
RE: REPORT OF FINANCIAL FRAUD AND UNAUTHORIZED PAYMENT REDIRECTION (USD 15,000)

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter serves as an official statement from the Africa Research and Impact Network (ARIN) regarding a fraudulent incident involving unauthorized redirection of conference payments, potentially resulting from email compromise.

ARIN was responsible for managing the finances of the Pan-African Conference on Environment, Climate Change, and Health: Science to Policy, which took place from 21st to 24th October 2025 and was organized in collaboration with six other organizations. ARIN solicited and received financial support from various partners.

One such partner, The Netherlands Organization for Applied Scientific Research (TNO), committed to sponsoring the event with a Gold Package valued at USD 15,000. Accordingly, ARIN issued an invoice for this amount, providing KCB Bank account details for payment. Two separate KCB accounts—one denominated in KES for Kenyan payments and another in USD for regional and international transactions—were made available.

The funds were intended to cover payments to various service providers during the conference. Upon review, it became apparent that ARIN had not received the expected funds from TNO. When we contacted TNO for clarification, they provided proof of payment, indicating that the transfer had already been completed.

Upon examination of the receipts, ARIN discovered that TNO had transferred funds to an incorrect account number. Further communication revealed

that TNO had received emails, purportedly from ARIN staff Ms Ann Irungu, containing a revised invoice dated 9th September 2025 with a new account number at Virgin Money Bank. On 15th September 2025, Ann Irungu further directed TNO to remit payment to Virgin Money Bank, rather than the previously provided KCB account. Given that Victoria was recognized as the conference financial manager and Ann served as the ARIN focal contact, TNO acted in accordance with these instructions.

Subsequent internal review found no record of these emails in the relevant ARIN colleagues' mailboxes, including those copied on the correspondence. Additionally, some copied email addresses appeared incorrect, and the signatures in the messages were inconsistent with standard ARIN formats. These factors suggest a potential cyberattack targeting our organizational email accounts, and a thorough investigation is underway. Notably, anomalies were also observed in Ann Irungu's email account, including missing incoming emails that appear to have been automatically read and deleted. Despite resetting her password both individually and administratively, the issue persisted.

Based on these findings, ARIN has determined there is a substantial likelihood of a cyber security breach impacting our email communications. Our IT team is actively investigating the situation to resolve the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Dr. Joanes Atela
Executive Director
Africa Research and Impact Network (ARIN)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanes Atela".