S POTENTIAL

Senator Edwin Sifuna emphasized the need for sports stakeholders to deepen their engagement with leaders, including lawmakers and policymakers, the majority of whom have yet to recognize that the creative economy holds similar or greater potential than other economic sectors.

“Many people in leadership positions, particularly parliamentarians, need to witness these opportunities firsthand. Without seeing them, they cannot visualize the potential,” he observed. Sifuna attributed this limited awareness of the sector’s true potential to successive governments’ reluctance to invest in sports infrastructure. “The last major stadium investments occurred during the 1980s under former President Daniel Arap Moi’s administration,” he stated. While acknowledging the fiscal constraints facing the government, Sifuna noted that the private sector has significant opportunities to support infrastructure development. However, he stressed the critical importance of transparency in public-private partnerships.



Kenyans are not fundamentally opposed to private investment in national infrastructure. However, legal frameworks are rarely followed properly. The primary issue is a lack of transparency," he explained.

"Kenyans want these projects completed. We want these stadiums finished. People have traveled internationally, witnessed fantastic infrastructure worldwide, and desire similar facilities in Kenya," he added.

3. EXPLORING SYNERGIES BETWEEN SPORTS AND MUSIC

Delvin Savara Mudigi emphasized that both music and sports evoke celebration and loyalty but lamented the absence of meaningful synergy between these sectors in Kenya. He reflected on his experience performing the national anthem at the Kenya-Gabon match in March at Nyayo Stadium.

"Globally, music and sports are celebrated simultaneously," he noted, identifying untapped opportunities including performances before games, during breaks, and afterward.

"Both industries create profound emotional connections and evoke unparalleled loyalty from consumers. Music and sports generate loyalty unlike anything else in the world."

Savara emphasized the importance of leveraging marketing tools to help athletes develop lifestyle brands, arguing that more compelling storytelling would enable athletes to commercialize their public image better.

"The reason audiences connected with Sauti Sol is because we showed them our lifestyle. We ensured you developed an emotional connection with us as individuals," he explained, suggesting that athletes should adopt similar approaches by sharing behind-the-scenes glimpses of their lives.

He criticized what he described as a culture of "misplaced humility" among Kenyan athletes that prevents them from creating marketable personalities.

"I call it misplaced humility. When you achieve victory, it's acceptable to celebrate proudly. It's acceptable to declare 'I'm the best in the world' and nobody can dispute that," Savara stated. "However, our national culture emphasizes humility, and this mindset suppresses celebration and inhibits the emergence of sports-based brands."



4. ICE SPORTS: INFRASTRUCTURE CHALLENGES

Robert Opiyo highlighted that ice sports in Kenya face substantial infrastructure challenges. Currently, only one privately owned ice rink serves the entire East and Central Africa region, and it measures merely one-third the size of standard rinks used by the US National Hockey League (NHL).

Equipment costs present another significant barrier, with complete kits for individual players ranging from \$2,000 to \$4,000. Furthermore, this equipment is not available locally and must be imported; South Africa represents the nearest market for sourcing equipment.

While the federation has recently received equipment donations from other sports associations and teams, it has encountered significant difficulties clearing customs and securing entry into Kenya.

"As a team, we harbor ambitious dreams, and we aspire to compete in the Olympics. Last year, we achieved a crucial milestone by joining the International Ice Hockey Federation as an associate member," Opiyo shared.

He also identified opportunities to construct multipurpose stadiums that could accommodate "basketball, ice hockey, and concerts simultaneously."

5. BUILDING A FAN BASE: ESSENTIAL FOR COMMERCIAL SUCCESS

Sandra Kimokoti discussed her company's acquisition of Nairobi City Thunder, a professional basketball team based in the Shauri Moyo neighborhood. She explained that formalizing the club's relationships with players and coaches while prioritizing consistent monthly salaries and health insurance has provided the team with much-needed stability.

Kimokoti noted that the club has invested significantly in developing its fan base, recognizing this as crucial for securing partner and sponsor support. "A critical step involved exposing fans to the game and demonstrating that there's genuinely high-quality sports entertainment that Kenyans can take pride in," she explained. "Once you build audience engagement and establish a committed community, partners naturally become interested."

