

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 76TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
**3RD AFRICA OPEN FOR BUSINESS SUMMIT: WOMEN OF AFRICA & THE DIASPORA**

Wednesday, 22nd September 2021, 11:00am New York Time (11:00h GMT-4)

Guest of Honour: Hon. Ms. Élisabeth Moreno, Minister Delegate for Gender Equality, Diversity & Equal Opportunities, French Republic

## INTRODUCTION

Africa is a continent of hope and promise, blessed with an abundance of human and natural resources and possessing myriad unique cultures, customs and traditions. Africa, as a crucible for innovation and growth in business, trade and development, has the potential to be at the forefront of a paradigm shift – business models that provide a solid return on investments, sustainably, while safeguarding our planet and people, upholding human dignity, and respecting the rule of law.

The COVID-19 pandemic amplified the systemic discrimination and lack of access to basic needs and human rights faced by women and girls everywhere, and at all levels of society. Incidents of physical, sexual and psychological violence against women and girls increased globally, while women continued to be underrepresented in leadership roles in government, academia, the private sector and civil society. In the African diaspora, the situation of women and girls of African descent has been further exacerbated by racial inequalities.

We continue to live in a male-dominated world, and women leadership, across all sectors of society, have been restricted and compromised for far too long. Women must be empowered to make real choices in every aspect of their lives, including choices fundamental to their own personhood.

By securing the right of women to make decisions and to be heard, positive change can be brought in the economy, including by enhancing access to education, employment and wider choice of roles. These benefits will further compound in the long term through the effect of the demographic dividend.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action affirms that the intersectionality of gender and racial discrimination causes a higher vulnerability and systematic violations in all areas of social life for women and girls.

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights promises that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.” As the world pushes forward to recover from COVID-19, we must seize this opportunity to ensure that the world we recover is one where freedom and equality is not only a right, but a reality.

## AGENDA

Africa Open for Business is a forum which provides an opportunity to explore how business should be done and labor opportunities should be created in Africa, including its diaspora, and for diverse stakeholders to share perspectives. This includes the ideas, the experiences and initiatives of the private sector, high level representatives from international organizations, governments, civil society, art and culture, and academia. Additionally, with the African diaspora as the sixth region of Africa, the Summit serves as an enabling environment for discourse between those inside and outside the continent.

Building on the Women of the Diaspora Summit Series, initiated by ARDN, the Republic of Costa Rica, UNFPA and UN Women, the theme of this year’s Africa Open for Business is Women of Africa and the Diaspora, and will consider the impediments facing, and strategies for advancing the economic empowerment of, women and girls on the continent of Africa and its diaspora, in the context of the private sector.

This Summit further falls within the framework of ARDN’s Red Card Campaign to end all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, which is part of ARDN’s Pathway Solutions Initiative, and will focus particularly on the following Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs):



**Sustainable Development Goal #5**  
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls



**Sustainable Development Goal #8**  
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all



**Sustainable Development Goal #10**  
Reduce inequality within and among countries



**Sustainable Development Goal #17**  
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

The format of the Summit will be divided into four distinct sections:

- Address by the guest of honour.
- Interventions by high level representatives from international organizations, government, and the private sector.
- A conversation with representatives from the private sector, local government, youth, arts and culture, civil society and academia.
- Recognition of selected champions whose efforts have served to advance the achievement of the SDGs in Africa and the diaspora.

## OBJECTIVES

- Showcase the potential and promise of Africa, and highlight the positive narrative of the continent.
- Illustrate innovative public-private sector partnerships for achievement of the SDGs.
- Inspire and empower women leadership in the private sector, as well as other sectors of society.
- Encourage equity in post-COVID 19 recovery.
- Explore and develop cross-sector and cross-border partnerships for sustainable business and sustainable development.
- Bring attention to and popularize the SDGs, particularly goals 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 10 (Reduced Inequalities) and 17 (Partnership for the Goals), in tandem with Africa Agenda 2063.
- Create and formulate solutions, initiatives and opportunities for achieving a better, more equitable world, through and with the support of business.

## OUTCOME

The Summit is intended to serve as the beginning of the dialogue and not the end. It is hoped that the relationships built and the connections reinforced, amongst participants,

through the Summit will lead to the development of opportunities for better business and a better world; and that commitments made at the Summit will encourage stronger representation of women and girls from Africa and of African descent in leadership positions in the private sector, and other societal sectors.

## CO-ORGANIZERS

Organized by African Renaissance and Diaspora Network (ARDN) in collaboration with the Republic of Costa Rica, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN Habitat), and the Africa Bureau of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

## RED CARD CAMPAIGN

Women’s rights are human rights. In the game of football (soccer), a red card symbolizes a significant infraction of the rules. ARDN Red Card Campaign seeks to mobilize individuals from all sectors of society to commit to giving a red card to all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.

The Red Card Campaign falls within the framework of the Pathway to Solution’s Initiative, an international, multilateral special project for the United Nations, spearheaded by ARDN, to popularize the SDGs, in collaboration with United Nations system entities, the international community, civil society, the private sector, academia, the world of sport and culture and governments.

To sign the Red Card Pledge:  
<https://www.redcardpledge.com/>

For more about Pathway to Solutions:  
<https://www.ardn.ngo/pathway/>

## CONTACT

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