

AITEC Africa celebrates 25 years

Come 23 October 2012, on the eve of the upcoming AITEC East Africa ICT Summit scheduled for the 24-25 October at Oshwal centre, Kenya, leaders from the East Africa information and communication technology sector will gather for a celebration dinner and toast to 25 years of AITEC Africa's impact on the region's ICT industry.



Dr. Bitange Ndemo, Kenya's Ministry of Information and Communication permanent secretary, will lead corporate and government officials in celebrating the company that brought awareness and knowledge of computing, the internet and telecommunications to the region many years before they became realities.

ICT professionals laud AITEC Africa events as having enabled the region to learn about technologies and innovations from other markets, and almost as soon as they emerge.

A Nairobi-based engineer with Chinese telecoms firm-ZTE, Simon Muchoki says, "I remember a heated debate at AITEC ICT Summit in 1998 on GSM and CDMA technologies, three years before networks like Safaricom and Kencell sprung up. In other editions of AITEC conferences, there were futuristic discussions on WiMAX, 3G, ERPs, Cloud Computing and LTE. These are now realities."

Paul Kukubo, CEO of the Kenya ICT Board says the ICT Summit is a source of updates for ICT professionals in different markets on technology advancement, "Conferences of a global nature such as the annual AITEC East Africa ICT Summit continue to play an important role in passing knowledge relating to inventions and innovations from other parts of the world," he says.

AITEC has sponsored over 2000 high-level tech leaders, technology developers and expert speakers from global organisations all over the world to speak, present or train participants at the conferences, resulting to highly successful knowledge sharing sessions.

Through AITEC Africa's conferences and technology showcases many regional technology decision makers pride in a worthwhile platform for comparison of technology products. The conferences have also helped widen the borders for interaction with local developers meeting important contacts.

Through the years...

In 1990, AITEC Africa's first conference was themed "computers". A vivid resonance to the skills needs that characterized the market. There followed others topics like 'the advent of mobile telephony', "the entry of the smart phone", "Networking," among other topics. Speaking at one of these conferences, Dr Ndemo once joked that at some point in the 90's well-to do individuals had to make a decision of either buying a mobile phone (with only voice as the functionality) or a house in the then up-market Buru Buru estate (Nairobi).

Fast forward to 2012, this year's theme for the summit is "Smart Cities, Smart Societies, Smart enterprises" with IBM as the event's Smart Solutions Partner. The conference will focus on technologies that make cities more efficient- and which integrate multiple technologies to ensure faster processes in functions such as government services, transport, and energy use, among others.

Relatively new to East Africa, adoption of smart city solutions is fast becoming an important milestone for leading cities. But basics first, what is a smart city? As lead sponsor of the summit, IBM will bring in thought leaders on city and community management systems from the US and Europe to kick start the debate. A range of other international companies involved in smart cities technologies will also participate as well in this conference that has been described by government leaders in the region as "well timed".

Other topics at the summit will revolve around cloud computing, security and mobile applications. KPMG, and Kenya National Council of Science and Technology (NCST) are other important strategic partners at this year's summit.

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