



November 2023

FRIENDS OF AFRICA 2023

Post Event Report



13th
ANNIVERSARY

MEET THE SPEAKERS

FRIENDS OF AFRICA (FOA) 2023

LEVERAGING ECONOMIC AND TRADE PARTNERSHIPS IN GLOBAL RECOVERY

Hybrid
Online October 3 - 5
In person - October 6 - 7
Westin Harbour Castle Conference Centre,
1 Harbour Square, Toronto



The Hon. Jean Augustine
Government of Canada



Prof. Gerald Frislan
George Brown College



H. E. Anasah Ramsford Owah
Republic of Ghana



General Mx. Thandeka Fuluwe
Republic of South Africa



The Hon. Victor Fedeli
Government of Ontario



H.E. John Dramani Mahama
Former President of the Republic of Ghana



H.E.ossen Araya
Fed. Democratic Republic of Ethiopia



The Hon. David Smith
Government of Ontario



Dr. Barbara Shankland
Dalhousie University
Nova Scotia



Dr. Wuyang Oyedele
Casa Foundation
Canada



Dr. Shaloma Gauthier
Government of Ontario



H.E. Fatima Braouile
Republic of Mali



Adnan Al-Sayid
Qatar Petroleum,
Government of Qatar



The Hon. Amelia Kyambade
Republic of Uganda



Arc. Shushe Oyedele
Archi Projects
Canada



Sandra Odendahl
Business Dev.
Bank of Canada



Prof. Wendy Cukier
Diversity Institute
Toronto Met. University



Prof. Odoi Yemah
Ghanaian-Canadian
Chamber of Commerce



Angelo Balimondo
Government of Canada



H.E. Basile Zaim
Kingdom of Morocco



H.E. Charles Fani
United Republic of Tanzania



Cheryl Bedard
Bedard Associates
Canada



Dr. Jamila Aman
Canadian Black
Chamber of Commerce



Prof. Kandan T. Sedora
University of Quebec
at Montreal



Nerissa Allen
Black Business Association
Nova Scotia



Andrea Pierce
Black Entrep. Knowledge Hub
Carleton University Ottawa



Oluwumi Makinde
TORIC, BMO group
Canada



Raymond Dulato
Tropicana Community
Services, Toronto



Idan Levato
WERKO
Canada



Ashia Grant
Business Innovation,
Holttech, Canada



Jess Gill
Host-CBC Radio



Christine Francois
Table of Impact Invest.
Practitioners, Canada



13TH ANNIVERSARY

THEME: LEVERAGING ECONOMIC AND TRADE
PARTNERSHIPS IN A GLOBAL RECOVERY



FRIENDS OF AFRICA 2023

ECONOMIC SUMMIT

Hybrid

Online October 3 - 5

In person - October 6 -7



Westin Harbour Castle Conference Centre.

1 Harbour Square, Toronto



FOA 2023: Leveraging Economic and Trade in a Global Recovery

Introduction

Welcome to the FOA 2023 Economic Summit Post-Event Report, a detailed exploration of the transformative discussions and profound insights that unfolded during this prestigious gathering. This report encapsulates the enriching experiences of attendees, highlights the dynamic themes explored by eminent speakers, and delves into the strategic outcomes that promise to shape the economic landscape. Join us on a journey through the summit's engaging sessions, expert analyses, and collaborative initiatives that underscore its pivotal role in steering global economic discourse and fostering actionable strategies for a resilient future.

Friends of Africa Team

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The Friends of Africa (FOA) Economic Summit 2023, hosted by Casa Foundation, marked the 13th edition of this globally recognized event. Held at the Westin Castle Hotel in Toronto from October 6 to October 7, with online components from October 3 to 5, the summit remained a cornerstone for connecting professionals, businesses, and entrepreneurs with public, private, and investment communities on a global scale.

Theme: Leveraging Economic and Trade in Global Recovery

Building on the success of past editions, FOA 2023 centered around the theme "Leveraging Economic and Trade in Global Recovery." In the wake of the pandemic's widespread impact on institutions and economies worldwide, the summit sought to address the challenges and opportunities presented, especially for Africa. The event emphasized the need for long-term recovery plans, partnerships, and strategic capital creation. Platforms such as AFCTA, APFTA, and other Country Free Trade Areas emerged as key drivers to accelerate recoveries, particularly in emerging markets and Sub-Saharan Africa.

Event Format: A Hybrid Experience

FOA 2023 embraced a hybrid event format, combining in-person and virtual experiences. Virtual participation took place on October 3rd to 5th for online pitch presentations, while physical attendance was encouraged from October 6th to 7th for summit sessions at the Westin Castle Hotel. Noteworthy inclusions were the FOA Marketplace, providing on-site opportunities for small enterprises, and a concluding evening networking session, the launch of a Fashion show from BAH alumni that illumine the night and dinner gathering on October 7, 2023. This format ensured a dynamic and inclusive experience for all participants.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all the supporters and Friends of Africa whose commitment and contributions made FOA 2023 another successful and impactful gathering. As we reflect on the insights, discussions, and collaborations fostered during the summit, we look forward to the continued growth and positive impact on global economic recovery, guided by the principles of partnership, innovation, and resilience.

Dr. Olutoyin Oyelade

For: Friends of Africa Coalition Group



About Friends of Africa Coalition

Prior to 2020, Friends of Africa platform was solely managed by the Casa Foundation, but since the pandemic, the platform has since transitioned into a Coalition of likeminded groups, for the emancipation and advancement of African Diaspora Businesses, the Governments of emerging markets and those who seek to expand into the Frontier markets of Africa.

The Platform partners include the Chambers of Commerce of the Republic of Ghana, Uganda, and Black Ecosystem Partners.

The goal of this program is to facilitate collaboration between African leaders in the public and private sectors and Canadian infrastructure providers. Roundtable discussions, planned debates, and informal meetings bring together relevant authorities in these sectors to discuss and propose solutions to challenges in the real sector of the economy. The target audience includes professionals in the organized private sector, CEOs of Corporate Canada, and leaders responsible for execution at various levels in Africa.