Addressing the challenges facing the club, she highlighted the inadequate quality of training and competition facilities. She specifically noted that Nyayo Stadium, a key venue, was in particularly poor condition and required urgent repairs.

"The roof's condition is such that exposed live wires pose major safety risks. When it rains, electrical sparks are visible on the roof, forcing us to shut down everything. Even after the rain stops, water continues to drizzle inside the arena, requiring spectators to open umbrellas indoors," she described.



"We're marketing this product to fans, and then they arrive to experience these conditions. Our next priority is addressing the facility challenge, and we must tackle this in collaboration with other partners."

Kimokoti revealed that Twende Sports hopes to partner with other teams to jointly construct a multipurpose arena that different teams could utilize for various sports at different times, "enabling us to maximize asset utilization 24/7."

KEY MESSAGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 **Involve communities when constructing sports facilities:** To ensure long-term success, entrepreneurs and investors in sports should actively involve local communities in the construction of sports facilities that can also serve as community centers.

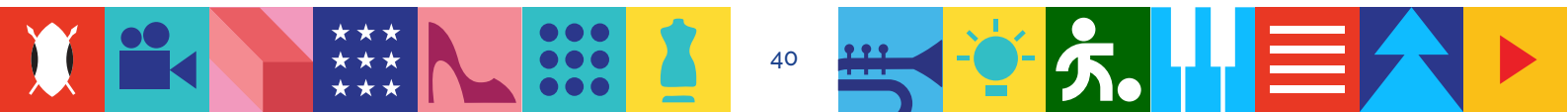
- 2 **Educate policymakers on the economic potential of sports:** It is essential to educate policymakers about the economic potential of sports. Many leaders have yet to fully understand this potential, and it is the responsibility of industry stakeholders to engage proactively with them to effect change.

- 3 **Partner with the private sector to develop sports infrastructure:** Collaborating with the private sector can expedite the construction of sporting facilities, as government resources are limited. However, it is crucial to ensure transparency in public-private partnerships to ensure citizens' support for these projects.

- 4 **Explore synergies between sports and music:** There are significant opportunities to integrate music and sports during major sporting events. In Kenya, untapped opportunities include scheduling musical performances before, during breaks, and after sporting events.

- 5 **Invest in ice sports infrastructure:** Ice sports show great potential but is currently limited by inadequate infrastructure, with only one privately owned ice rink in Nairobi serving the entire East and Central Africa region. New investments are needed to unlock the full potential of ice sports.

- 6 **Build stronger fan bases and sponsorships will follow:** Sports clubs must prioritize nurturing their fan bases and building a dedicated community of active supporters to secure investments from partners and sponsors.





CLOSING PLENARY



CLOSING PLENARY

The closing session provided a comprehensive roundup of the day's discussions, featuring summaries of the various panels, music, film, and sports, presented by their respective moderators. The session also included keynote addresses by Panos A Panay, President of The Recording Academy, and Fikirini Jacobs, Permanent Secretary, State Department for Youth Affairs and Creative Economy, at the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative Economy and Sports.



Fikirini Jacobs

Permanent Secretary,
State Department for Youth Affairs
and Creative Economy,
Ministry of Youth Affairs, Creative
Economy and Sports.

GOVERNMENT COMMITMENT TO CREATIVE ECONOMY GROWTH

Fikirini emphasized the critical importance for policymakers to develop a clear understanding of the potential pathways that can enable local artists to achieve their aspirations and generate greater income from their talents. He emphasized the importance of strategic partnerships, linking the event's objectives to the spirit of Sustainable Development Goal 17, which focuses on partnerships for sustainable development.

"As a government, we pledge to do everything within our capacity to ensure that we provide this creative industry with the necessary attention and support it requires to flourish," he declared. "We are committed to incentivizing the sector to attract foreign direct investment and foster sustainable growth."



