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Breega Launches US\$75M Fund to Back African Startups

Bridging the Equity and Experience Gap (Breega), a technology VC firm based out of Paris with offices in the UK and Spain has launched a new US\$75 million fund aimed at African startups. The fund will focus on important African startup hubs, including Nigeria, Egypt, South Africa, Kenya, Morocco, Senegal, Ivory Coast, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The fund will target sectors such as agritech, edtech, healthtech, fintech, logistics, mobility, and energy—technologies that address critical needs in Africa.



Comment: This fund presents opportunities but also comes with several concerns. One recurring challenge experienced has been scaling technology solutions across Africa's diverse regions, where regulatory, cultural, and logistical differences could impact success.

Many of the fund's target sectors depend on reliable infrastructure, including electricity, internet, and transportation. However, these services remain inconsistent in many parts of the continent, which could limit the impact of these solutions.

Additional concerns include the accessibility and affordability of these technologies and Africa's unpredictable regulatory environment, which vary from country to country, presenting barriers to growth and investment. For the fund to succeed, these challenges must be carefully addressed to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth across the continent.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Zimbabwe Adopts AI-Powered Traffic System to Tackle Congestion

Zimbabwe has launched an AI-powered traffic management system to tackle urban congestion, beginning with the capital city, Harare. The system uses real-time data to adjust traffic signals based on information from cameras and sensors improving overall traffic management.

The introduction of this system is an important step in Zimbabwe's urban development plan and highlights a growing trend across Africa – adopting smart technologies to address urban issues. By implementing this AI-driven system, Zimbabwe positions itself as a leader in smart city innovations, with the potential for Harare's success to serve as a model for other African cities facing similar challenges.

Comment: The success of the system heavily depends on the availability of reliable infrastructure, including high-quality cameras, sensors, and stable networks. As such there are concerns that the benefits of AI traffic management might not be equitably distributed with wealthier, more urbanized areas likely to see better and improved services.

Zimbabwe also must carefully address data collection and privacy concerns to protect citizens' rights and ensure the system is transparent, accountable, and secure.

Implementing strong data protection regulations and ensuring transparency in the use of AI technologies will be necessary for the achievement of their goal.

Public adaptation is another challenge. For the system to work effectively, drivers and pedestrians must understand new traffic patterns and follow updated signals. Without proper public sensitization, confusion or resistance to the changes could undermine the system's success.



For more information, please click [here](#).

Orange, OpenAI and Meta to Train LLMs to Support Regional African Languages

Orange has partnered with OpenAI and Meta to enhance Artificial Intelligence (AI) language models by incorporating regional African languages that are currently not supported by Generative AI (GenAI) models. The initiative will focus on two West African languages—Wolof, and Pulaar. The companies will train OpenAI's Whisper speech model and Meta's Llama 3.1 text model using diverse examples of these languages to improve their understanding.

The goal is to allow customers to interact with Orange in their local languages. Orange also plans to make the resulting AI models available as open-source for non-commercial uses such as public health and education.

The company's ultimate goal is to expand this effort to include all African languages spoken across its 18-country network in Africa.

Comment: By focusing on languages which are not yet supported by existing GenAI models, the initiative could help bridge communication gaps. This would enable a broader portion of the African population to access services in their native languages, enhancing inclusivity in the digital space.

A crucial issue is the ownership of intellectual property (IP) derived from the training. This will likely be governed by the agreements between the involved parties — Orange, OpenAI, and Meta., the specific details may be determined by percentage of contribution.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Law to Compel Social Media Platforms to Set Up Offices in Nigeria Underway

A bill has been introduced in Nigeria's Senate that would require social media platforms, data controllers, and data processors operating in the country to establish physical offices within Nigeria.

The Bill mandates that all data controllers, processors, or social media platform operators must set up and maintain a physical office within Nigeria. Failure to comply within thirty (30) days could result in a prohibition of operations by such data controller within the country.

The Bill defines "Physical Offices" as operational business locations in Nigeria, which should be staffed and authorized to engage with regulators and the public.

Comment: By mandating a local presence, the Bill could strengthen Nigeria's ability to regulate data practices more effectively and potentially create job opportunities by encouraging businesses to set up operations within the country.

However, requiring companies to establish physical offices may pose challenges, particularly for smaller platforms or those without a strong market presence in Nigeria.

Furthermore, international companies may push back on the implementation of the law as this would create additional reporting and compliance obligation and cost of doing business. Lastly, the broad definition of data controllers, processors, and social media operators could lead to ambiguities, potentially complicating enforcement and legal interpretation.