Objectives of Annual Round-table:

- Facilitate discussions on economic, business, and entrepreneurship development.
- Facilitate connections and business matchmaking for African-focused businesses.
- Connect startups to potential partners, business, and investment opportunities in North America and Africa.
- Promote strong networks and business mentoring for startups, youths, and entrepreneurs.
- Prepare startups and SMEs to pitch to growth organizations and their investors.
- Prepare diaspora African businesses to scale and expand across regions by understanding the business culture, ethics, and principles of other African diaspora communities.

For more information on the Friends of Africa Economic Summit and how to participate or become a program sponsor, please send an email to: info@casafoundation.ca

Friends of Africa Summit is held annually in October. Follow Friends of Africa on social media to get more details about its upcoming events: www.friendsofafrica.ca

SPONSORS:



PROGRAMS & INITIATIVES OF CASA FOUNDATION



- **Black Entrepreneurship Youth Initiative (BEYI):** Launched in 2021 to train and mentor emerging leaders through a Black founders' roundtable.
- **Women Inspire:** Created in 2020 as a forum to advance women in business, trade, and leadership, showcasing influential problem solvers who serve as role models for girls.
- **Pitch Masters:** Started in 2016 as a fundraising platform for BIPOC entrepreneurs as part of the FOA summit.

With support from our partners, donors, and sponsors, the Casa Foundation has been able to create and implement a wide range of impactful programs in line with our mission, vision, and approach:

- **Entrepreneur Exchange:** Created in 2015 to bridge skills gaps among young entrepreneurs, it expanded in 2022 to serve women entrepreneurs.
- **Casa Labs:** empowers diverse individuals, focusing on youth, women, newcomers, and racialized communities through a tailored Skill Development Program designed for the digital age.
- **Black Advisory Hub:** Launched in 2021 to create a platform for the integration and socio-professional inclusion of the Black community in Canada through innovative community-based programs.



The Casa Foundation is now in its 13th year of operations, offering life-changing programs, impacting diverse industries, transforming lives and communities, and facilitating the creation of new businesses within the Black and African diaspora and on the continent at large.



FRIENDS OF AFRICA

Friends of Africa Coalition fulfills its mandates and objectives through various programs and initiatives, one of which is Friends of Africa (FOA) Economic Development Summit. This conference provides leaders from various sectors with the opportunity to expand their businesses, play an active role in contributing to the economic development of the community, and cultivate a new generation of entrepreneurs who will build a more sustainable private sector.

FOA serves as a global platform that promotes economic and business development opportunities in emerging markets. It connects start-up businesses in the diaspora, allowing them to pitch their ideas to investors and partners.

OUR GOALS

The primary goal of this program is to facilitate collaboration between African leaders in both the public and private sectors and Canadian infrastructure providers. Roundtable discussions, planned debates, and informal meetings bring together relevant authorities in these sectors to discuss and propose solutions to challenges in the real sector of the economy.

The target audience of FOA includes all professionals in the organized private sector, CEOs in corporate Canada, and leaders with responsibilities at various levels in Africa.





FOA 2023: LEVERAGING ECONOMIC AND TRADE PARTNERSHIPS IN A GLOBAL RECOVERY

Friends of Africa is an annual economic conference powered by Friends of Africa Coalition Partners and organized as both an in-person and virtual experience. The event started as a form of community outreach in 2012 and has continued to grow over the past twelve years. We hosted our thirteenth conference at the Westin Harbour Castle, Toronto, both in person and virtually, from the 3rd to the 7th of October in 2023. The summit was highly successful and boasted excellent analytics. This report will highlight key analytics and provide an overview of essential demographic information to keep in mind for our next event. The theme this year was titled 'Leveraging Economic and Trade Partnerships in Global Recovery,' examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on institutions and economies worldwide and proposing a long-term recovery strategy. Capital creation through platforms such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA), and other Country Free Trade areas has shown the potential for global development, especially in emerging markets and Sub-Saharan Africa.



FOA 2023: LEVERAGING ECONOMIC AND TRADE PARTNERSHIPS IN A GLOBAL RECOVERY



Day 1 & 2: October 3rd and 4th, Online

On October 3rd and 4th, the FOA 2023 Economic Summit commenced with the highly anticipated event, "Pitch Masters: For Entrepreneurs (Mock Pitch)." This engaging session, conducted entirely online through Zoom, unfolded from 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm. The primary objective was to facilitate the preparation of 50 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) for a unique opportunity—SME Grants of \$5000.00 generously sponsored by TD Bank. Guiding the participants through this critical phase were seasoned hosts, Vidhya Jayakumar and Dino Onyenokwe. The discerning panel of reviewers, consisting of esteemed figures such as Dr. Olutoyin Oyelade, Cheryl Bedard, Prof. Yemoh, Arben Kacanolli, and Arun Bhatia, provided valuable insights and feedback during this vital pitch preparation exercise. This event set the stage for entrepreneurs to refine their pitches and compete for substantial grants, embodying the summit's commitment to fostering innovation and entrepreneurship within the business community.

Day 3: October 5th, Online

On October 5th, the FOA 2023 Economic Summit progressed to the pivotal event, "Pitch Masters Virtual Presentation by Contestants." This engaging session unfolded in the virtual realm, conducted through the Zoom platform, from 2:00 pm to 7:00 pm. The essence of this event was the virtual presentation by contestants who had undergone meticulous preparation in the preceding days. Hosted by Vidhya Jayakumar and Dino Onyenokwe, this session provided a platform for participants to showcase their refined pitches to a discerning panel of judges. The esteemed judging panel comprised executives from TD Bank, including Aneysha Mohammed, Chimaeze Okoroigwe, Taiwo Olubamise, Krunal Ahuja, Sindhu Karunakaran, Alla Warner, Easby Ho, Anthony Bonaventure D'Costa, and Yomi Muir, alongside representatives from the broader business ecosystem. The event underscored the summit's commitment to nurturing entrepreneurial talent and innovation, offering contestants a valuable opportunity to demonstrate their business acumen and vie for recognition and support.