Panos A Panay

President,
The Recording Academy

THREE PILLARS FOR CREATIVE ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT

Panay presented three key recommendations for stimulating accelerated growth in Kenya's creative economy: prioritizing ecosystem development, capitalizing on shifting global cultural dynamics, and consistently placing the interests of creatives at the forefront of all initiatives.

ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

Emphasizing the importance of ecosystem development, Panay stressed that meaningful collaboration among creators, investors, government entities, and industry stakeholders is essential for cultivating a thriving creative sector. He encouraged Kenya to leverage its robust ties with the United States to access new markets, attract investors, and embrace innovative ideas that could transform the local creative landscape.

GLOBAL CULTURAL DYNAMICS

Commenting on evolving global cultural dynamics, Panay observed that the Global South is rapidly emerging as an artistic powerhouse with significant worldwide influence. He noted that this shift presents unprecedented opportunities for African creatives to reach global audiences and establish themselves as leaders in the international creative marketplace.

CREATOR-CENTERED APPROACH

Panay concluded with an impassioned call for entrepreneurs, policymakers, and investors to position creators at the center of all initiatives and create meaningful opportunities for them to monetize their talents effectively. "Perhaps the most crucial principle is that at the heart of all our efforts, we must never lose sight of the fact that it's the creative, the individual who is creating, who matters most," he emphasized.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND CALL TO ACTION

Panay concluded by reaffirming his optimism about Kenya's and Africa's creative economy potential, highlighting it as an exceptionally attractive investment opportunity for American investors and international stakeholders.

"There's a saying: 'If you don't go, you don't know.' This is what I want to communicate, not only to my fellow Americans but to anyone listening. You must experience this firsthand," he urged. "Africa, for many people, remains a continent they know very little about. However, the energy, excitement, and momentum happening here are unparalleled anywhere else in the world. The creative potential is extraordinary, and the opportunities are limitless for those willing to engage meaningfully with this dynamic ecosystem."

His closing remarks reinforced the transformative potential of Kenya's creative economy and issued a compelling invitation for global investors and partners to recognize and participate in Africa's cultural renaissance.



POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

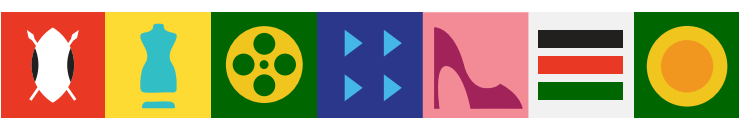


POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The U.S.-Kenya Creative Economy Forum marked a pivotal moment for bilateral economic relations, with the American Chamber of Commerce in Kenya (AmCham Kenya) playing a central role. Maxwell Okello, CEO of AmCham Kenya, emphasized the chamber's commitment to spearhead **a dedicated task force to streamline U.S.-Kenya creative industry partnerships**, working closely with the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi and the Kenyan Government to facilitate these strategic alliances. Drawing on the insights and recommendations from the forum, AmCham Kenya can pursue several key policy reforms to foster the growth of the U.S.-Kenya creative economy:

1 ADVOCATE FOR EXPEDITED LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY REFORMS

- **Support the passage of the 2024 Creative Economy Support Bill:** This bill is designed to provide a structured framework for monetization, streamline regulatory hurdles, and unlock private sector financing and tax incentives, serving as a pivotal step for Kenya's creative enterprise.
- **Promote the finalization of the Intellectual Property (IP) Bill and related policies,** including advocating for institutional reorganization, increased funding for anti-piracy operations, stricter penalties for infringement, public awareness campaigns, and the integration of Digital Rights Management (DRM) systems to safeguard artists' rights in the digital age. Robust intellectual property frameworks are fundamental for the long-term viability of the creative industry.
- **Push for amendments to the Sports Act:** These amendments should aim to allow private companies to register as sports organizations, enable U.S. investors to serve as club officials, develop clear revenue-sharing models that incentivize private sector investment, and establish a robust framework for public-private partnerships in sports infrastructure development and leasing.
- **Advocated for streamlined logistics and licensing processes:** AmCham Kenya can champion initiatives such as fast-tracking visa and work permit issuance for film crews, facilitating equipment clearance waivers, and reducing bureaucracy in the licensing of film productions to ease operations for international partners, including U.S. companies.



