OVER 250 STAKEHOLDERS ACROSS AFRICA CONVENE FOR THE 2024 DATAFEST

Over 250 stakeholders from diverse backgrounds, such as government, civil society, donors, academics, students, and private industry experts have convened for DataFest Africa 2024 conference, organised by the Aga Khan University and Pollicy.

The conference, themed Opportunities for all: Harnessing Data & Technology for Africa's Transformation, is celebrating the use of data in East Africa and creating a platform to address and leapfrog challenges that stymie the development of data ecosystem in Africa.

Speaking during the opening ceremony of the conference and on behalf of the Office of the Data Commissioner, the Deputy Data Commissioner Oscar Otieno commended Aga Khan University and Pollicy for creating a platform that addresses data use.

"Data plays a crucial role in accelerating the ICT ecosystem. Enacting legislation is just one step. The next step is ensuring effective implementation and enforcement which are crucial in ensuring the success of data protection efforts," he said.

"Crucial stakeholders in such forums must work together to raise awareness, provide guidance and enforce compliance of data laws. This includes investing in capacity building, training and technology to support data protection initiative," he concluded.

The World Health Organisation estimates that by 2030, data driven healthcare interventions could save up to one million lives annually.

"Aga Khan University is committed to proactive preventative healthcare through usage of data driven methods that tackle population health issues. Through the integrated electronic health record system, we are using data to innovate from our cultural context to enable better outcomes," said the Aga Khan University Chief Innovation Officer Farhana Alarakhiya.

Since the inception of the DataFest Africa in 2019, the conference has been celebrating data science and its ever-evolving impact on the African continent.

"Despite significant advances in use of data globally, many countries across Africa still lag behind in harnessing data for social good. We therefore endeavour to use data to help engineer social change and this fifth edition of the DataFest is one of those instrumental ways," Pollicy Director of Programs Phillip Ayazika