FOA 2023: LEVERAGING ECONOMIC AND TRADE PARTNERSHIPS IN GLOBAL RECOVERY

Day 4: October 6th, In person

On October 6th, the FOA 2023 Economic Summit unfolded a comprehensive agenda, prominently featuring the event "Welcome to Job Fair: For Youths & Professionals & Pitch Masters Presentation." This multifaceted gathering took place at the Westin Harbor Castle Hotel, Downtown Toronto, specifically in the Harbour A&B Ballroom, from 10:00 am to 6:30 pm. The day commenced with the registration of participants and a refreshing welcome, setting the tone for a day filled with enriching activities. Dr. Olutoyin Oyelade delivered the opening remarks, providing a strategic overview of the day's proceedings. The agenda encompassed presentations by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) and the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) teams, offering valuable insights into pathways to employment and immigration. The event further featured a dynamic job fair, with diverse opportunities for both youths and professionals. During lunch, attendees were treated to compelling narratives from CLab graduates, immigrants, and ecosystem contributors, fostering a sense of shared experiences. Additionally, the day included engaging workshop sessions and culminated in an in-person Pitch Masters presentation by contestants, emphasizing the summit's commitment to fostering both career opportunities and entrepreneurial innovation. The Pitch Masters: For Entrepreneurs, our esteemed panel of judges included TD Bank executives Aneysha Mohammed, Chimaeze Okoroigwe, Taiwo Olubamise, Krupal Ahuja, Sindhu Karunakaran, Alla Warner, Easby Ho, Anthony Bonaventure D'Costa, and Yomi Muir. Additionally, we were honored to have ecosystem experts Kwene Guzoraky, Christelle Francois, Clement Esene, Anita Grant, Idas Levato, and Arc Sola as part of the judging panel. Their valuable insights and expertise contributed to the success of this entrepreneurial showcase. Stay tuned for a detailed post-event report highlighting the achievements and impact of Pitch Masters: For Entrepreneurs.

FOA 2023 : WORKSHOPS SESSIONS



The workshop sessions commenced with a compelling start, taking place in Harbor Ballroom A & B. The agenda featured key presentations by distinguished representatives from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Government of Canada, and the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, Government of Ontario. Participants gained valuable insights into the "Pathway to Canada" presented by the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada team, shedding light on the various opportunities and processes. Subsequently, the focus shifted to the "Pathway to Ontario," with an in-depth overview of the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program provided by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. Dr. Shaloma Gauthier, Manager at the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, and Angelo Raimondo, Outreach Officer, Domestic Network, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, served as the distinguished presenters, sharing their expertise and facilitating an engaging and informative session for the attendees. The comprehensive coverage of immigration pathways at both federal and provincial levels offered a well-rounded understanding of opportunities available to participants.



Dr. Shaloma Gauthier
**Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training
and Skills Development**



Angelo Raimondo
**Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
Canada**



FOA 2023: LEVERAGING ECONOMIC AND TRADE PARTNERSHIPS IN GLOBAL RECOVERY



Day 5: October 7th, In person

On October 7th, the FOA 2023 Economic Summit concluded with two distinct segments: the Day Event (10:00 am - 6:30 pm) and the Evening Event (4:30 pm - 6:30 pm). The Day Event featured a business exhibition, networking sessions, panel discussions on BIPOC business wealth creation and global economic recovery, a diplomatic alliances roundtable, and a vibrant lunch with music. Keynote speakers, a fireside chat on Black Entrepreneurship, a tea break, a fashion exhibition by BAH graduates, and other engaging activities enriched the day. The Evening Event included a pitch presentation, announcement of winners, and closing keynotes by Dr. Rustum Southwell and H.E John Dramani Mahama, offering a fitting conclusion to the summit's diverse and impactful agenda.





PANEL OF DISCUSSION 1: CREATING WEALTH THROUGH THE BIPOC BUSINESS ECOSYSTEM

Panel of Discussion 1, featured experts such as Nerissa Allen, Christelle Francois, Dr. Jamila Aman, Mr. Raymund Guiste, Dr. Fearon, and Andrea Pierce. The discussion focused on strategies for BIPOC businesses, covering topics like access to capital, equitable opportunities, mentorship, and policy changes. The panelists shared insights on fostering innovation and skill development to empower BIPOC entrepreneurs, contributing to a dynamic conversation on driving economic success within this business ecosystem.



Nerissa Allen



Dr. Jamila Aman



PANEL OF DISCUSSION 2: PROMOTING ECONOMIC AND TRADE PARTNERSHIPS IN THE GLOBAL RECOVERY



Panel Discussion 2, "Promoting Economic and Trade Partnerships in the Global Recovery," featured distinguished panelists: Adekunle Akintayo from Qatar Petroleum, The Hon. Amelia Kyambadde from the Republic of Uganda, H.E Oyebanji from the Government of Ekiti (TBC), Prof Komlan Sedzro from the University of Quebec at Montreal, and H.E Anselm Ransford Sowah, Ambassador of Ghana to Canada. The panel explored strategies to create an attractive investment climate, financing critical infrastructure projects, structuring trade agreements for mutual benefit, mitigating risks, and facilitating technology transfer to enhance economic growth. The insightful discussions provided a comprehensive overview of fostering global partnerships for economic recovery.



PANEL OF DISCUSSION 3: CONNECTING AFRICA TO THE WORLD: THE ROLE OF DIPLOMATIC ALLIANCES IN “THE AFRICA WE WANT.”



Panel Discussion 3, "Connecting Africa to the World: The Role of Diplomatic Alliances in 'The Africa We Want,'" featured esteemed panelists: H.E Fatima Braoulé MEITÉ, Ambassador of Mali to Canada; The Hon. Amelia Kyambadde, Senior Presidential Advisor on Trade and Industry, Republic of Uganda; H.E Fitsum Arega, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; General Ms. Thandiwe Florence Fadane, Consulate General of South Africa in Toronto; and Mr. Charles T. Faini, High Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania. The panel delved into the historical significance of diplomatic alliances, their role in integrating Africa into the global community, challenges faced, and the future prospects and opportunities for African nations. The discussions provided valuable insights into the diplomatic landscape shaping Africa's connections with the world.





