

# Highway Africa kicks off today

The 14th Highway Africa Conference kicked off today, Monday, 5 July 2010, with MTN celebrating its sponsorship of the event for the ninth consecutive year. Highway Africa is the largest annual gathering of African journalists and media practitioners on the continent.



This year the timing of Highway Africa broke with tradition to coincide with the 2010 FIFA World Cup. MTN will host a viewing of the semi-finals for the delegates on 6 and 7 July.

This year's theme, African Voices in the Global Media Space, is both a celebration and an interrogation of African journalism and media and how these are opening up and expanding spaces for engagement.

## Africa media and global development

The conference kicks off with Nozipho January-Bardill, MTN Group executive for corporate affairs and company spokesperson, participating in a high-level debate on a theme titled African Media and the Global Development Agenda: How is African media framing Africa's role on the global stage in relation to China, climate change, emerging economic order, terror and security.

This will be followed by a roundtable discussion on ICT Trends and Innovations in Africa: what is and what is not happening on the continent. The MTN representative on the panel discussion will be EASSy project manager, Trevor Martins.

On the second day of Highway Africa MTN will participate in a workshop themed Mobile is the future, the future is here, led by Professor Harry Dugmore, chair of MTN Mobile Journalism at Rhodes University together with Richard Mwami, head of Public Access and Mobile Money, MTN Uganda.

## Exponential growth of social media, internet

Says MTN's January-Bardill: "The exponential growth of social media and the internet is rapidly altering the media landscape and changing the way news gets disseminated and consumed. Through our partnership with Rhodes University, MTN is proud to be at the forefront of deliberations and discussions that will help evaluate the role the African media should play in influencing global perceptions about the continent.

"Highway Africa will also give us an opportunity to appraise how the media on the continent can assert Africa's place in the global arena, particularly on critical issues such as socio-economic development, the promotion of democracy and climate change," she says.

Over 500 journalists are expected to attend Highway Africa this year. In the previous year, FIFA Local Organising Committee chief executive Dr Danny Jordaan opened Highway Africa by addressing delegates about South Africa's state of readiness at an opening event held at newly-built Nelson Mandela Bay Stadium.

For more information, go to <http://highwayafrica.com>.

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