

The Africa AI Village @ AI+ Expo 2026

Beyond Frontier Capability: Building Practical AI Through Data, Compute, and Investment

Washington DC Convention Center, May 7, 2026

Time	Session	Description
10:00 AM - 10:10 AM	Opening Keynote: The Missing 90% of AI	This session focuses on framing the shift from frontier models to real-world systems. It will highlight the importance of data, tools, and financing, explaining why impact comes from efficient, localized AI.
10:10 AM - 10:50 AM	Beyond Frontier Capability, Part 1: AI Model Approaches	This session explores the shift from massive frontier models to "good enough" AI, prioritizing open-source and low-compute methodologies. Panelists will discuss practical frameworks for deploying efficient, localized systems that redefine success through real-world utility rather than model size.
10:50 AM - 11:30 AM	Beyond Frontier Capability, Part 2: Preparing for AI Adoption, Literacy, and Education	This panel addresses the human infrastructure required for AI integration, focusing on digital literacy and edtech initiatives. Additionally, discussions will center on scaling adoption through leveraging U.S.-Africa student exchanges and academic integration programs designed to build a future-ready, technical workforce.
11:30 AM - 12:10 PM	Infrastructure & Data Economics	Amid a shifting geopolitical landscape, U.S.-African strategic partnerships will be critical for strengthening the resilience of localized AI systems and digital infrastructure. This session will consider areas for streamlining U.S.-African investment in accessible compute—addressing cloud, edge, and energy realities; opportunities to reform the tokenomics of inclusion by lowering barriers for low-resource languages; and prioritizing efficient, localized AI over frontier models, to build

		a robust ecosystem focused on high-impact, real-world systems.
12:10 PM - 1:40 PM	Networking Lunch: Startup Spotlight	A session focused on real-world use cases. Startups will discuss the problems they are solving, model/system design choices, deployment constraints, and what is required to scale
1:40 PM - 1:50 PM	Keynote #2	This session focuses on framing the natural synergy between U.S. and African technology sectors and how their combined strengths drive the AI age. It will highlight the importance of cross-continental collaboration, explaining why shared flourishing depends on integrating global innovation with local market expertise.
1:50 PM - 2:30 PM	Financing the Application Layer	This session explores why funding often misses practical AI. Topics include the role of venture capital vs. development finance, as well as blended and catalytic finance models for tools solving everyday problems.
2:30 PM - 3:10 PM	U.S.-Africa Software Partnerships	Amid a shifting geopolitical landscape, U.S.-African strategic partnerships will be critical for strengthening the resilience of collaborative software ecosystems and localized AI deployment. This session will consider areas for streamlining bilateral investment in applied AI pilots across priority sectors and opportunities to expand market access pathways for emerging tech firms. By focusing on language, data, and infrastructure partnerships, this forum will translate collaborative frameworks into a robust ecosystem built on shared technical standards and sustainable innovation.
3:10 PM - 3:50 PM	Closing Session: Policy & Governance	This final session addresses balancing sovereignty and innovation. Panelists will discuss cross-border collaboration and a roadmap for enabling AI governance.