PANEL OF DISCUSSION 4: DRIVING INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP THROUGH DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION



Panel Discussion 4, "Driving Innovation and Entrepreneurship through Digital Transformation," featured accomplished panelists: Anita Grant, Business Innovation Consultant at Haltech, Toronto; Prof Odoi Yemoh, Chair of the Ghanaian-Canadian Chamber of Commerce, and Professor of Mathematics at Humber College; and Olubunmi Makinde, Associate Director at TORIC, BMO Financial Group. The panel explored the concept of digital transformation in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship, discussing factors driving businesses to undergo digital transformation, strategies for SMEs, and the role of digital platforms in facilitating collaboration. The diverse perspectives offered valuable insights into leveraging digital tools for fostering innovation and entrepreneurial growth.

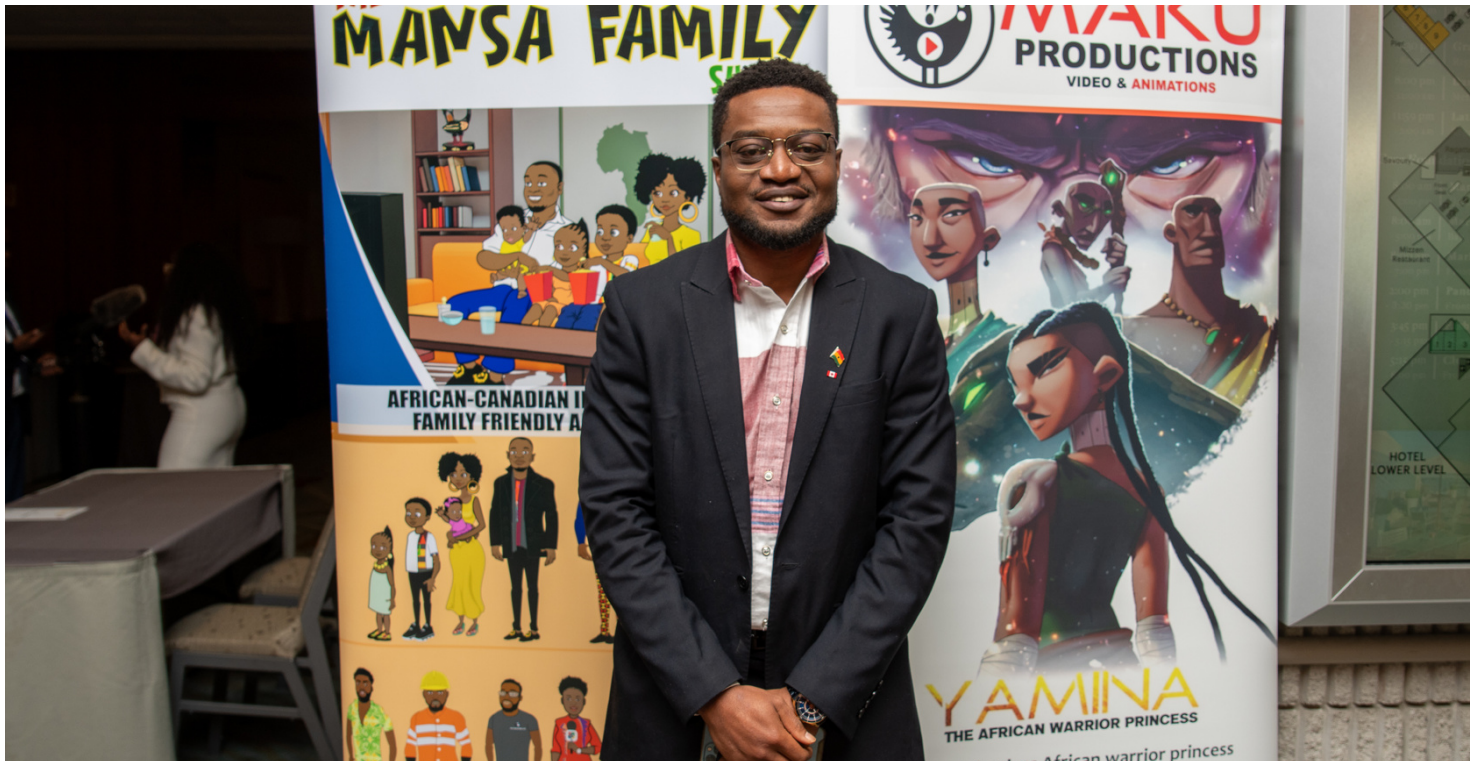




FIRESIDE CHAT

The Fireside Chat on "Unlocking the Potential of Black Power: A Review of the Black Entrepreneurship Program" was a dynamic and insightful event featuring prominent speakers Dr. Olutoyin Oyelade, CEO of Casa Foundation, and Dr. Rustum Southwell, Chancellor of Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia. The engaging discussion delved into the critical aspects of the Black Entrepreneurship Program, providing a comprehensive review and analysis. Attendees had the opportunity to gain valuable perspectives from these esteemed speakers, contributing to a greater understanding of the program's impact and the broader theme of fostering Black entrepreneurship. The Fireside Chat successfully provided a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and knowledge-sharing within the context of empowering and advancing Black entrepreneurship initiatives.





MARKETPLACE - FOA 2023

The FOA 2023 Marketplace featured a diverse lineup of participants, including Manifesting Hues Inc, Savana Beauty, Latam Wic, Mutchoradio.com, Inside Lagos Kitchen, and more. These exhibitors added vibrancy to the event, showcasing a wide range of products and services.



MARKETPLACE - FOA 2023





JOB FAIR - FOA 2023

The FOA 2023 Job Fair brought together a diverse group of participants, including Entrepreneurs Point, Toronto Police, PKG Digital Marketing, Access Employment, Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development of Ontario (MLITSD), Michnat Fashion, Casa College, and Conseil Canadien de la Coopération et de la Mutualité (CCCM). This platform provided a valuable opportunity for job seekers to connect with potential employers and explore various career paths.