We note that this is still a bill and may be further amended or revised prior to the bill coming into force.

For more information, please click [here](#).

NCC Bars Nigerians Under 18 Years Old from Owning SIM Cards

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has introduced a policy preventing anyone under the age of 18 from owning a SIM card. This policy has been in development since 2021 as part of the NCC's efforts to improve telecom security and industry regulation.

In addition to age restrictions, the NCC has been focused on improving the accuracy of subscriber data. This push for age limits reflects a broader trend toward increasing accountability and oversight in Nigeria, impacting how young people access various services.

Comment: The new policy is aimed at enhancing accountability and protecting minors. By requiring minors to have SIM cards registered under a parent or guardian's name, the policy ensures that adults are held responsible for any misuse.

However, the policy raises several concerns. One potential issue is the delay that may result from the requirement for guardians to personally register SIMs to grant to be used by their wards.

Additionally, there may be concerns regarding the co-mingling of personal data of the guardians and underage users collected by the mobile network operators. There is expectation that operators will address these concerns as they take steps to adhere to NCC's directive.

For more information, please click [here](#).

MTN South Africa, China Telecom, Huawei in Digital Infrastructure Pact

MTN South Africa has entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with China Telecom Global and Huawei to enhance digital infrastructure across MTN's African operations. The collaboration leverages China Telecom's network expertise, MTN's broad regional presence, and Huawei's technological capabilities to drive digital infrastructure growth in Africa.

MTN Group operates in 17 African markets and two in the Middle East. The partnership will likely focus on technologies such as 5G, cloud, AI, and enterprise solutions, with MTN South Africa emphasizing the Internet of Things (IoT) as a key area of interest. Tumi Sekhukhune-Chamayou, MTN South Africa's Chief Enterprise Business Officer, noted that improved network services could unlock new opportunities in smart mining and industrial applications.

Additionally, MTN South Africa is collaborating with Huawei on trials of 5G-Advanced technology, following a MoU signed in June, and opened a Technology Innovation Lab with Huawei in April.

Comment: This collaboration could unlock many opportunities for digital transformation in Africa, enhancing services and creating new markets. The partnership's emphasis on 5G and cloud technology could foster economic growth, but there are concerns regarding infrastructure costs, regulatory frameworks, and ensuring equitable access to these advanced technologies across diverse regions.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Nokia, Reflex & Net Nine Nine Partner to Expand Broadband in South Africa

Nokia, in partnership with Reflex and Net Nine Nine, is expanding broadband access to underserved communities in South Africa. Led by Reflex, the initiative will use Nokia's fiber broadband solution to provide affordable internet to millions, enabling vital services like online education, telehealth, and remote work, which are essential for economic growth and social inclusion.

The project, currently underway in Gauteng and Free State provinces, supports South Africa's goal of extending quality, affordable broadband to underserved areas. Through this collaboration, Nokia, Reflex, and Net Nine Nine aim to bridge the digital divide and foster social and economic development in the country.

Comment: The initiative will involve the collection and processing of personal data, particularly if the broadband service includes services like online education, or e-government applications.

Furthermore, where any of the companies involved in the project are based outside of South Africa, cross-border data transfer regulations may come into play. Accordingly, the parties would have to comply with extant laws, such as Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA), in the implementation of this partnership.

For more information, please click [here](#).





ITU Reports 5.5 Billion Global Internet Users as Digital Divide Persists

According to the International Telecommunication Union's (ITU) Facts and Figures 2024, as at 2024, an estimated 5.5 billion people are online, marking an increase of 227 million from 2023. While global connectivity continues to improve, certain challenges remain in reaching communities in low-income countries.

The report highlights the stark contrast between high-income and low-income countries. In high-income nations, 93% of the population is online, while only 27% of those in low-income countries have internet access. Connectivity in the least developed and landlocked countries remains particularly low, with only 35% and 39% of the populations, respectively, online.

The ITU stresses that progress toward universal access is slow and emphasizes the need for more focused efforts to overcome barriers to internet access, especially for vulnerable communities.

Comment: This reflects the slow progress toward universal internet access. Despite the increase in global connectivity, about one-third of the world's population remains offline, with stark disparities between high- and low-income countries. The report also underscores that while global progress is being made, it is insufficient and uneven on a global scale, with vulnerable communities facing greater challenges in overcoming barriers to connectivity.

For more information, please click [here](#).

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