2 CHAMPION FAVORABLE TAXATION AND INVESTMENT INCENTIVES

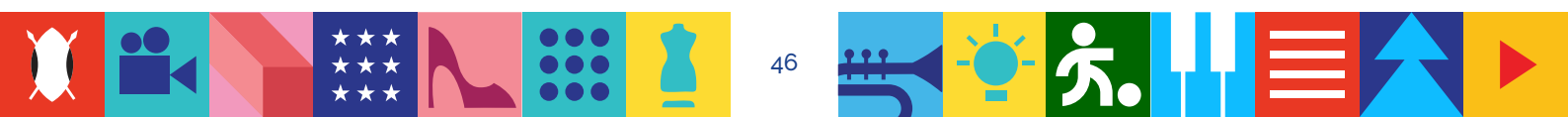
- **Advocate for tax incentives:** Specifically, advocate for tax relief and financial benefits for eligible creatives, particularly on imported production equipment, to attract increased foreign production to Kenya.
.....
- **Encourage a consultative approach to taxation:** Policymakers should be urged to engage with the industry to ensure that taxation proposals, such as creator withholding taxes, do not stifle the sector’s development before it can generate sustainable taxable income.
.....
- **Incentivize foreign direct investment:** The government is committed to incentivizing the creative sector to attract foreign direct investment and foster sustainable growth. AmCham Kenya can work with the government to identify and implement these incentives.
.....

3 STRENGTHEN INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS ENFORCEMENT AND ROYALTY COLLECTION

- **Emphasize robust IP enforcement:** Work to bridge the gap between modernized legal frameworks and ground-level enforcement capabilities, addressing the misconception that IP theft is a victimless crime.
.....
- **Address royalty payment challenges:** Despite persistent difficulties with royalty payments, the Kenyan government is actively working on transformative solutions. AmCham Kenya can support and engage in these efforts to ensure fair compensation for creatives.
.....
- **Promote global music tracking standards:** Encourage the adoption of standards like the International Standard Recording Code (ISRC) to help mitigate piracy by facilitating the tracking of global music consumption and royalty collection.
.....

4 FACILITATE SPORTS INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

- **Advocate for public-private partnerships (PPPs) in sports infrastructure:** Given limited government resources and the identified need for modern facilities, AmCham Kenya can help facilitate a PPP pipeline for investors to expedite the construction of sporting facilities. Transparency is crucial for citizen support.
.....



5 FOSTER SUSTAINED INDUSTRY-GOVERNMENT COLLABORATION AND ADVOCACY

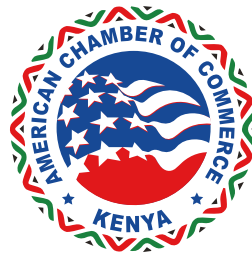
- **Maintain sustained dialogue:** Emphasize the critical importance of continuous dialogue between creative industry leaders and policymakers to craft supportive policies that accelerate growth and magnetize investment.
- **Educate policymakers on economic potential:** Work to educate leaders, particularly policymakers, about the significant economic potential of the creative economy, as many currently underestimate it.
- **Encourage industry-led policy development:** Support the idea that regulations should originate from within the industry itself, with stakeholders actively engaging in policy conversations to build an industry and policies that attract investor interest.

6 PROMOTE CREATOR-CENTRIC POLICIES AND ECOSYSTEM DEVELOPMENT

- **Position creators at the center of all initiatives:** Ensure that policies and efforts are designed to create meaningful opportunities for artists and creative professionals to effectively monetize their talents.
- **Emphasize ecosystem development:** Foster collaboration among creators, investors, government entities, and industry stakeholders to cultivate a thriving creative sector and leverage strong U.S.-Kenya ties to access new markets and attract innovative ideas. This approach is crucial for transforming raw potential into measurable prosperity and exceptional talent into thriving industry.



CONVENING PARTNERS



AMCHAM
KENYA