JOB FAIR - FOA 2023



FASHION SHOW - FOA 2023

The FOA 2023 Fashion Show highlighted the talents of BAH alumni Funmilayo Odeniyi of Michnat Fashion House and Oyinlola Olusoga of Labeke Wear. Their collections seamlessly fused modern and cultural elements, showcasing their creative excellence and contributions to the fashion





FOA 2023 : SPEAKERS PROFILES

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS



The Hon. Amelia Kyambadde, Senior Presidential Advisor on Trade and Industry, Republic of Uganda

The Hon. Amelia Kyambadde is the Senior Presidential Adviser on Industry to the President of Uganda. She is a philanthropist, politician, and mother, having served as the elected Member of Parliament for Mawokota North County in Mpigi District from 2011 to 2021. On May 27, 2011, she was appointed State Minister for Trade and Industry, and on June 6, 2016, she became the Cabinet Minister of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives



H. E Anselm Ransford Sowah, Ambassador of Ghana to Canada

H.E Anselm Ransford Sowah is the current Ambassador of the Republic of Ghana in Canada. He attended Mfantsipim School, Cape Coast, and has a BA Honors Degree in English & Philosophy from the University of Ghana, Legon. He is a Barrister at Law and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Ghana, as well as a member of the British Bankers' Association, Business Council for Africa, and the Association of Foreign Banks, all in London.



H.E Fatima Braoulé MEITÉ, Ambassador of Mali to Canada

Her Excellency Madame Fatima Braoulé Méité is the ambassador of Mali in Canada, in addition to her role as Permanent Representative of Mali with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). She graduated from the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM) and the State University of Stony Brook in New York (SUNY at Stony Brook), Long Island. She has a master's degree in Business Administration as well as a double major in Sociology



H.E Fitsum Arega, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

H.E Fitsum Arega Gebrekidan is an Ethiopian diplomat and the current Ethiopian Ambassador to Canada. He previously served as the Director General of the Ethiopian Investment Commission and the Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia. Fitsum has also held the position of Ethiopia's Ambassador to the United States. Born and raised in Addis Ababa, he pursued his higher education in the United Kingdom, obtaining a master's degree in Development Economics and Policy Management from the University of Manchester. Additionally, he earned an MBA degree from the Open University (OU) Business School and a PD from the University of Birmingham



FOA 2023 : SPEAKERS PROFILES



General Ms. Thandiwe Florence Fadane, Consulate General of South Africa in Toronto

General Ms. Thandiwe Florence Fadane, Consul General of South Africa in Toronto, was born in Tsolo, Eastern Cape, South Africa. Thandiwe Fadane is a mother, grandmother, sister, and aunt to many nieces and nephews. She has a passion for youth and women's issues and recently completed a program on Women in Peacekeeping and Conflict Resolution. With over 17 years of experience in various sections of the Department of International Relations and Cooperation in Pretoria, South Africa, her roles have included Chief Director of Financial Management, Minister at the South African Embassy in Washington DC, Chief Director of Latin America & the Caribbean, and Acting Chief Financial Officer. She is currently appointed as Consul General based in Toronto, Canada.



Mr. Charles T. Faini, High Commission of the United Republic of Tanzania

Mr. Charles T. Faini serves as a Government Official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, bringing extensive experience in International Relations, Diplomacy, Geo-Politics, and Regional Economic Cooperation. He began his career as a Desk Officer for several Asian countries before transitioning to a RECs Desk. Mr. Faini has also worked as a Private Assistant to four different Deputy Ministers for Foreign Affairs before assuming his current role as an official diplomat. He is well-versed in Diplomacy, Stakeholder Engagements, and International Politics and Analysis.



Dr. Jean Augustine, 1st Black Female Member of Parliament/Cabinet Minister, Canada

Dr. Jean Augustine, the first Black female Member of Parliament and Cabinet Minister in Canada until 2006, is also the Founder of the Jean Augustine Centre for the Empowerment of Girls. She attended Toronto Teachers College with determination and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Toronto. While working as an elementary school teacher with the Metropolitan Separate School Board in Toronto, Jean earned her Master's in Education degree. She later became a principal/supervisory officer, remaining deeply involved in grassroots efforts in the community. Jean Augustine's story is a testament to the power of hard work and devotion in pursuit of social justice.



FOA 2023 : SPEAKERS PROFILES



H.E John Dramani Mahama, Former President of the Republic of Ghana

John Dramani Mahama, born on November 29, 1958, served as Ghana's president from July 24, 2012, to January 7, 2017. A historian, writer, and communication specialist, he was a member of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and represented Bole Bamboi in parliament from 1997 to 2009. Mahama, the first Ghanaian head of state born after independence, became president after the passing of John Evans Fifi Atta Mills. He held various roles, including deputy minister for communications and minister for communications. Mahama won the December 2012 election but lost his re-election bid in 2016 to Nana Akufo-Addo, making him the first Ghanaian president not to secure a second term.



Hon. Victor Fedeli, Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade

The Honourable Victor Fedeli, a successful entrepreneur and philanthropist, presently serves as Ontario's Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade in the Ford government. With a notable business background, he led Fedeli Corporation to be recognized among the Top 50 Best Places to Work in Canada in 1989. As a two-term Mayor of North Bay, he prioritized fiscal responsibility and economic development. Elected to the Ontario Legislature in 2011, he is currently in his fourth term as MPP for Nipissing. In 2018, Vic was unanimously elected by the PC Caucus to serve as Interim Leader of the Official Opposition. Throughout his career, he has actively contributed to chambers of commerce, global organizations, and various boards and commissions in leadership capacities.



Dr. Olutoyin Oyelade, President Casa Foundation

Olutoyin, CEO of InVcap Corporation, is a seasoned investment expert with over 23 years of experience. Holding a Ph.D. in Management and graduating from prestigious programs, including the University of Maryland and Wharton School, she recently led InVcap in a major investment advisory deal. As lead investor at EntrepreneursPoint, a Canadian co-work incubator, Olutoyin also serves as an advisor with the African Expert Network, providing insights to global investors interested in Africa. Her impactful contributions have earned her prestigious awards, including the Diasporan Achiever Award in Nigeria and the Women of Courage Award in Canada. Olutoyin is recognized for founding non-profit initiatives and social enterprises. A dynamic public speaker, she has addressed renowned forums like VoiceAmerica, TEDx, and the Invest in Africa Forum. As an Adjunct Professor, Olutoyin shares her wealth of knowledge in entrepreneurship with students in universities and colleges.

