UN Economic Commission for Africa Engages NVIDIA to Boost Data Science in 10 Nations

Public-private effort provides nations with data science workstations and AI education to support census, public health, climate projects and data analytics.

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NVIDIA is collaborating with the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) to equip governments and developer communities in 10 nations with data science training and technology to support more informed policymaking and accelerate how resources are allocated.

The initiative will empower the countries' national statistical offices — agencies that handle population censuses data, economic policies, healthcare and more — by providing AI hardware, training for data scientists and ecosystem support.

Known as the United AI Alliance, the initiative is led by the UNECA, the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (the Global Partnership), which facilitates data partnerships for public good, and NVIDIA. Future Tech, a Fort Lauderdale, Florida-based IT solution provider and member of the NVIDIA Partner Network , is the Alliance's inaugural funding and global distribution partner.

"Population data is critical information for policy decisions, whether it's for urban planning, climate action or monitoring the spread of COVID-19," said Oliver Chinganya, Director of the African Centre for Statistics at UNECA. "Without a strong digital infrastructure, many of these nations struggled to collect and report data during the pandemic."

Better public health data can help countries track real-time COVID infection rates, detect hotspots and target their response efforts. And beyond the pandemic, strengthening data systems will allow local experts to connect population statistics to agricultural data, climate trends and economic indicators.

Future Tech is covering the cost of procurement and overseeing the distribution and deployment of NVIDIA-Certified Systems and data science workstations powered by NVIDIA RTX and NVIDIA Quadro RTX GPUs for each country — starting with Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Up next will be Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and Togo.

"Public-sector institutions play a critical role in providing the data used for policymaking at all levels. But often they face huge gaps in infrastructure and expertise required to tap the benefits of the data revolution," said Future Tech founder and CEO Bob Venero.

To further support the countries' data science capabilities, NVIDIA is teaming up with local universities, research institutes and data science communities to build a pipeline of developers that can extract insights from census information and other data sources.

"This is the first time many of these countries will be digitizing their census efforts, which represents a potential goldmine of data," said Keith Strier, VP of AI Nations at NVIDIA. "By connecting these efforts with the local developer ecosystem, we can help more organizations harness this for the benefit of society."

NVIDIA is putting together a curriculum of free Deep Learning Institute courses — starting with fundamentals such as accelerated computing with CUDA Python and accelerated data science workflows — tailored to the needs of each country's national statistical office. It's also providing access to workshops and data science teaching kits for each of the nations.

This work extends the company's support of AI and data science in Africa through the NVIDIA Inception startup program and the NVIDIA Emerging Chapters initiative, which bolsters developer communities in

emerging markets with education and technical resources.

Around the world, the pandemic has accelerated the transition to digitization . The United AI Alliance is supporting this transformation by working with grassroots groups at the core of AI development in Africa, with the goal of enabling data practitioners in every region to build meaningful solutions to local challenges.

Many of the continent's developers are part of local technology communities, including groups like the Kenya-based AI Center of Excellence or nonprofit organization Data Science Africa. United AI Alliance is pairing many of these developers with governments to drive new data analysis projects.

"Many countries are still excluded from using big data, AI and digital technologies to improve the quality of information for making decisions," said Claire Melamed, CEO of the Global Partnership. "Together we can change that and collaborate to support data-driven progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals."

While the project's initial focus is in Africa, the collaborators plan to roll out the same model in Southeast Asia and Latin America.

To learn more about this initiative, watch the replay session of " Democratizing AI in Emerging Markets through the United AI Alliance " from NVIDIA GTC and visit the United AI Alliance site .

Learn more about the NVIDIA Emerging Chapters , NVIDIA Developer and NVIDIA Inception programs, and register free for NVIDIA GTC, running online Sept. 19-22.

Main image shows (L to R) Jean Paul Ngom and Ibrahima Diop, of Senegal's national statistical office, working with an NVIDIA GPU-powered mobile workstation.