

Inaugural AfriCanada Expo 2026 Wraps in Edmonton, Drawing African Investment Interest in Alberta

Canada's first Africa-Canada trade expo drew ministers, mayors and diplomats to Edmonton, launched three trade platforms, and urged Ottawa to fix visa barriers.

EDMONTON, ALBERTA , CANADA, June 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Made In Africa Expo Canada, a Bridge Africa Global company, has concluded the inaugural AfriCanada Expo 2026, Canada's first dedicated Africa-Canada trade and global partnership Expo, held across four days in Edmonton, Alberta. The main conference ran June 10–11 at the Holiday Inn Conference Centre, Edmonton South Gateway Boulevard, followed by two days of County Economic Discovery Tours on June 13–14 through the Town of Westlock and Camrose County.



AfriCanada Expo

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AfriCanada Expo 2026 proved Africa-Canada trade is a vastly under-leveraged opportunity, celebrating Edmonton, Westlock and Camrose's role in launching what comes next. Says Founder”

HRH Rancia Christiana Erickson, Made in Africa Expo Canada

One hundred delegates from 10 countries took part in two days of ministerial-grade policy dialogue, sector panels, and investment matchmaking, followed by two days of direct, on-the-ground engagement with Alberta's rural economic leadership. Multiple delegates have since expressed formal investment interest in Alberta agricultural land, agri-processing facilities and renewable energy sites, with direct introduction protocols now in place between those delegates and county economic development offices.

A Platform Backed by Government, Diplomatic and Civic Leadership

AfriCanada Expo 2026 drew a notable roster of government and civic leaders to the stage. Edmonton Mayor Andrew Knack delivered a keynote positioning the city as a gateway for African and Indian investment flows. MLA Shane Getson, Parliamentary Secretary for Economic Corridor Development, addressed delegates on Alberta's role in building new international trade corridors. MLA Jackie Lovely also joined the programme, underscoring provincial government engagement with the Expo's investment agenda. Town of Westlock Mayor Jon Kramer opened the Expo's second day with a fireside chat that set up the County Economic Discovery Tours. Alberta MLA Peter Guthrie addressed delegates on building competitive Africa-Canada-India value chains. The African Union Commission, the City of Edmonton, the Town of Westlock, Camrose County, and the honorary consuls of Belgium and Japan in Alberta all participated directly in the programme, alongside more than 40 confirmed speakers, panelists and moderators across four plenaries, three investment panels and two strategic roundtables.

Rural Alberta Becomes the Story:
County Economic Discovery Tours



AfriCanada Delegates



MIA Logo

In a format the organizers describe as unique among Canadian trade expos, all 100 international delegates boarded coaches from Edmonton on June 13 and 14 and travelled directly into Alberta's rural investment corridors. The Town of Westlock hosted a guided economic tour, an investment showcase and an exclusive roundtable with town leadership; Camrose County delivered a parallel programme the following day, led by County Reeve Cindy Trautman, showcasing oil and gas infrastructure with clean energy transition potential alongside high-productivity agricultural land and agri-processing sites. By the organizers' account, the tours produced some of the most concrete commercial outcomes of the entire Expo: multiple

delegates have formally expressed investment interest in county land, agri-processing facilities and renewable energy sites, with direct introductions between delegates and county economic development contacts now underway.

Three Platforms Launched to Outlast the Expo Floor

AfriCanada Expo 2026 launched three platforms designed to keep deals moving after the event closed: Connecta, an AI-powered trade matching and deal-facilitation platform offering delegates 90 days of post-event access, including private deal rooms and a live AfCFTA opportunity feed; TradePod, a verified B2B e-commerce marketplace connecting African exporters to Canadian and international buyers year-round; and WOCTED, the World Chamber of Trade for Economic Development, a new multilateral trade chamber network offering cross-border trade advisory services.

A Formal Call on Ottawa Over Visa Barriers

Made In Africa Expo Canada used the close of the Expo to issue a formal policy statement on visa barriers that prevented a significant number of confirmed African delegates — government officials, institutional investors and business professionals with full documentation and confirmed registrations — from attending. The organization is calling on Global Affairs Canada and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada to establish a structured pre-clearance framework for credentialed delegates of recognized international trade events and is asking that such a framework be in place before the 2027 edition.

The Africa-Canada Opportunity, by the Numbers

Canada's trade with Africa stood at \$15.1 billion in 2024, just 0.8 percent of Canada's global trade, despite the continent's emergence as the world's largest single market under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): a \$3.4 trillion economic bloc of 54 nations and 1.3 billion people. Export Development Canada projects the corridor could grow to \$25–30 billion by 2030, supporting more than 50,000 Canadian jobs. Africa supplies more than 70 percent of the world's cobalt and 75 percent of its platinum — minerals central to Canada's electric vehicle and clean technology ambitions. The Expo's dedicated Africa-Canada-India Trilateral Trade Corridor dialogue, anchored by the Alberta India Chamber of Commerce, pointed to a complementary opportunity: India-Africa trade reached \$98 billion in 2023, with a 2030 target of \$200 billion, while Canada-India trade already exceeds \$10 billion annually.

A Bilateral Case Study: Delta State, Nigeria and Alberta

An address from Dr. Sunny Ofehe introduced delegates to a province-to-state framework for Africa-Canada trade: a direct economic partnership between Alberta and Delta State, Nigeria, a \$16-billion GDP economy with oil and gas infrastructure seeking clean energy transition investment, an active agro-processing sector, and a strategic port position on the Gulf of Guinea.

A formal Delta State–Alberta trade and investment memorandum of understanding, to be facilitated through Made In Africa Expo Canada and WOCTED, has been identified as an early post-event priority.

Gender and Trade

A dedicated plenary, "When Women Trade, Nations Prosper," featuring H.E. Prof. Elizabeth Pedro, Janet James and Manisha Patel, made the economic case for gender-intentional trade policy: women own 40 percent of businesses in Sub-Saharan Africa but receive only 7 percent of available finance, and the McKinsey Global Institute estimates that equal economic participation by women would add 26 percent to global GDP.

AfriCanada Expo Becomes a Permanent Canadian Fixture

The Edmonton edition is now confirmed as the founding chapter of a permanent, annually rotating Canadian Expo. The 2027 edition is in development, with the host city to be confirmed among Toronto, Calgary, Vancouver and Ottawa.

"Alberta India Chamber of Commerce says AfriCanada Expo 2026 showed India's role is catalytic, positioning Edmonton and Alberta as gateways for Africa-Canada-India trade." — Anupam Srivastav

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www.madeinafricaexpo.com

+1 587-501-3257

info@madeinafricaexpo.com

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