FOA 2023 : SPEAKERS PROFILES

CORPORATE, PROFESSIONAL AND POST SECONDARY OFFICIALS



Nerissa Allen, President and CEO, Black Business Association, Vancouver, British Columbia

Nerissa Allen, President and CEO of the Black Business Association in Vancouver, British Columbia, is a community leader and entrepreneur dedicated to building economic prosperity within the African Diaspora. She spearheads market access impact initiatives to connect the Diaspora to the continent of Africa. As the Co-Founder and President of the Black Business Association of BC, Nerissa drives progressive change, leveraging her 20 years of experience as a federal public servant and her involvement on boards such as the Barbados Cultural Association of BC and the Vancouver Economic Commission Advisory Board.



Christelle Francois, Board Chair, Table of Impact Investment Practitioners, Toronto, Ontario

Christelle François is the Vice-President of Government Affairs and Strategic Partnerships at Skills for Change and former President of the Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce and Founder of the consulting agency Untold & Co, which specializes in PR, Brand Partnerships, and business strategy. She is also the Founder of a firm named; Untold & Co Agency. Christelle François is a bilingual executive leader and entrepreneur who has the pulse on the leaders of business, innovation, and advocacy. She has a wealth of expertise in the financial industry as well as working as a strategy consultant where she focused on accelerating growth, creating revenue models, and putting solutions into place for various businesses and organizations.



Dr. Jamila Aman, Executive Director, CBCC , Toronto, Ontario

Dr. Jamila Aman is an educator, entrepreneur, and activist focusing on social justice and equity. Currently serving as the Executive Director of the Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce and a former Executive Director of Northwood Neighbourhood Services, she is also a professor at Humber College and a founding member of Premier Canadian Business Solutions Inc. Dr. Aman works as an independent consultant, providing capacity-building assistance to non-profit organizations and enterprises to help them achieve their optimum potential. She holds a PhD in Education from the University of Liverpool and a Master of Arts in Leadership from Royal Roads University.



Mr. Raymund Guiste, Executive Director, Tropicana Community Services, Ontario

Raymund Guiste serves as the CEO at Tropicana Community Services. He holds a Master of Laws from Osgoode Hall Law School and has a background in social justice, human rights legislation, policy, and consumer protection mediation. With training and experience as a mediator and adjudicator, Raymund joined Tropicana after a 25-year career within the Ontario Public Service. His policy analysis work with the Human Rights Commission played a key role in reshaping dispute resolution and investigative approaches. Additionally, Raymund has served as the lead consultant on numerous non-profit engagements, contributing to capacity building, shaping organizational governance, and aligning operating pillars for maximum effectiveness.



FOA 2023 : SPEAKERS PROFILES



Adekunle Akintayo, Head of Technical Petroleum, Qatar Petroleum

Adekunle is the National Head of Technical Production at Qatar Petroleum, with responsibilities encompassing production, management, and distribution. In additional advisory roles, he serves as the VP of Business Development at InVcap and is a member of the Investment Committee, where he plays a key role in screening investments and developing and implementing InVcap's corporate strategy. Adekunle holds an MBA from Manchester Business School, an M.Sc. in Mechatronics from King's College, London, and a B.Eng. in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Lagos, Nigeria.



Prof Komlan Sedzro, Dean, School of Business, University of Quebec at Montreal

Komlan Sedzro is the Dean of the School of Management at the University of Quebec in Montreal. Mr. Sedzro holds a master's degree in Business Economics from the University of Clermont in France and a Doctorate in Business Administration (Finance and Insurance) from Laval University. On June 1, 2016, he became the Director of the Finance Department at the School of Management (ESG) at UQAM, and later assumed the role of research director of the RBC Chair in Financial Services Management. Mr. Sedzro has been a professor in the Department of Finance at ESG UQAM since 1997, specializing in the digital economy, corporate finance, financial institutions and markets, microfinance, and alternative investments



Anita Grant, Business Innovation Consultant, Haltech, Toronto

Anita Grant is a business consultant by day, a social entrepreneur by night, and a mother and wife around the clock. In 2020, Grant founded Hello Hair with a mission to redefine the black hair experience and support the next generation through visual representation, education, and by showcasing the importance of self-love through hair care and self-acceptance.



Dr. Gervan Fearon, President of George Brown College

Dr. Gervan Fearon became the President of George Brown College in August 2021. His career also includes serving as the Executive Assistant to the Deputy Minister at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and as a Senior Analyst at the Treasury Board, Ontario Ministry of Finance. Dr. Fearon has also served on numerous community boards, including the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Brandon Urban Aboriginal Peoples' Council, United Way Niagara, Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce, and the Chinese Cultural Centre of Greater Toronto. He was the Co-Chair of the Niagara Region's Community Safety and Well-Being Planning Committee, Chair of the Budget and Audit Committee of the Council of Ontario Universities, and President of Tropicana Community Services.

FOA 2023 : SPEAKERS PROFILES



Olubunmi Makinde, Associate Director, TORIC, BMO Financial Group

Bunmi Makinde is an Associate Director within the Technology and Operations Risk and Internal Controls Group (TORIC) at BMO Financial Group. He is a highly experienced Technology Governance, Risk, and Compliance (Tech GRC) professional with expertise in Technology Risk Management, focusing on the financial services industry. Bunmi is a Fellow Chartered Accountant (FCA) of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN), a Certified Information Systems Auditor (CISA), Certified in Risk and Information Systems Control (CRISC), and a Certified Financial Services Auditor (CFSA). Additionally, he holds a Certification in Management Essentials from Harvard Business School (HBS) Online. He graduated with a B.Sc. Honours in Sociology and Anthropology from Obafemi Awolowo University.



