

Women take centre stage at WIE Africa

Joyce Banda, president of Malawi; humanitarian campaigner, Graca Machel and Wellbeing Foundation president, Toyin Saraki have been confirmed as the headline speakers for inaugural WIE Africa. WIE Africa will be the first women's symposium on the African continent to bring together female leaders from the worlds of politics, business, philanthropy, media, fashion, entertainment and the arts to empower and inspire the next generation. The inaugural WIE Symposium Africa is to be held from 5-7 May 2013 in Cape Town, South Africa.



WIE (Women: Inspiration & Enterprise), founded in 2010 is a global annual conference and online community designed to empower the next generation of women leaders. WIE Africa is timed to coincide with the World Economic Forum Africa and will showcase the women taking a central role in shaping the Africa of tomorrow. Following Cape Town, the pan African event will occur in a different African city annually.

Joyce Banda, Africa's third ever female head of state will open the women's symposium and Graca Machel, humanitarian and the wife of Nelson Mandela, will close proceedings. At the time of confirming her attendance Banda was pleased to share her belief that, "Women need to be united if they are to be successful. This symposium, therefore, sets a good ground of uniting women across the globe, with the aim of empowering them to be responsible for their own destiny."

What to expect

The rest of the symposium will be packed full of panels and workshops on topics such as role of technology in media, tackling social perceptions of African women, entrepreneurship and the influx of western brands to the continent.

Toyin Saraki will moderate a panel on innovative African solutions to health and education. Next generation trailblazers such as entrepreneur and rising star Magette Wade (named one of the 20 Youngest Power Women in Africa by *Forbes*) and the celebrated FACE Africa founder Saran Kaba Jones, will also speak on panels.

Following the symposium, WIE and Saraki will host a fundraising dinner to benefit the Graca Machel Trust, an organisation that advocates for the rights of women and children on the continent, as well as good governance and democracy.

This is the first time that the WIE Symposium, founded by Dee Poku and June Sarpong, will be venturing into Africa,

breaking new ground by bringing together the continent's stars and emerging young female leaders. With Africa experiencing some of the fastest economic growth in the world, WIE Africa aims to contribute to changing any negative perceptions of Africa as a whole by showcasing successful African women and innovation.

Dee Poku, co-founder and CEO of WIE said, "Africa is truly the land of opportunity and there are some incredibly impressive women seizing that opportunity to launch companies and find innovative solutions to the various issues. The Africa I know is very different to the Africa I see in the western media. The common image of a continent mired in war, corruption and poverty, fails to reflect the complete picture."

For more, go to www.wienetwork.org

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