

HPE's Initiatives for Digital Transformation in Africa: Education, Training, and Partnerships

Akim Benamara, Founder of TechAfrica News, and Xavier Poisson Gouyou Beauchamps, Global Vice President, Service Providers, HPE discuss how they can drive digital transformation in the continent by establishing a unified digital market and deploying trusted cloud services.



INTERVIEW BY:

Akim Benamara

Founder of TechAfrica News



**Hewlett Packard
Enterprise**

HPE has been involved in several collaborative projects with Smart Africa. Could you provide more details about these initiatives and explain why it's crucial for HPE to be part of Smart Africa?

Today, we have the vision to enhance people's lives. It's important for us to be connected with Africa because we've been partnering with Smart Africa for the past four years with a vision to establish a unified digital market. Our global IT vision revolves around delivering edge-to-cloud services to individuals and businesses. Therefore, we joined the data centre on the Cloud workstream.

Together with Smart Africa, we've worked on a concept note and executed proof of value, focusing on building a national trusted cloud in an African country. This cloud will provide public and private cloud services in a secure manner to both government entities and

enterprises. Our participation in Smart Africa as a technology partner for South Africa aligns with this objective.

Over the course of four years, we have progressed from conceptualization to execution and are currently in the implementation phase. We anticipate deploying three clouds, one in Ghana, Florida, and Djibouti, as proof of value design for South Africa. We have



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also engaged directly with other countries, collaborating with local service providers that could serve as public health partners for their respective nations. Our aim is to bring them into the Smart Africa network.

Could you explain how the decentralised cloud Federation pilot will benefit local cloud service providers and resellers in the selected Smart African Member States?

To understand the benefits, we need to consider the economics of cloud computing. When enterprises rely on hyper-scale cloud providers, they face various challenges. One of these challenges is data protection, as demonstrated by the example of UCS in Europe. Implementing robust data protection measures is crucial. By establishing a nationally trusted cloud, we can address this concern effectively.

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Another issue arises when connecting to global providers like Amazon and Azure, given the telecommunications landscape in Africa. The costs incurred are primarily outbound telco costs rather than in-country telco costs. This situation is detrimental to the economics and affordability of cloud services. We firmly believe that having cloud infrastructure within Africa will serve as an accelerator for digitizing government services and enable the introduction of vertical data spaces as a service. This means not only digitizing government e-services but also facilitating digital transformation within specific industries such as agriculture, mining, and financial services.

Furthermore, sustainability is a key aspect. With the presence of a cloud, workloads can be centralised, reducing the need for purchasing and underutilizing

numerous servers. This consolidation contributes to environmental sustainability, bringing about a positive green effect.

So, what initiatives has HPE undertaken to support digital transformation in Africa, and how are these initiatives making a difference?

The first thing we are doing is fostering the acceleration of national clouds. To achieve this, the initial step is creating awareness through education and training.

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The third point is that we are fortunate to have a strong presence in Africa. We have partnered with various local organisations that share our vision for a new cloud delivery model. We also collaborate with highly skilled value-added resellers and system integrators to bring our ideas to life.

These are the different initiatives we have undertaken. Additionally, we are involved in other projects related to data space and digitising processes. One such initiative is the Global Alliance to Improve Nutrition, funded by the Gates Foundation. Our aim is to comprehensively digitise the process of fortifying food and improving its nutritional value. This will help people eat safely and receive the necessary nutrients. We are currently working on this project for the Gain Association, and the first three countries where it will be implemented are India, Bangladesh, and Nigeria. We hope to have a service provider in Nigeria before the 12th.



So we're here at Victoria Falls, and it's the first time the Smart Africa Transforms Summit is being held outside of Kigali. I'd like to know your thoughts on the past three days.

I believe the past three days have been a success here at Victoria Falls for the Smart Africa Transforms Summit. It's the first time the summit is being held outside of Kigali, and we've seen active participation from numerous African countries. One notable highlight was the presence of six presidents who attended and recognized the importance of accelerating progress. Under the leadership of Smart Africa, we are now entering a phase of execution, which is a critical step forward.

Let me provide you with an example to illustrate our potential. Yesterday evening, you were present at the signing ceremony with KX. We are proud members

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of both KX HPE and Smart Africa, and our engagement with KX has been particularly active. We have been contemplating whether we can implement a clearing house service for KX, catering to service providers who currently lack customers. When I realized this opportunity, I immediately suggested that you meet with the representatives from KX. By doing so, we have the chance to leapfrog the progress that European

service providers have been striving for over the past five years. This immediate implementation or even integrating the clearing house software provided by KX into our cloud Federation design would foster trust and expedite our advancements.

This showcases how Africa can take the lead in this conference. Our booth, situated away from the crowd, has served as a hub for learning about the latest developments and exchanging experiences on best practices. I found the experience highly engaging and truly fascinating. Additionally, we organized conferences on the Pan African interfaith and the digital economy, and I had the opportunity to participate in the Green For Green discussion panel, facilitated by the World Bank. We also conducted a session on Data Center Ankara, which proved to be highly rewarding.



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