Dr. Wendy Cukier, Founder and Academic Director at the Diversity Institute, Toronto Metropolitan University

Dr. Wendy Cukier, Professor of Entrepreneurship at the Ted Rogers School of Management, is a leading authority in disruptive technologies and innovation. As the Academic Director of the Diversity Institute and Research Lead of the Future Skills Centre, she co-authored the bestseller 'Innovation Nation.' Dr. Cukier's extensive work includes over 200 articles on diversity, inclusion, and innovation. She leads Toronto Metropolitan University's Diversity Institute, focusing on workplace diversity, future skills, and entrepreneurship. Additionally, she spearheads the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub and the Inclusive Innovation and Entrepreneurship Network. Her impactful work on the DiversityLeads project contributed to shaping legislation and initiatives like the 50-30 Challenge, where the Diversity Institute supports organizations committed to gender parity and increased diversity in leadership roles.



Prof. Odoi Yemoh, Chair, Ghanaian-Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Executive Director Realty Capital Management Etobicoke, Ontario and Professor in Financial Mathematics, Humber College

Odoi Yemoh is a versatile professional with executive experience at Realty Capital Management and a background in financial analysis, accounting, and academia. He currently serves as a Professor of Mathematics of Finance at Humber College and holds an Executive MBA from Harvard Business School. His expertise includes budgeting, corporate deal-making, negotiation strategy, analytical skills, financial accounting, reporting, and modeling. With a CMA focused on Management Accounting from IMA - CMA, Odoi Yemoh brings a strong skill set to the field of management consulting.

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Andrea Pierce, Executive Director, Black Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, Carleton University

Andrea, an MBA holder and certified professional in LEED, CEM, PMP, and CRM_IIPER, currently leads the Black Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub at Carleton University. With extensive experience in senior roles across the U.S. and Canada, she's known for her strategic leadership and successful program delivery. Andrea has managed budgets exceeding \$750 million USD, worked with notable organizations, and is a passionate advocate for economic development and inclusion.



Dr. Rustum Southwell, Chancellor, Dalhousie University

Dr. Rustum Southwell, Dalhousie University's Chancellor, is a distinguished figure in Nova Scotia. As the founding CEO of the Black Business Initiative (BBI), he has significantly impacted the province's business landscape since 1972. Under his leadership, BBI has achieved 25 years of growth, creating over 1,500 jobs and training 1,000 entrepreneurs. Dr. Southwell is recognized nationally and internationally for his work in Black entrepreneurial and community development, co-founding initiatives like the FACE coalition. He has also been actively involved in community service, earning accolades such as the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond and Platinum Jubilee Medals, honorary doctorates, and induction into the Nova Scotia Business Hall of Fame and the Order of Nova Scotia.

HOSTS / MC



Joey Gill

**Media Relation Consultant, Publicist
and PR Strategist - MC**



Ife Oyelade

Senior Program Manager, TD Bank

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PITCH JUDGES AND ADVISORS



Anthony D'Costa, Business System Specialist, Agile Coach

A seasoned professional in the world of business technology. He's got a magic touch that spans finance, telecoms, and tech. Remember when science got fun and data made sense? That was Anthony. He has this knack for simplifying tricky stuff, ensuring projects not only tick but also triumph. In the tech world, he's the guy you want by your side, always two steps ahead of the trend. More than just a brilliant mind, Anthony's a true team player. With him on board, it's not just about smart moves; it's about making moves together.



Namita Chaudhary, TD Ready Commitment Ambassador, Credit Analyst

has over 11 years of experience in commercial banking across 2 countries and 3 Banks. Currently, she is a commercial banking analyst at TD, an active member of the Women in Enterprise at TD and a TD Ready Commitment Ambassador. Namita holds a computer engineering degree, but has found her passion in balance sheets, connecting with people, and giving back to the community through her job. While Namita has been in Canada for 5 years, she carries a big part of India with her every day. When not working, she enjoys listening to music, playing soccer, and watching documentaries.



Idas Levato, Founder of WERKTO, 3P Business Development Leader

progressive Business Development Leader. She is the Operations Manager of Haltech Regional Innovation Centre. Before then, she worked as Business Development Manager at Angel Investors of Ontario. WERK is a women investors, founders, entrepreneurs, startups, businesses, mentors, VCs, speakers. We are connecting & supporting women in business. WERK share resources, knowledge, talent opportunities.



Dr. Wendy Cukier, Founder & Academic Director of the Diversity Institute, Academic Director of the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, and Research Lead of the Future Skills Centre

Dr. Wendy Cukier is a professor of Entrepreneurship and Strategy at the Ted Rogers School of Management, Academic Director of the Diversity Institute and Research Lead of the Future Skills Centre. She is the former VP of Research and Innovation and has authored more than 200 articles on aspects of diversity, inclusion and innovation. She leads Toronto Metropolitan University's Diversity Institute which has 130 research staff, 100 research associates from around the world and more than 200 industry. She also leads the Women Entrepreneurship Knowledge Hub, funded by the Government of Canada which promotes inclusive support for women and other diverse entrepreneurs. and the Inclusive Innovation and Entrepreneurship Network (IIE-Net). She is also the research lead for the Future Skills Centre with a comprehensive research agenda and supporting innovative pilot projects.

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PITCH JUDGES AND ADVISORS



Krunal Ahuja, Business Operations Support Lead - TD

Being a judge at this pitch contest is not just an honour but a testament to my unwavering belief in the power of innovative ideas to reshape industries and create a future that's efficient and sustainable.



Easby Ho, Business Architect - Business Banking Strategy & Transformation

My role as a Business Architect allows me to harness my technology experience to grow our business, streamline the customer journey, and champion the colleague experience. Throughout my career, I have cultivated expansive experience in advisory, analysis, change management, DevOps, process improvement, projects and program delivery for clients and global partners in the consulting, financial and technology industries (including American Express, CIBC, Citigroup, IBM, MasterCard, PricewaterhouseCoopers, RBC, Scotiabank, TD and Visa International).



Taiwo Olubamise, Product Manager, External Ecosystems

She is an expert in Business Integration and Strategic thinking. She is currently at TD Bank group as a Product Manager for External Ecosystems. Taiwo started her career in the Oil and gas sector, and for over six years, she led the design and delivery of multi-million dollar oil & gas development projects. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics and an IMBA from the Schulich School of Business.



Alla Warner, Director, Change Management, Corporate Evolution and Change Enablement

Alla Warner is a seasoned Finance and Business Transformation professional with over 15 years of professional experience within Pharmaceuticals and Banking. Her specialty is leading large transformational change initiatives in complex, highly regulated global organizations.



Anita Grant, Business Innovation Consultant, Haltech, Toronto

Anita Grant is a business consultant by day, a social entrepreneur by night, and a mother and wife around the clock. In 2020, Grant founded Hello Hair with a mission to redefine the black hair experience and support the next generation through visual representation, education, and by showcasing the importance of self-love through hair care and self-acceptance.

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Architect Olusola Oyelade, Principal Partner, Archi Projects and Board Member, Casa Foundation

Architect Olusola Oyelade is the Principal Architect at Archi Projects; and a major Partner at Invcap Corporation. Olusola Oyelade is an Architecture graduate of the University of Lagos and Harvard Graduate School's Advanced Management Design. He completed specialized courses in Project Management at University of Toronto as well as Building Construction Methods at Toronto Metropolitan University, Toronto Canada. He is also a certified Project Management Professional and a Chartered Architect.



Christelle Francois, Board Chair, Table of Impact Investment Practitioners, Toronto, Ontario

Christelle François is the Vice-President of Government Affairs and Strategic Partnerships at Skills for Change and former President of the Canadian Black Chamber of Commerce and Founder of the consulting agency Untold & Co, which specializes in PR, Brand Partnerships, and business strategy. She is also the Founder of a firm named; Untold & Co Agency. Christelle François is a bilingual executive leader and entrepreneur who has the pulse on the leaders of business, innovation, and advocacy. She has a wealth of expertise in the financial industry as well as working as a strategy consultant where she focused on accelerating growth, creating revenue models, and putting solutions into place for various businesses and organizations.



Clement Esene, Executive Director, BIPOC Foundation, Alberta

He is the Founder and Executive Director of BIPOC Foundation. It's a non-profit organization that aims to advance racial and gender equality while building awareness to eliminate anti-blackness and Indigenous invisibility to create significant entrepreneurship opportunities for diverse communities. It provides various tools and services to early stage entrepreneurs with foundational business and growth training.



Kwene Guzoraky, Financial Controller at FACE Coalition

The FACE Coalition's financial controller is Kwene Guzoraky. Kwene is a professional accounting candidate and holds a professional diploma in business administration. The John Molson School of Business at Concordia awarded him a Bachelor of Commerce with a major in accounting.

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Arun Bhatia, Co-founder and Lead at HNH PVT Ltd

With 15+ years of progressive experience in Operations, Strategy, and Business Management. He is a dedicated professional well-versed in startup dynamics. As Co-founder and Lead at HNH Advisors Pvt Ltd, an independent business consultancy, he has propelled remarkable growth and strategic excellence for his clients.



Chimaeze Okoroigwe, Project Finance Advisor at Shell Plc

He is an experienced finance professional with almost 2 decades of experience working for brands across continents. He is, at the moment, Manager of Finance Operations at TD Bank. Before TD Bank, he was Finance lead for Shell Nigeria and General Manager of Finance at Terragon Group (an African-focused Marketing Technology Start-up). He was at some point the Business controller for Microsoft Mobile Devices and services in Nigeria and the Accounting, Reporting and Compliance Manager for Nokia.

PITCH MASTERS



The Pitch Masters webinar series, spanning four engaging parts, catered to freelancers, entrepreneurs, and small to medium businesses seeking to forge new ventures and partnerships. This specialized series centered on equipping community startups and their networks with the necessary skills to pitch for grants at a National Pitch Event for Entrepreneurs. With prizes reaching up to \$10,000, participants were offered an invaluable chance to succeed. The event, a collaborative effort with partners from academia and diverse industries, aimed to empower aspiring entrepreneurs and foster innovation within the entrepreneurial landscape.



PITCH MASTERS WINNERS



Hats off to the remarkable winners of Pitch Masters at FOA 2023! These standout freelancers, entrepreneurs, and businesses wowed us with their innovation and compelling pitches, earning prizes up to \$10,000. Thanks to our partners in academia and diverse industries, this initiative continues to inspire and empower the entrepreneurial spirit. Congratulations to all the winners on their well-deserved success!

WINNERS

- * **Stephanie Martin - Side Hustle Mastermind**
- * **Zainab Williams - FundEvolve**
- * **Abiola Alifa - Abilex Co**
- * **Toru Ogan - Your Beautiful Name**
- * **Asli Kahraman - Operations Mavenu**
- * **Melissa Pole - Three Fires International**
- * **Ruth Ariyo - Wazobia Bakery**
- * **Keda Edwards Pierre - True2Soul Network**
- * **Inc.**
- * **Keno Akpomi - Phoakes Events**
- * **Asha Wheeldon - KULA Foods**



FOA 2023 FACTS IN NUMBERS



This was the most successful summit to date. Our virtual sessions were held from the 3rd to the 5th of October, and the in-person session took place on the 6th and 7th of October. The event was initially marketed on Eventbrite and streamed on YouTube to a larger audience. Here are some analytics:

+999

REGISTERED DELEGATES

+35

COUNTRIES OF PROCEDENT

277

INTERNATIONAL DELEGATES

45

ESTEEMED SPEAKERS

8

INSPIRING KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

5

DAYS OF HYBRID EVENT

+30

VOLUNTEERS

+128

PITCH CONTESTANT

23

PARTICIPANTS AT MARKETPLACE

12

EMPLOYERS PARTICIPANTS AT JOB FAIR

25

BAH GRADS PRESENTED AT THE FASHION SHOW

+20K

VIEWS ON YOUTUBE

50K

AWARDED TO THE PITCH MASTERS WINNERS

10

PITCH WINNERS

FOA SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our sponsors for making it possible for us to provide education and support to all our participants. Your generous support has been instrumental in our mission, and we deeply appreciate your contributions.





FOA 2023



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